Music Columns

from

THE NATION

1962-1968

by

Benjamin Boretz

selected and introduced by
Elaine Barkin

OPEN SPACE

MUSIC COLUMNS from **THE NATION** 1962-1968

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INTRODUCTION: BEN IN *THE NATION*

Even as I was reading Ben's *NATION* writings more than two (now getting closer to three) decades past, even then their singularity was apparent. And reading them in *The NATION*—known for its radicalism, its penetrating analysis of governmental policy, its focus those days on myopic Cold War stalemates—confirmed their extraordinariness, with those weird flankings of Ben's texts alongside ads for leftwing bookstores, vacation-camps & free-schools, poetry, and make-love-not-war, Impeach Johnson, psychedelic & etc. Sixties bumperstickers. On the surface, an admittedly thin one at that, Ben's concerns—the making of Western high-art music and the support of an elitist, mostly East Coast, set of composers—hardly seems radical; but the true depth of Ben's radicalism was of a different order and on a different dimension entirely from the journalistic, popular-aesthetic, or party-line radicalism associated with the Sixties.* His was a public voice speaking uniquely from the inside of a revolutionary practice which valued music as active experiencing and thinking, touching the concerns and depths of psychological, philosophical, and cognitive issues, regarding them as the natural sphere and rightful domain of music composition, performance, and audition, in both their historical and contemporary traditions. This voice, in fact, was as generative as it was reportive: the revolution in question, a radical music-intellectual activism within American music culture, was very much in the making, and Ben was clearly one of those deeply interested and involved in seeing to it that it got made. Significantly—and not by chance—the journal *Perspectives of New Music,* the leading communal voice of this would-be revolution (an idea of Ben's conceived during his Brandeis late-Fifties graduate days), materialized in 1962 and he was its founding co-Editor and—until 1983—its perennially controversial (sometimes co-) Editor. Ultimately the unmistakable heavyweight intellectualism of Ben's voice—radical in any context of "music criticism", neither equivocal nor temporizing, totally 'advanced' and assertive in every facet of its being—provoked awareness of social responsibility while reformulating articulate musictalk. His January 13, 1962 Alban Berg and *Der Wein NATION* debut firmly annunciated his commitment and reflected an awareness of a literate audience, as unambiguously expressed in the opening paragraph:

> The music of *Der Wein* renders the poetic image of drunkenness by permeating every detail and dimension with imbalances and asymmetries. The mask of representational artifice conceals a pathetic artistic confession: *Der Wein,* like a parable of Berg's own music-spiritual struggle, harbors a fundamental imbalance, a corrosive asymmetry between feeling and form.

So, in fact, with respect to all manner of senses in which his life, work, and thought have been manifestly resolute and revolutionary, demonstrably cognizant of 'the present', now and then somewhat anarchic or countercultural or even immoderately subversive, *The NATION*—which in addition to its radicalism also had a peculiar tinge of intellectual austerity and academic sensibility—was in an oddly appropriate way the likeliest of forums for Ben's fervidly idiosyncratic voice.

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*Intermingled in the next few paragraphs are passages—verbatim or paraphrased—from correspondence and conversations Ben and I have carried on.

The writings reflect almost a decade (1962-68) of music activity mostly centered in New York City, truly exhilarating years for the American culture, and for its "serious" music culture no less than for its populist politics and popular arts. It was a time of emergent public New-Music energies, not only at the grassroots level where American composers were beginning to form their own groups to perform and present their own musical ideas, but at the music-institutional level, as American universities, cultural agencies (the NEA was born during these times), and philanthropic foundations began to concern themselves with what they perceived as worthy, but economically anomalous, contemporary art practices. Such ostensible benevolence attracted Ben's highly skeptical scrutiny: he regarded "foundationism" more as an invasion than a support, more a diversion and a threat than a stimulus or a shelter of the political, social, intellectual, and artistic independence and vitality which he saw as being born in the community-focussed, often self-sustaining activities of indigenously interested composer-performer groups. One response he had was to help form (in 1965-66) the American Society of University Composers, to nurture, even lobby for, and defend that kind of serious musical activism. In those extraordinary days and times, filled with local and global political & social upheaval as well as a new youth-music (reifying the gap we'd each of us, in one way or another, already experienced), the possibility—and desirability—of cultural reconstruction on a culture-wide scale, in a public-cultural context, seemed imaginable, and drew Ben and many others closer toward public activism than they had ever imagined they would be.

But the engagement by artists and intellectuals in public life in those 1960s days in no way implied any new sort of enlightenment in the conduct of public ideological-political dialogue, in music any more than in governmental politics. Art-"garde" battlecries and boundaries, ferociously defended and promoted, were simply updated to a nuclear&space-age Cold War level.* The partisan segmentation of a truly tiny, almost incestuous, certainly ingrown, community of "advanced" musicians was intense in proportion to its minuteness. If you were for X or Y, no way could you be for W or Z, and if as a Y-supporter you turned up at a concert of Z's music, you were considered a traitress; the hostile mutual isolation of each "avant-garde" (Uptown, Downtown, WestCoast, MidWest, Academic, AntiAcademic, et alia) was brutally manifest to anyone who bothered to pay attention.

Then as now, Ben's commitment to the community in which he immersed himself was total. He expressed neither exclusionary party-line nor crudely sloganized structured vs. indeterminate dicta; rather he spoke for serious consideration of music and music-making unlike so many other music journalists, who either were simply uninterested in New Music or, when they did attend to it, did so primarily by pigeon-holing or epithet-making. To Ben, American music and musicians were not to be viewed apologetically as a lesser species of some European counterpart; distinctly different kinds of "advanced" music of the more "notable" middleaged generation and of the (then) younger (now advanced middleaged) generation were tirelessly and staunchly championed. A revolution seemed to be in the making and Ben took full advantage of his *NATION* forum to promulgate such proceedings.

In *The NATION*—as every&elsewhere in Ben's work—music and musical issues are never regarded as ephemera: it and they are alive; individual and uniquely identifying attributes are sought out, as are those memorable moments of flat out revelation. In all instances, the critical

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* Nowadays, a politically motivated—even more judgmental and chilling—fundamentalist climate, adversely affecting artistic and intellectual expression, has replaced erstwhile Cold War ideologies.

discourse engages and is focussed on music as heard, as composed, as performed, as culture, as thought, as work, as life—to be cherished and taken seriously. Readers of his columns are addressed and appealed to as real persons. And as I read through these texts again, now, a revitalized re-acquaintance with much music I'd put aside for a time is enabled, an era is re-created (recalling as well that so much music we now take for granted had then still not been performed); the relevancy and substantiality of those musical, intellectual, political, and social perceptions persist.

A record review, however short, is an opportunity to think—and rethink—about how a particular work reflected X's life in music, or about what it is that composers do, or how some musicians really do (or do not) make music live. "Nutshell" reviews did appear in Records of the Year columns, such as: "A definitive representation of the decidedly ephemeral qualities of the last of the drawing-room composers, containing all the Poulenc any record collection will ever need." And although cutting remarks occasionally cropped up, Ben wasn't quintessentially interested in titillating his readers by nastily abusing the subjects of his inquiry; nor was entertainment a focus. The fused style-substance writing—alternately compact, lucid, incisive, dense, poetic, compassionate, witty, penetrating—challenged and confronted readers with its purposefulness.

My fuller understanding of, for instance, Strauss's *Salome* was facilitated by insights, such as how characters listen to one another and how some are 'realer' than others; how on- and off-stage 'real life' or 'noise' music effect time and action; continuities over time-flow; event-synchronism vs. event-disjunction (or, as in his Beethoven-*Fidelio* text, how musics of 'internal' reality are juxtaposed against stage 'reality' and also, so crucial to this maverick *Singspiel,* how speech transforms into singing); how Strauss's social and artistic prejudices were blatantly corroborated by what he chose to excise from Wilde's playtext; my sheer delight in his deliciously demi-erotic and riotous characterization of Salome's "Dance of Seven Veils"; and substantively characterized distinctions between inherent compositional radicalism and artfully manipulative sensationalism—also lengthily discussed in the text on Liszt—whose immoderateness obscures our perception of his own uniquely invented mode of "radical continuity", that interdependently 'self-referential', micro(basic)cellular-macroshaped "free form", the symphonic tonepoem, and further, aside from their sheer virtuosic flashiness, within whose 'resource-extending' piano transcriptions lurked fabulous compositional gems (thereby not only reconstituting a sense of Liszt for me but also giving expression to my covert fondness for neo-Lisztian Liberace); and in his text on Britten, whose "artful . . . sophisticated . . . genuinely clever consummate professionalism . . . manipulative genius [and] originality" are superabundantly manifest in his *War Requiem,* a work to which Ben deftly applies a finely honed scalpel, cutting into the so profoundly serious texts, message, and title even; the motivic connections, "structural events", and illusions of unity; and the "borrowing" of "direct allusions" to both old and new Requiem and War literature. Ben's scalpel cut deep but respectfully; not to divest but to uncover, leaving Britten and his Requiem intact albeit not unscathed: the attention-getting masterpiece-genre sensationalism of the work in fact ensures its survival and mass appeal. And in the end Britten's flair for theatricalism gets its due.

Insights of global and future relevance emanated from many specifically focussed studies,*

*(rare enough in the music criticism literature, yet even more astonishing when one recalls that Ben was in his late twenties at the onset of his *NATION* association)

as in the homage to Hindemith, where questions are raised concerning the various ways in which composers hear other(s') music, and how it came to be that Hindemith's particular fixity of hearing at a "more reproductive stage" (than either Schoenberg's or Stravinsky's) resulted in that sameness of identification in so much of his post-1930s music (perceptions also applicable to today's essentially adventitious Post-Modernism). Ben's probe of the relationship between theory/system/rules and practice yields assertions sure to (once again) startle and raise bristles: imagine considering Schoenberg's system far more liberated than Hindemith's (but hardly startling once the depths—or the shallownesses—of each system are plumbed)! And although "whims of fashion" may have been responsible for the remoteness of Hindemith's *persona* during the last decade of his life compared with his ubiquitous and forceful "impact on Amercian musical life" during the 1940s & 1950s, Ben opines that more likely it was the 'potentially destructive fallacy' of equating "expertise, technical mastery, . . . and prodigious facility in every practical aspect of music" with "superior compositional attainment"—an utterly weird cause&effect misconstrual, linking notions of 'musicianship' and creativity, that not only lingers on—way after Hindemith—but seems to have metastasized, banefully infecting music education to the detriment of our students and their & our souls and music. But what gets me most about this unsentimentalized tribute is how, with no punches pulled, an empathic compassionate text recalled (and recalls) the efforts of a dedicated serious musician, one whose time seems to have come again with recent *Wergo* releases. In fact, I unhesitatingly recommend the purchase of all those unrevised, sensational theater and text-based works of the late 19teens to late 1920s—The Early Hindemith—, maybe not wayward but certainly flaunting "audacious 'modernism'".

Possessed with an uncanny capacity for ferreting out what was so often overlooked or bypassed, and by peculiarly skewing his angles conjoined with an even fiercer determination and ever-flourishing ability to speak to his readers *as if* they/we were hearing all about it for the first time, Ben truly made 'news' out of the familiar. For with each freshly tilted angle, that public voice, specific to and focussed on its 'subject', spoke of music as news. Thus, his writings on performers and their performances of the older classics were as illuminating as were those essays of the New Music: *music* was a hot issue. His review of Otto Klemperer's Philharmonia Orchestra performance of Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* totally fuses "the musical experience of composer, performer, listener"*; his account of just how it is Klemperer realizes and enables us to hear Bach's ingenious "instrumental . . . articulative, and textural . . . differentation and similitude" and dynamic-levellings balancing act sharply deviates from the usual concerto-historical, authentic instrument, and performance-practice concerns: his ebullient report of Klemperer's attentiveness to balancing all that can be heard is itself an authentic account of performance practice. And in a way that I haven't yet quite figured out, this text switched and turned my ears on directly to Bach, as if no intermediaries were between us, as if no other voices were *telling* me what sort of musical experience I ought to be having.

And if Klemperer—whose performances satisfied a host of criteria for the significant practice of performance—revealed Music to his listeners, other conductors managed to obscure. The *Brandenburg* performances by von Karajan, Harnoncourt, and Casals are perceived more as weird misinterpreted compositions 'in the style of Bach' than as performance of the music of

* (here I quote the Sessions-Imbrie book title)

Bach—paralleling the practice of major commercial recording companies to feature glossy, PR-starlike pretty boy&girl photos of performers on discjackets, composers relegated to smaller typeface or no face at all. Such recompositional performance-practice further exemplifies the foibles, weakness, or ego-tripping inherent in having a preconceived notion of how "music" is to go, and then perfunctorily adapting a performance to such a notion. Or re-creations in which, as with an older generation of supervirtuosos, most of whose efforts pushed the "realization of an ideal instrumental sound", the medium truly became the message.

Further instances of his distinctive brand of insightfulness include unexpected discoveries of "advancement" in the early symphonies of Dvorak; a characterization of the compositional shortcomings and consequent performance difficulties of Schubert's 'Great' Ninth Symphony; the image underlying all the movements of Mendelssohn's 'Italian' Symphony; the unflinching assertion of the rugged monodimensionality of Ruggles's music, a music whose structural simplicity had always disarmed me, and which, at one time, I endeavored to 'get at', yet always came out just where I'd gone in. Ideas concerning Schoenberg's compositional capacities as heard through his Brahms-quintet orchestration or how to be clued into later Schoenberg by listening to his Op. 8 songs were part of a text that subtextually engages modes of "*hearing*" the music of one's own tradition. A distaste for the gratuitous making of "very important pieces", that self-aggrandizing *drang nach* 'masterpiece-composition'—more explicitly written about recently—undercoats many of his texts. Conversely, many texts are infused with a respect and appreciation for the care and concern of a diverse array of American composers to extend the possibilities of what music can be, such as the independent 'Americanist' attitude implicitly informing the music of both Babbitt and Carter. There's little doubt that many of his perceptions extended the listening capabilities and possibilities of his readers, as in his linkage of Babbitt with Varèse, by way of the latter's 'spatial articulative discoveries', or of Carter's *Double Concerto* to the super-virtuoso-sounding electronically synthesized music of the early 1960s. And this late 1950s-60s music of Babbitt and Carter—whose differences far outweighed their similarities—was to inspire multitudinous eruptions, nationwide, of truly dedicated virtuosos, young musicians drawn to and wanting to participate in the life of this difficult American New Music—Ben reassuring his readers that, contrary to rumors spread by other music critics of the "unperformability" of this music, ample opportunities were to be had to hear it with one's own ears—and even see it being played live.

On the other side—despite Ben's own involvement in and support of interactive, real-time collaborative endeavors during the past fifteen years—his negative assessment of most 1960s "free improvisation" and "indeterminacy" derived from his perceptions as a listener—and composer—strongly rooted in "traditionally structured music", a listener-composer whose primary experience and preoccupation with much of the 1960s music of Cage and Feldman were precisely what devotees of the music espoused, namely, "waiting for something to happen". And while the devotees grooved, others waited. The 'eventless' characteristics of the music, its frequently beautiful sounds in time-stretched and "perpetually undifferentiated" environments, and its obvious lure and attractiveness to a considerable number of young composers worldwide are almost (but not quite) disinterestedly reported on. Not so explicitly expressed is a perception of its underlying oppressiveness and coerciveness, as in 'play whatever you want so long as my name appears on the program (and I get the royalties)'. That Cage became the guru of the avant-garde of Europe and Japan was no surprise, given the charm of his peculiarly American snake-oil medicine-man pedlar's pitch. Nonetheless, with Cage as with other composers

whose music Ben took seriously, and whose substance (or lack thereof) he seriously questioned, an optimism prevailed, sheer exuberance that so much diversity existed simultaneously.

Even to a casual reader, an animated thumbflip through these texts would reveal the extent to which Stravinsky loomed in all our lives during the 1950s-1970s. Stravinsky-resonances abound, not only in the several texts about his work, but in texts about Bartók, Hindemith, Carter, Schoenberg, Babbitt, Tchaikowsky, Ruggles, Berg, Janacek, Liszt, Britten, and Dvorak. (Schoenberg loomed as well but neither to the same extent nor as resiliently (nor was it a Schoenberg doodle that Ben chose to adorn the cover of *Perspectives*); you could say 'bad' things about Stravinsky and the image would rebound untarnished; not so with Schoenberg.) As if thinking about Stravinsky inspired Ben to conceive of music in ways previously unenvisaged and then to write of it lyrically and buoyantly as in his review of Stravinsky's 'realization' of Bach's "Von Himmel hoch" chorale variations: " . . . that luminous intricate filigree whose bass resonance coats the entire sonority without overflowing it, leaving space for all the crystalline lines to interlace. . .". Inspiring to emerge from out of Ben's head cherishable ideas of Stravinsky, most notably in a text which concurrently celebrates the old man's 80th birthday and the composition of his newest work, *The Flood,* fortuitously providing an occasion for a mini-retrospective (Stravinsky: perpetual inventor; gourmandish consumer producing gourmet music; beneath whose ostensibly or deceptively simple surfaces lay profound and compositionally rigorous ideas about phrasing, transition, reprise, and, above all, strikingly original 'sound'). The absence of an overt neo-Stravinskyan 'school' in the 1960s is lucidly accounted for by the already truly profound depth of Stravinsky's influence, penetrating to the core of our musical experience since he taught us how to listen to others and then speak—not of or about—in our own uniquely identifiable voice.*

Anti-establishment attitudes showed up as early as October 1962, in a text deploring the obviously myopic and regressive planning and policy of the then-new Lincoln Center. Ben's intrinsic distrust of "foundationism", alluded to earlier, erupted full blown in 1965, his voice earnestly and rationally despairing of the inane conduct of the major foundations who (in a familiar and characteristic American way) preferred to reward the already successful, those who had shown themselves capable of measuring up to "high professional criteria", and ignore those younger, fledgling groups struggling for survival. Or, if not ignore, then create circumstances which would eventually ensure their demise, since benevolence in one quarter produces a competitive "market" where, as is also customary in a capitalist economy, smaller outfits ultimately go under. Lincoln Center itself, whose history is detective-storylike revealed to us, was designed and built with no real input from any living composer, with no "fundamental rethinking of either the role or technique of '20th-century companies' functioning in a 20th-century artistic world", *status quo* reaching monumentally obese proportions. The glitzy leisure-class fashion image of Lincoln Center, its imposing facades, glittering chandeliers, and now-functioning fountains do fulfill—and gorgeously—a *mise-en-scène* starring role in the films

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* Do also read Ben's memorial tribute to Stravinsky, "In Quest of the Rhythmic Genius" (which elucidates of what rhythm and rhythmic invention consist) in *Perspectives of New Music,* 1971, double issue, pp. 149ff; and "Fantasia: A Lecture" in the March 1986 issue of *News of Music,* a publication whose genesis—the year that Ben resigned as editor of *Perspectives*—is also part of Ben's community-forming history (and our own as well). Nor was it serendipitous that the *Contemporary Music Newsletter* began its ten-year life in 1967, while Ben was teaching at NYU, the year before he ended his association with *The NATION.*

"Moonstruck" and "The Turning Point". These days many new Performing Arts Centers are adjacent to shopping malls, reifying product-oriented mercantile instincts and reassuring a skeptical public that everything worth 'buying' is *really* easy, when, in fact, so much is really difficult, and takes time and work for both listeners and executants. Concomitantly, then as now, the living American 'hard-listening' composer went both unnoticed by "big money" and untolerated by professional orchestral musicians—whose own *status quo* anti-intellectualism and territorial "professionalism" also aroused Ben, the only voice to publicly express dismay and outrage at such blatant indifference and irresponsibility, emanating both from within and without a presumedly concerned community. That he was put on a number of shitlists should, by now, surprise no one.

The realm of discourse into which we are drawn was then—and is still—rarely encountered in the dailies. Motivated by a strenuous insistence on the seriousness of musical thought and a refusal (or a preternatural inability) to dilute or conform for the sake of an at best insincere appeasement, its coloration became even more intense in time. The overtly paradoxical mix of realism-idealism has in fact impelled and compelled him. One of his last columns combatively engages the ignorance and mindlessness of most "journalistic music criticism"; and the difficulties and hindrances which he lamented then persist: even with superficially extended coverage of new music events not much has changed, as music journalists still look for easy ways out, still lump "schools" and "camps" and "isms", still crank out columns in which the reader is told little about the music, still rely on their clichéd cache of suitable and unsuitable adjectives—in lieu of serious discourse—to fill those columns. Unswerving sincerity and the direct confrontation of one's reality—issues addressed with sympathy and reason in Ben's text on the "universal critical vilification" accorded the premiere of Bernstein's *Kaddish*—are neither appreciated nor considered fit to print by those upholders of institutional or corporate mentality.

All creative work that expresses dissatisfaction with or aims to disturb the *status quo,* that supports alternative or counter-culture, or that is manifestly unconcerned with complaisancy or respectability runs the risk of being 'unheard and unheeded'—or becoming 'popular' or 'relevant' or 'trendy' (however, given today's intellectually repressive climate there hardly seems cause for alarm)—or, a far more realistic and no-risk prediction, eventually finding its own appropriate and sympathetic audience, one which will know how to benefit from such work. Ben's *NATION* writings are so informative, accessible, prescient, timely, instructive, and unformidable (unless one does not wish to confront rational discourse in any shape or form), so much so, that in some ways I regret not having been able to insist on their availability sooner; on the other hand, if "to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose", we are right on schedule now.

Once the whether-or-not-to-print obstacle was overcome, the questions what to include, what to exclude, whether or in what sense to revise, and how to make available preoccupied me—with Ben in apposition, opposition, and invariably contrapuntal dialogue—intermittently for well over a decade. Ultimately 51 (out of 85) texts survived the debates, but, since the revival of blatant misjudgments or gross or hurtful thoughtlessness does no one any good, alterations were made to many of them. Some have been cut—not, I believe, to the bone, but to the meat; attitudes, concerns, and opinions have been left, to the best of my ability to judge, intact and un-updated, perhaps now better focussed and a bit more refined. Here and there a lick of the 80s

trickles in (then, ". . . the sense in which music is really 'twelve-tone'" and now, ". . . holistically 'twelve-tone'"); some clearer senses of what a colleague's music was *really* about are also subtly infused. Mostly, readers now benefit from the removal of 'deadline'-fever-induced obscurities, crudities, prolixities, and generic placeholding substitutes for precise saying; in fact, just how *little* had to be altered, and the senses in which alterations were made, are far more newsworthy than how much. A simple change from "since" to "when" confers a sense absent in the 2.26.68 original: "And since [now read "when"] works are so regarded, they are described only in terms of their. . . 'typical' characteristics" or (in the same text): "in terms of its unique realization of particular musical ideas," altered to "in terms of what it is as a unique realization of particular musical ideas." The real bite of the alteration strategy is manifest in the two comparisons below, the first from the opening of his 2.3.62 Cage et alia text and the second from the close of his 5.22.67 review of Menuhin's performance of Klemperer's-Beethoven's Violin Concerto:

> There is undeniable charm in the way Cage and his followers casually reverse every fundamental notion about the nature of music, by means of which they claim to have cut cleanly through all musical problems and to have liberated pure expression. Skillful propaganda has gained them a position of influence in the musical world. Young composers forsake the humdrum of academic rigor and come to New York to participate in the explorations and exploits of the master.

The altered text:

> There is irresistible charm in the way Cage and his associates casually . . . with the aim of cutting cleanly through complex musical problems, and thereby liberating pure expression. As a result, they have begun to exert considerable influence within the musical world; young composers in significant numbers forsake the oppressive humdrum of academic musical rigor . . . and exploits taking place in Cage's orbit.

And:

> Menuhin, too, is evidently still possessed of unusual violinistic capacities, and is capable also of a genuine conceptual collaboration in the projection of this rather special idea of the Concerto; the total *legato* achieved in the unfolding of the slow movement is perhaps the most remarkable result of its realization.

The altered text:

> Menuhin, too, is still possessed of unusual interpretive capacities, such that he is quite capable of a genuine conceptual collaboration in the realization of this rather special image of the concerto; the total *legato* produced throughout the unfolding of the slow movement is the transcendent devolution point of the performance.

Anyone out there curious enough about the excluded texts can find them, most likely Xerox-resistantly yellowing away, in the periodicals section of their nearest large library.

Although concerns, commitments, and occasions may have changed over the years, what endures are Ben's predilections, penchants, and propensities for the hard stuff, for agitating the murky miry stagnant ooze we so often find ourselves in, in order to confront, define, and compose—and then, as both an obligation and a privilege, let us in on—his inner and outer worlds of reality—some of which have been our own.

Elaine Barkin

Los Angeles, July 1990/September 1990/February 1991

PROVOCATIVE...

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...medium (small mixed
...seven instruments) and the
There is considerable sonorous
rhythmic ingenuity in both ...
...oral and instrumental

RECORDS

It will go to BENJAMIN Boretz

SCHOENBERG: The Music of Arnold Schoenberg, Volume 5: Six Son... soprano and orchestra. Columbia Symph... dan, soprano. Columbia Symph... chestra. Suite for String Orchestr... Columbia Symphony Strings. Piano Quintet in G minor by Schoenberg. The C... Orchestra. Friede... Ithaca College C... ducted by Robe... 352/M2S 752

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MUSIC/ Benjamin Boretz

Music journalism survives through the continuous propagation of compositional "movements," endlessly contending in mutual exclusion and hostility for some ultimate "supremacy," the achievement of which creates, for a brief Hegelian moment, a new Establishment that is, in its turn, opposed and overthrown. In this, our journalists are the victims of their own dedication to hyperbole and generality; for they are left unable ... describe a musical work except a... type, a pawn in an ideological co... whose "outcome" is the only evide... stantive issue. And since works ... regarded, they are descri... terms of their most imme... characteristics, whose significance appar-ently lies only in their contrast with some other, contending "school." Perhaps this tendency results also from the consider-ably greater ease of describing a com... ...that it is not th... realization

CONTROVERSIAL...

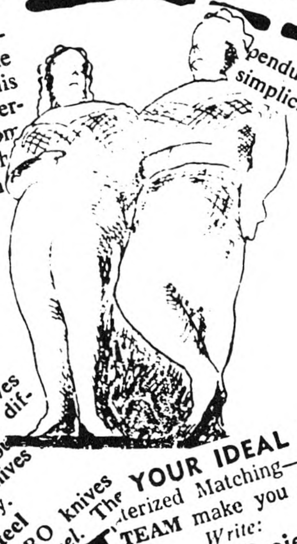
Through a dark drizzle of rain,
Plodding to work on
mountain-heavy shoes,
one hears
"lines" and instruments for long stretches.

A

enthusiastically proclaimed, by George Marek of RCA, as a major revolution in recording technique, and even more enthusiastically denounced, by God-

THAT'S NEWS

...pendulation between primitive homespun simplicity and ... his uncritical ... chaos



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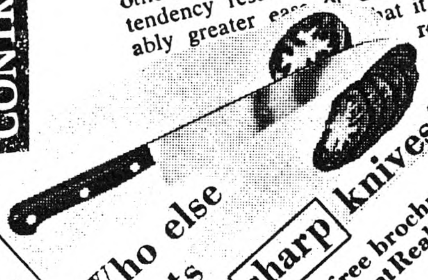

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"RUBY GOLDWATER" automobile stickers. ... will project them unmistakably

CONTENTS

1.13.62

RECORDS: ALBAN BERG

ALBAN BERG: *Lulu* Suite; Three movements from the *Lyric Suite;* Chamber Concerto. Israel Baker, violin, Pearl Kaufman, piano; Seven Early Songs; Concert Aria: *Der Wein.* Bethany Beardslee. On Columbia MS 6216. Altenberg Songs, Op. 4, Bethany Beardslee. On Columbia ML5428. All with Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Robert Craft, cond.

THE MUSIC of *Der Wein* renders the poetic image of drunkenness by permeating every detail and dimension with imbalances and asymmetries. The mask of representational artifice conceals a pathetic artistic confession: *Der Wein,* like a parable of Berg's own music-spiritual struggle, harbors a fundamental imbalance, a corrosive asymmetry between feeling and form.

Ambiguity and paradox followed Berg so closely that he seems to have possessed a personal Trojan horse, a lifelong enemy within. In the Schoenberg circle, he was the truly sophisticated intellectual; yet his music appears the least disciplined, the most emotively self-indulgent. He was, personally, aristocratic and sensitive; his two operas, *Wozzeck* and *Lulu,* have morbid, almost brutal, Expressionist texts.

A historical irony is particularly striking: thirty-five years ago, when Schoenberg and Webern were still considered so 'modern' as to be virtually insane, *Wozzeck* had already secured for Berg a high standing among contemporary composers. But twenty-five years after his death (which had its own ironies) he remains the most enigmatic of his peers; having been among the first of his generation to be celebrated, he may finally be the last to be understood.

These recordings by Robert Craft of a substantial swatch of Berg's music bear vivid testimony to the fragmentation of his creative personality. On the constructional level, he is obviously among the deeply original musical inventors. But the texts of his musical expression seem to be chaos and hopelessness, the despair of a disillusioned would-be communicant at the altar of Wagner and the Romantic vision of artistic transcendence. All his exquisite dexterity and refinement—Stravinsky calls him "the most gifted constructor in form of the composers of our time"—seem thus unnaturally deviated, dissonating Style against Idea.

Symptoms of such unresolved tensions appear even in the very early Seven Early Songs. *Sommertag,* confident, tightly made, and urgent, ends alarmingly with a tacked-on, oversimple tonal cliche. Compositional immaturity might, of course, account adequately for such self-destruction, were it not for the unmistakable redolence of nostalgic bewilderment projected earlier, at an earlier climax, poised atop the famous chord from Wagner's *Tristan,* and led into by a quotation from Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder.*

Incongruities such as these become far more distressing when they penetrate the work of a mature artist; the depth of Berg's mal de siecle may be gauged by the increasing prominence which such aberrances assume in his later compositions. In *Der Wein,* aesthetic expression seems confounded with literal experience—a confusion also embedded in the premises of pornography; and this project is addressed through a context steeped in such transcendently esoteric obliquities as the paradoxical derivation of tonal harmonies from a twelve-tone syntactical base. And in the *Lyric Suite,* a persistent redolence of enigmatic, suppressed subtext, expressed in the recurrent intervention of inexplicable *misterioso* and *appassionata* passages, is supposed to have its meaning finally revealed when in the last movement Berg conjures from his twelve-tone row the entire opening phrase of *Tristan.*

Among these recorded works, the Chamber Concerto is perhaps the most poignantly self-denying. In constructive beauty, it may be unsurpassed by any music of its time. Flashes of inspired invention illuminate it: a Mozartian incision and depth of rhythmic design, flickering recurrences of the opening fragments, vivid dramaturgical characterizations of violin, piano, and ensemble, and innumerable revelations of unsuspected relational possibilities among materials and passages. Only some pathological *Angst,* some artistic deathwish, could have goaded Berg into a compulsive reliance, in this same music, on a Faustian baggage of mystical-intellectual abstractions: numerological secrets (everything is based on the number three in a way that is as mathematically vacuous as it is musically inscrutable), musical anagrams on the pitch-letter equivalents of names, his own,

Schoenberg's, and Webern's, and, to seal within the music the dedication, literal quotations from Schoenberg's First Chamber Symphony, with no discernible internal relevance to the surrounding music. Stravinsky might have been thinking of this concerto when he lamented Berg's music as "an old woman about whom one says, 'How beautiful she must have been when she was young!'"

And most of Berg's most lucidly, integrally beautiful music was, in my perception, composed before he was thirty: perhaps another paradox. The Altenberg Songs, Opus 4, five miniature dramas of genuine intensity, whose gestures, in the small-scaled context, are nevertheless operatic in breadth, grotesquely overwhelming the tiny boxes containing them. Familiar signatures of Berg's theater, great swelling crescendos, offstage noises, word-painting gestures, are somehow relevantly employed. At the opening of the cycle, an orchestral preface builds to an enormous sonority from nothingness, moving like a giant kaleidoscopic wheel slowly revolving, its juxtaposed images recurring perpetually but never recoinciding, cut away to expose the beautiful humming entrance of the voice, wordless, echoed long after by eternally long-held woodwind hummings, sustained against indistinct subterranean mutterings, as the song's end.

The Three Pieces for Orchestra Opus 6 seem to find for once a perfect form for Berg's apocalyptic vision. Here *Angst* seems the dramatic protagonist, a composed image rather than a compositionally paralyzing obsession. And what the drama consists of is the awesome final convulsion of an entire musical universe, a terrifying *Götterdämmerung* for a composer desperate for the significance to which music had attained, no longer retrievable from its canonical forms. Although stylistically these pieces might be orchestral interludes from *Wozzeck,* their purely musical drama has a deeper dramatic reality than the textualized theater of the opera. *Marsch,* the last piece, is the apothetic Berg crescendo, sound arising from within sound, rather than sound affectively applied to corporealize an artificial situation, as in the celebrated *Wozzeck* B-crescendo. Here, the sudden ending in quiet is a stunning experiential verity: there seems no return from this silence.

Nothing in Robert Craft's previous recordings—of Schoenberg and Webern—had prepared me for the depth of these Berg performances. Except for the *Lyric Suite,* which to date not even a string quartet has mastered, and the *Lulu* Suite, whose muddiness may be in Berg's score, the clarity and shape of the playing is exemplary. Especially in the Three Pieces, which I have always thought were unperformable, Craft not only manages to get all the details into the proper places, but also balances the great orchestral blocks, controls time with sure dramatic sense, and achieves the improbable miracle of a lucid and truly expressive interpretation. The Chamber Concerto, too, has not been better recorded; pacing and phrasing are virile and meaningful. But neither of the soloists, Baker or Kaufman, has quite the requisite instrumental mastery for this score.

Bethany Beardslee sings the Altenberg Songs, *Der Wein,* and the early songs with a manifestly impossible perfection—which is precisely what one has come to expect and demand of her. To hear her float serenely along a hair-raising vocal line, utterly located on course amid textures of any degree of complication and density, is reason enough to rush to the nearest record dealer.

2.3.62

MUSIC UNBOUND: JOHN CAGE AND OTHERS

RESTLESS listeners and musicians who long for a magic formula to break the bonds of musical convention find in John Cage's *avant-garde* conceptions the promise of an alluring freedom. There is irresistible charm in the way Cage and his associates casually reverse every fundamental notion about the nature of music, with the aim of cutting cleanly through complex musical problems, and thereby liberating pure expression. As a result, they have begun to exert considerable influence within the musical world; young composers in significant numbers forsake the oppressive humdrum of academic musical rigor and come to New York to participate in the explorations and exploits taking place in Cage's orbit. Artists from outside music, especially painters of the New York school including Philip Guston and Robert Rauschenberg, find in Cage's ideas an almost unprecedented affinity between music and visual art. Even the European *avant-garde* composers, normally contemptuous of American musical phenomena, respond to Cage's attraction: Karlheinz Stockhausen, the leader of the Darmstadt composers, recognizes Cage as the most potent force in today's "experimental" music.

Publicly, the Cage composers have earned their reputation for outrageous originality by a display of spectacularly iconoclastic theatrics: performances consisting of a piano unplayed, a piano burned, a piano emitting unfamiliar sounds elicited by abrasion on normally undisturbed parts, or moved about a stage along with other assorted furniture, people doing highly unconcert-like acts unconnected with evident music-making purposes—along with experimental practices of entirely sonic character. What these represent, according to Cage's philosophical writings, is a profound displacement of the traditional notion of music as a structural art, toward a condition in which it will "resemble daily experience" so as to "dissolve the difference between art and life". Such music is also "hospitable to non-musical sound, noises." Thus, in addition to a strong attraction to the use of the normal-musical "noise" instruments (those of indeterminate pitch, such as drums or gongs), it also explores the use of realistic sounds from "daily experience".

The practices of composition and performance developed around Cage's conceptions are equally extreme. Compositionally controlled structure and form are clearly unusable by music that would be completely free. The idea of "aleatory", music whose composition and performance are controlled by the operations of chance, is the Cagean alternative. In his *Music for Piano,* for example, the sounds to be performed are determined by the "imperfections on the paper on which the music was written." Other pieces are created by rolling dice and translating the resultant number sequence into musical notation by way of a purposely arbitrary correlation process. Since no sound can be predicted from the characteristics of its predecessors, events will be perceived as even more random than the experiences of daily life.

Even a random sound sequence, of course, becomes totally predictable once heard; hence indeterminacy of performance is entailed. The composer's notation is a set of ground rules, to be used as a basis for more or less free improvisation. Musical notation is itself replaced by graphic images invented compositionally: Morton Feldman, an originary composer of this group, has written scores which indicate by dots that, at any given juncture, a high, middle, or low sound is to be played. The *Duo II for Pianists* by Christian Wolff, another originary, is indeterminate not only in pitch, dynamics, and rhythm, but also in performance length.

But the sonic output of these devices of perpetual variety is not, mostly, anything like an experience of constant stimulus and renewal. Despite Cage's intense verbal imagery—". . . urgent, unique, uninformed about history and theory, beyond the imagination, central to a sphere without surface, [a sound's] becoming is unimpeded, energetically broadcast. . ."—the psychoacoustic problems raised by these practices are formidable. In a texture of total differentiation, the perceiving mind-connected ear finds no reference point for the inference of similitude. Even when the literally same sounds recur, they won't remind us of themselves because the absence of context obliterates the resonant trace of their first occurrence. With no similitude, there is no basis for differentiation;

and thus total differentiation in a sounding text is to all cognitive purposes identical with total uniformity.

In practice, some recent experiences bear on these speculations: a recital given by the adventurous violinist Matthew Raimondi at the New School on January 12 included the first performance of Feldman's *Durations 4* (1961) for violin, cello, and vibraphone. For fifteen minutes or so, soft strikings on the vibraphone and pluckings of strings produced a series of widely spaced quiet sonorities. The sounds themselves were often sonically beautiful, but they were beautiful in an essentially generic way, more or less what playing quiet sounds together randomly on those instruments would be likely to produce. And the experience after the first few minutes began to be increasingly uncomfortable. For unlike traditionally structured music, intensifying the experience of time by the kinesis of a stream of eventful actions given urgency by the tension of formal issues, this music stretches time out beyond everyday experience, by circumventing any sense of grouping or demarcation, and thus never accumulating the sense of time in passage materializing. The sensation in *Durations 4* is like waiting between trains in an empty station with nothing to do. As time passes, each moment becomes heavier; an anxious waiting for something to happen. At the end is the realization, when *Durations 4* stops, that the train is never going to arrive.

The recorded Cage *Aria with Fontana Mix* combines two independent scores. The *Aria* is notated by wavy colored lines on a page, accompanied by non-sense-making words. The singer is instructed to pay attention to the score, or not. The *Fontana Mix* is an all-purpose combination of noises. On the recording, the result is like the sound track in an Italian movie where a woman swings down the street humming fragments from opera, jazz, Gregorian chant, and Neapolitan folk tunes against the highly amplified street noises around her. Striking qualities of sound and image happen, with the unfocussed titillation of stray coincidence; but after the point where it seems that *anything* can happen the actual events that do become a matter of indifference. A net sense of grey hazy uniformity is the ultimate residue.

The future of these practices can possibly be envisaged from their past. Cage considers that he represents the tradition of "experimental" music, but his idea of "experimental" is not what the term has meant in music for the last thirty years. Heinz-Klaus Metzger, a conspicuous European participant in the Cage enterprise, defines as experimental "music which by its own terms of reference is an experimental arrangement, and can therefore not foresee the results that will work out in performance." From this angle, the Cage practitioners align themselves with the tradition represented by Edgard Varèse, who also introduced "noise" elements into his music. But Varèse's idea, and that of his kindred spirits Stefan Wolpe and Ralph Shapey, is to subject such sounds to a process of dissociation from their extramusical sources, to effect a transformation into music of highly recalcitrant elements. Cage's intentions are just the opposite: where Varèse turns noise into music, Cage turns music into, literally, noise.

For the real tradition of the Cage practice, one must look to another twentieth-century tendency, that of radical music, whose overt rationale is to be blatantly different and self-fulfillingly anti-traditional. Ever since the Italian Futurists, back in 1910, this tendency has evinced a progressive deflation. Its successive stances are definitionally ephemeral; the ways to be merely different exhaust themselves quickly. Committed by its nature against growing organically, this kind of activity advances by progressively cannibalizing its own resources. The enthusiastic Futurist manifestoes proclaimed an "Art of Noises", introducing the sounds of "the masses, of industrial shipyards, of railroads, of steamships, . . ." Stravinsky remembers a demonstration of Futurist music: "Five phonographs standing on five tables in a large and otherwise empty room emitted digestive noises, static, etc." Both verbally and musically, the kinship with the new American radicals seems obvious. But further: by embracing chance procedures, the Cage composers are acting out the terminal disintegration of "radical" music. In guaranteeing the imputation of perpetual differentiation, they forfeit artistic identity and personal location, redefine composition as a kind of page-turning, and reduce the idea of creative freedom to an essential absurdity.

John Cage: *Aria* with *Fontana Mix*. Cathy Berberian, soprano. On Time S/8000.

Silence (a collection of essays and lectures). Wesleyan University Press, 1961.

Morton Feldman: Works on Columbia ML 5403.

2.17.62

"ADVANCED" MUSIC IN AMERICA: SOME ISSUES, SOME COMPOSERS

WHEN Elliott Carter wrote recently of the composer's need to find "new forms for the new materials" of twentieth-century music, he designated the principal common focus of a group of American composers who may be considered the substantive *avant-garde* of this time. In Carter's own music the rethinking of fundamental processes of rhythmic and linear connections results in a new kind of musical continuity, built up from novel, complex textures that juxtapose highly differentiated ideas. Although Carter's music and thought are strongly influential, the group as a whole cannot be defined in terms of any one composer or any one stylistic predilection. In fact, the identity of this group as a group is precisely in the strenuous individuality with which each of its "members" approaches the basic problem of perception and expression.

That the compositional vanguard is primarily American is perhaps a direct result of the wartime emigration from Europe of the major carriers of the culture of twentieth-century composition. Although Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Bartók, Krenek, Milhaud, and Hindemith were never "American" composers, they established, simply by living and working here, a creative-compositional standard against which American new music could no longer be viable merely by virtue of its overt or implicit "Americanness". American music has been forced to hear and evaluate itself in the environment of the most powerfully original and organically realized music of its time.

By the same token, Europe's postwar music-cultural deprivation has been considerable. Not only did the war break the continuity of its tradition, but the removal of the composers in whom the tradition was most vividly personified left an unfillable void, just in the generation most formatively critical for the development of younger composers. The present European *avant-garde* appears to exhibit significant symptoms of a consequent rootlessness, as it seems—in a paradoxically regressive disregard of some of the more sophisticated contemporary insights into the deeper nature of musical tradition in the context of original compositional creativity—to have adopted a rigidly doctrinal disillusioned anti-traditional posture, in some strange way reminiscent of the defensive postures of much American music before the war (although Americans always tend to naive optimism in contexts where Europeans are more likely to wallow in dismissive cynicism). Thus, to American practitioners of "advanced" music, it does not seem that the "post-Webern" music emerging in the environment centered on Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen really represents the significant contemporary line of development of the twelve-tone structural and aesthetic concepts that originated with Schoenberg and his Viennese colleagues. For these Americans, that significant continuation is far more meaningfully to be discerned in the work of a group of American composers which has formed around the composition, music-intellectual concepts, and theoretical formulations of Milton Babbitt.

But some of the most significant departures from tradition taken by Carter, Babbitt, and others of the intellectual *avant-garde* derive not from the pre-eminent European models but from the examples of strong, individualistic American predecessors, particularly Roger Sessions, Charles Ives, and Aaron Copland, who, in their strenuous insistence on maintaining a rigorous self-determination and autonomy in their personal creative outlooks, provided their contemporaries and their younger colleagues with an "outside" point of departure which armed the next generation with an alternative to submersion within the powerful orbit of the European masters. Elliott Carter's remark voices the importance of this independence in maintaining the growth and vitality of the tradition itself, which our composers appear now to have, in this perspective, inherited.

The "new materials" Carter refers to, the fresh contemporary resonances of rhythm, harmony, and texture, were cast up originally in the great artistic ferment following upon the evident collapse of the viability of classical assumptions, early in the twentieth century. At the time of this initial "revolution", these new resonances emerged in a chaotic state to which the accepted modes of musical ordering seemed inap-

plicable. To many composers, then as now, the confusion invited a "freedom" that was, in effect, anarchic. But to the deepest creative minds, the necessity for structure—the work to be done to give the new materials coherence, and thus to give creative "freedom" a meaningful specificity, a determinate, intelligible voice—was the strongest motive for undertaking the duress of new-music composition. Schoenberg insisted that he hated to be called a revolutionary, that he had "possessed from the first a thoroughly developed sense of form and a strong aversion to exaggeration. . . . There was never disorder. . . but on the contrary, there is an ascending to higher and better order." Stravinsky, too, felt that he had been "made a revolutionary in spite of" himself, and also maintained that limitations must be imposed on musical materials in order to avoid the "abyss of freedom".

The approach these composers took to the new materials was to subsume them into traditionalist, neo-classic frameworks. Thus Schoenberg, though he had devised in the twelve-tone system the most powerful of the new modes of structuring, formed his early twelve-tone works according to traditional symphonic or neo-Baroque procedures. It was only in his last years that he began to explore, in works like the String Trio and violin-piano Phantasy, ideas of form derived from the twelve-tone principles themselves. Similarly, Stravinsky used a succession of historical styles as springboards for his prodigious originality.

Now that these efforts have themselves become tradition, new kinds of formulations ensue. Although the music being composed today certainly evinces fundamental changes in attitude toward such surface elements as texture and instrumentation, its contrast with the immediate past is not nearly as violent as were the sound-innovations of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* or Schoenberg's Five Pieces for Orchestra, Opus 16. Such changes in sensibility are fundamentally only changes in emphasis; the rhythmic and harmonic issues raised by Wagner were probably not problematic to Wagner, but became critical for every composer who succeeded him for quite some time. Similarly, today's new music deals with the unresolved formal problems of the music of the immediate past. The changes, though largely beneath the surface of the newest music, are nonetheless real, and significant.

Some of the extent of recent *avant-garde* activity is evident from the number of interesting new works which were performed in New York this past month. An especially significant case in point is Arthur Berger's String Quartet, performed at the New School on January 26 under the auspices of the International Society for Contemporary Music. The personal kind of neo-classicism/Webernism of Berger's music of the Forties and early Fifties is replaced here by a free adoption of twelve-tone procedures. Because of the syntactical consistency of this twelve-tone style, there is an immediate auditory association among all the materials of the different episodes. Berger exploits these associations by evolving a fluid continuity in which passages are interchanged and reintroduced with unusual freedom. The form itself is motivated by the dramatic idea of opposing active and passive elements, setting kinesis against stasis. The energetic opening chords and figurations become the active principles, the structural pillars, of the entire Quartet. Following their exposition and working-out in the first movement, they struggle to return throughout the rest of the piece, but are always dissolved into an increasingly pervasive quietude. Finally, a kind of immobility emerges from a texture made of quiet, sustained arrangements of one of the structural chords.

At the very end, a last suggestion of motion is left suspended; thus the conclusion remains, in a sense, unstated. The quartet medium is composed into transcendently—the music creates itself in striking timbral and contrapuntal inventions which call to mind, in substance more than manner, the two Carter quartets. The exemplary performance was by the precociously accomplished young Lenox Quartet.

Earlier in the same week, the enterprising and manifestly talented Aeolian Chamber Players introduced Ralph Shapey's *Discourse* for flute, clarinet, violin, and piano on their Town Hall concert. To anyone familiar with Shapey's rather untamed early music, the restraint and discipline of *Discourse*, which is "serial" without being "twelve-tone", comes as a wonderful surprise. Listening to it is like looking at a large sculpture; taking in the auditory images, although they are perceived consecutively, is like accumulating a sense of the details in a rich field of vision. At the conclusion of *Discourse*, all the events of the piece seem to have been held stationary, as though in a kind of frozen balance. Each idea is so sharply profiled that it appears to have been carved from rock, and its identity remains clearly distinct no matter how complexly it is altered or combined.

The three movements of *Discourse* examine the same materials from three different points of view: in the first, the ideas are chrono-

logically separated, but they alternate and develop through the instruments in an intensifying way that generates a rather imposing and grandiose rhetoric. The second, with its hypnotic, incessant reiterations at maximum volume of a simultaneous combination of motives of different lengths and shapes, ends just short of becoming unsurvivable. But the pain of the experience must be generic to Shapey's conception; there is nothing atavistically primitive or indeterminate about its realization. In the third movement the flute, clarinet, and violin slowly unfold a continuous texture that combines several of the earlier elements, while the piano softly interjects the echo of its first-movement triplets. This movement is surely the finest of the three; it must be an important developmental event in Ralph Shapey's work: it is good to hear him moving further from the explicit resonance of Varèse to a refined personal utterance promising to enable the full development of his unmistakable originality.

Stefan Wolpe's new Piece in Two Parts for flute and piano also materialized on the ISCM program. Wolpe has been one of the most adventurous composers of recent times, full of daring and difficult ideas that have produced first-rate music in the Sonata for violin and piano, for one instance. Despite a number of bristlingly original passages and corrosively brilliant instrumental inventions (especially the coordinated rapid-note passages for both flute and piano), however, there is a shakiness in the continuity, and a diffuse fragmentation in the phraseology—problems in other Wolpe music as well—which undermine the focal intensity of this Piece. Wolpe's work here seems to be in a transitional place. He has already, in his history, negotiated some fairly radical transitions of a similar nature—from jazz-oriented to Expressionistic chromatic qualities, for example—and now I think I discern an emerging engagement with the current European gestural-textural mode. In any event, Harvey Sollberger and David Tudor played it brilliantly and with a dashing sense of style.

The Trio for violin, clarinet and piano by Donald Martino—on the same ISCM concert—represents a consistent twelve-tone solution to the problems of complex musical order. It is a musical unfolding of great sensitivity and delicacy, whose underlying constructional rigors are subtly varied by the concentration of each of its seven brief episodes on a distinct kind of structural relationship. Its sheer beauty of line and sonority are astonishing—Martino, in his early-ish thirties, is consummately mature in his handling of complex compositional materials. Unfortunately, this performance (because of technical difficulties) eliminated all but the last of the inside-the-piano pizzicatos which, as I understand the score, have an important articulative meaning. Otherwise, the performance, by Matthew Raimondi (violin), Arthur Bloom (clarinet), and Howard Lebow (piano), was smooth, alert, and faithful.

The resumption of the ISCM's concert activity on such a high level of compositional and performative quality is in itself an index of the new vigor of the local *avant-garde.* The very quantity of provocative and convincing music produced via a path of most resistance is itself exciting and promising. And as long as concerts like these continue to represent the interesting music being composed today, neither the musically interested public nor its journalistic informants need to remain ignorant of the important musical developments which are taking place in their presence.

ARTHUR BERGER: Duo for cello and piano (1951); Quartet for winds (1941). Columbia ML 4846.

Polyphony for Orchestra (1956). Louisville 58-4.

RALPH SHAPEY: Evocation (1959). CRI 141.

STEFAN WOLPE: Sonata for violin and piano; Passacaglia; Percussion Quartet. Esoteric 530.

RECORDS: FRANZ LISZT

FRANZ LISZT's music is so easy to categorize in terms of its extrinsic qualities that its real depth of compositional innovation and invention threaten to go undiscovered. The readily available images of Liszt's flamboyant extrovert Romantic virtuosity assimilate his music to an art of pure theatrical gesture whose structural originality is simply one more maneuver of spectacular self-dramatization. Even recognition of the powerful and pervasive imprint of his creative discoveries is diluted by cavils about virtuoso piano style and flashy use of novel harmonic and orchestral devices, as if these were not inseparable from the significant compositional ideas which they embed.

This sort of misunderstanding is a familiar hazard endured by much nineteenth-century music in its public images; in public discourse, public performance, and ultimately, public hearing, a variety of red-herring conceptions about Romantic literary sensibility and the personal glamour of the genius artist have made it more difficult to follow the intense development of musical thought during that time. By putting first things last, Liszt comes to be regarded as the Paganini of the piano, Berlioz as the Paganini of the orchestra, and Tchaikowsky as the Paganini of the heartstrings (and Paganini himself may not be quite as advertised, either). Such notions, of course, have a catchy simplicity that ensures their popular viability: the complex issues internal to music are far less colorfully representable. But there is real musical harm in these simplifications, not just in their tendency to cultivate listening habits, and hence musical experiences, that are simplistic and impoverished, but also in their power to delete from public experience the profounder works which do not so blatantly manifest the advertised tendencies, in favor of the more superficial ones which do. Hence Berlioz is principally admired for Romantic passion, and for the color and energy of his orchestral effects, so that all the complex and subtle music of his later composition is neglected in favor of *Symphonie Fantastique*.

Liszt's music has had a posthumous career rather more like Verdi's than like Berlioz's. Despite, or perhaps because of, his great popular repute, he was quickly dismissed by the elevated and the learned as a grandmaster of charlatanry, a wizard of the keyboard to great effect as spectacular entertainment but utterly depraved as to taste—Verdi, remember, was to such discerning judgments notorious as an organ-grinder-tune composer. Later, the sophisticated elite culted around obscure esoterica rejected by the uncultured masses: in Liszt's case, that meant his very last choral and piano music; in Verdi's mostly *Otello* and *Falstaff*. Finally, in the Roaring Twenties, the post-Dada anti-snob camp culture just adored all the virtuoso—and organ grinder—numbers precisely in proportion to their malodor with the good-taste guardians, as a way of deriding what Milhaud used to call *le serieux a tout prix*.

A fresh hearing of what Liszt in fact composed obliterates the shades of these hoary shibboleths. What one hears is the genesis and growth of a radical concept of musical structure that eventually engenders a radically new kind of musical continuity. Even early piano music, supposedly trashy fantasies and transcriptions of other people's music, are full of stunning reimagings of music-formal processes. A transcription of Beethoven's song *Adelaide* alternately separates and joins the piano and the vocal lines of the original, and changes its registrations with apparent freedom, spreading the "voice" over a (vocally inconceivable) four-octave range—creating, in substance, a new composition over the shape and essence of its model. And the pianistic elaborations on Beethoven's accompaniments, expanding progressively as a counterpoint to the arching song-line, culminate in a densely and deeply worked-out cadenza which emerges as a uniquely Lisztian meditation on the style and substance of Beethoven's music.

Liszt is usually forgiven his habit of transcribing orchestral masterworks for piano on the grounds that this made them available for public audition, and that his "orchestration" of the piano constituted a brilliant and formidable extension of that instrument's resources, to the ultimate benefit and inspiration of many later composers. But what I hear most powerfully in such pieces is their profound insight into the orchestral nature of orchestral music, especially the critical role of space and register in its articulation. In the transcriptions of sections from

Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and —especially—the waltz from Gounod's *Faust* the originals are virtually overmatched by the reconstitutions: Liszt's transitions and juxtapositions among Gounod's passages are sensational, and he gets more textural shades and degrees from the piano (including a stunning adumbration of lean, arpeggiated Stravinsky piano style) than Gounod ever drew from his full orchestra. *Midsummer Night's Dream* emerges as a kind of super-Mendelssohn, retaining the sheen of the original (wonderfully evoking those unforgettable woodwind and string sounds), but composing in a new dimension of connective strength. The superposition, at the end, of the Wedding March and Elfin Chorus is indeed a typical virtuoso trick, fiendishly ingenious, and digitally stupendous, as advertised.

By the time of the unfinished *Figaro* fantasy (completed by Busoni in 1912) Liszt had become preoccupied with issues of formal unity, with discovering and extruding hidden interior relationships among overtly disparate configurations. This fantasy begins with a long introductory disquisition on a single interval (minor third) which turns out to be spinal in both the Mozart arias on which the piece dwells: *Non piu andrai* (where it occurs at the outset), and *Voi che sapete* (on *Donne, vedete).* Later, the initiating rhythmic pattern of the former, which also appears in *Voi che sapete* as the words *(che) cosa e a(mor),* is isolated as a motif of structure. Under the strenuous load of chromatic sequences and fancy structures, Mozart's clear, penetrating idiom is, finally, strangled; but this interesting failure is itself a measure of the distance by which Liszt's reshaping of the modes of musical progression had removed the sense of music from the space of Mozart's conceptions.

By now it should seem quite natural that the music-formal medium in which Liszt's radical continuities were most fully realized is precisely the one generally cited as the ultimately licentious musico-literary extravagance: the "programmatic" symphonic poem. Whether or not Liszt was aware of the wider implications of his investigations, it seems that the idea of creating a "free" musical form based on (extramusical) literary qualities compelled him to develop a coherent musical syntax whose functions would lie athwart of and skew to the contexts of traditional musical dialects. What he invented is a mode of structure based radically on the internal structure of melodic cells, from which every aspect of the musical organism is formed. In early symphonic poems (as *Tasso* and *Les Preludes*) this mode takes the form of "thematic transformation"—rhetorical utterances of strongly contrasting character, all formed from the opening phrases, develop like a set of free, but still musiclike, variations. Later, in *Orpheus* and elsewhere, the process of motivic thinking is extended to harmony, tonality, and macroshape as well, engendering clusters of structure-blocks that depend for their internal and mutual coherence entirely on characteristics derived from the configurations themselves, rather than by any likeness to "common-practice" musical shape-types.

In *Orpheus,* the hermetic self-enclosure of each episode of transformation is so extreme as to engender a macrotextural experience of immobility, a witnessing of image replacing image, passage replacing passage, with no impetus or evidence of directional, kinetic movement. From the opening, built on a single sustained horn note elaborated by slowly sweeping harp chords, everything moves in even strides, more like undulations from a still center than like linear, dynamic progression. Listening now, I was reminded of Stravinsky's *Orpheus,* whose idiosyncratic evenness, immobility, and instrumental coloration could easily have been modelled on this amazing composition by Liszt.

But where twentieth-century musical preoccupations are most fully engaged, and seemingly even shared, in Liszt's music is in both of the long symphonies developed from the form of the symphonic poem: the *Dante* and the *Faust* Symphonies. Thus the formation of both the "Inferno" and "Purgatorio" movements of the *Dante* Symphony from completely self-defined principles makes it plausible, despite the "tonal" harmonic coloration, to experience these works as essentially atonal. It is rather startling to be able to discover such evidence that the conceptions later developed by Schoenberg for radically "modern" works like *Pierrot Lunaire* could have grown out of qualities developing naturally within the context of tonal music itself. Even Schoenberg's way of creating harmony by combining identical melodic motives is anticipated by Liszt in the "Inferno", where powerful dramatic intensity is built entirely from the compression of this self-referential means of texture construction, without resort to externally excited gesture or rhetoric.

"Purgatorio" creates an experience of time suspended. After the condensation and force of "Inferno", "Purgatorio" unfolds its few sparse elements with astral slowness and clockwork repetition, creating a space of dead stillness and viscous gravity, ending in a fantastic ghost-fugue,

whose eerie asymmetry must have been utterly incomprehensible to the ears of its time. And then all the signature qualities of the Symphony are transformed in a choral Magnificat: what has been chromatic now becomes modal, resonating the image of Renaissance polyphony; the searing sharpness of "Inferno", and the doleur of "Purgatorio" dissolve into delicate scoring and luminous spacing. The resolution of this complex formal trajectory leaves me with a rare and impressive sense of wholeness consummated.

Westminster's idea of issuing a number of Liszt recordings in an integral series commemorating his 150th birthday was an obviously good one, but the Hungarian State Orchestra that plays on two of the four records is simply not up to professional standard. Attacks are mostly of the dominoes variety, rhythms are painfully unarticulated, dynamics are mostly mezzo-forte, and the orchestral sound is all fuzz. Fortunately, the *Dante* Symphony is performed by the Budapest Philharmonic, clearly and well, and can be recommended.

Egon Petri's disk, however, is entirely treasurable. Although he was eighty years old when he recorded it, his mastery as a Liszt performer is unmistakable. It is really revelatory (and wonderful) to hear the clarity with which underlying rhythmic movement is projected; the treacherous flying figurations are never allowed to invade the foreground rhythm as they seem always to do in almost everyone else's performances of Liszt piano music. Of course Petri drops notes, even, perhaps, many notes; and occasionally, conceding something to Nature, he does slow the pace for a digitally treacherous passage. But except in the *Mephisto Waltz* and some patches of the *Figaro* Fantasy none of this has the slightest masking effect on the essential presence of the essential music of this music.

Records

LISZT: The Famous Piano Transcriptions: *Adelaide* (after Beethoven); Fantasia on two motives from Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro; Mephisto Waltz;* Paraphrase on Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream;* Waltz from Gounod's *Faust*. Egon Petri, piano. Westminster WST 14149.

Hungaria; Tasso. Hungarian State Orchestra; Janos Ferencsik, cond. Westminster WST 14150.

Les Préludes; Mephisto Waltz; Orpheus; Spanish Rhapsody. Hungarian State Orchestra; György Lehel, Janos Ferencsik, conds. Westminster WST 14151.

Dante Symphony. The Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra; Budapest Radio Choir; Győrgy Lehel, cond. Westminster WST 14152.

3.17.62

ABOUT PERFORMANCE

PERPETUALLY expectant of the transcendent musical revelations that great performances of great masterpieces are supposed to supply, the music-loving populace submits happily to endless rehearings of that handful of works which constitute the institutional canon of performed concert music. While this constriction of hearable literature contributes to the high visibility of the concert performer as the prime hero of serious musical artistry, it also cultivates a fundamental misapprehension of the essential nature of the "great" works themselves, and of the qualities which actually distinguish a meaningful musical performance. Much of this confusion arises from the general indifference of the performers and listeners who form the public-musical culture to the serious music which is being composed in their own world, during their own time. For when music is regarded nostalgically, as a pre-fixed collection of "masterpieces" whose "inner meanings" are uncoverable only by inspired "interpretation" under the hands of an authenticated maestro, what is lost is the awareness that every meaningful musical artifact is part of a continuing chain of compositional discovery, that a "masterpiece" is a "composition" too, and that its particular qualities derive from unique orderings of cogent ideas, from its invention of significant solutions to urgent musical problems.

A good performance is precisely one which results from a performer's apprehension of such orderings, and his discovery of the means by which to articulate the structural configurations they produce. That is a feat which requires deep musical intelligence and insight, as well as comprehensive mechanical mastery of the performance medium. But it also requires considerable self-effacement: the performer's proper efforts are directed at removing obstacles to the clarification of the musical object; and his "personality" is often one of the more serious of these obstacles.

And yet, the performer's personal responsibilities are substantial, since the musical notation in a score is only a more or less accurate symbolic representation of the attributes of a composition. Unless he understands the essential nature of the work approximated in the notation, his performance is likely to do violence to it, even when he believes he is adhering exactly to the score. For example, a score may indicate which passages are loud and which soft (even, to a certain extent, the gradations between), the textural densities, relative speeds, etc., along with, obviously, the pitch-instrumental data. But only through a developed sense of the structure of a composition can a performer decide on crucial relationships among these qualities—the intensity of a texture, the loudness of one *forte* or *piano* as against others, the hierarchy of contrapuntal voices or harmonic successions—none of which is accurately determinable from generalized ideas of sensibility or the perception of merely local relationships.

In fact, a performance is likely to be weakened to the extent that they are so determined. Anton Webern said "Your ears will always lead you right, but you must know why." Thus a performer's intuitions about the nature of a work may bring him into a more or less reasonable simulation of its sensibility; but this is perilous, both because it is superficial and because it reverses musical logic. The "feeling" of a musical work results from its precise fixing of relationships among musical ideas—the "form"—so that a performance that proceeds judiciously in terms of interior formal articulations is far more certain to generate the particularity of "feeling" than is any application of overtly "expressive" qualities. And a performance conceived from the particular terms of such a form will naturally generate the qualities that make it unique; whereas sensibility and expression are ultimately undefinable generalities which can with equal effect (for good or ill) characterize works which are grossly disparate. As a result, the construction of performances directly from the expressive point of view tends to level the most poignant particularities among individual musics, to bring all music onto approximately the same level.

Although the formal procedure of every meaningful composition is unique and specific, the relativity of notation makes it possible, in traditional music, to find a variety of means for its realization. Slower speeds permit greater weight of individual accentuations or thicker overall density; lighter accentual and dynamic inflections and less instrumental weight tend toward a swifter textural flow to achieve coherence. Similarly, important musical differences

reside in whether a point of arrival is approached by way of a progressive speed change, or qualities of dynamics, or phrasing, or any combination (or none); and, it makes a difference whether an increase in perceived loudness is induced by progressive emphasis on instruments of more intense timbre, or by an increase in actual total energy level. Naturally, stylistic contexts determine some of these variations, but more than one significant "interpretation" of any combination of music-notational symbols is possible, with significantly different musical consequences, as long as each choice is dictated by the necessities of a conception of the musical discourse being traversed rather than by the caprices of a performer's quivering sensibilities. The "expression" of significant musical relationships, creating significant images of musical thoughts and ideas, is the only expressivity germane to musical performance.

Unfortunately, in practice, good performances are nearly as uncommon as good compositions. The most common diseases take a few distinct forms: the perennially popular emotionalist performance freely mangles the shape of everything in response to any momentary whim; the virtuous *Kapellmeister* approach conceals its resistance to imagination and involvement beneath a strict adherence to the letter of a score; the virtuoso strategy is simply to cover the issues by playing as fast and brilliant as possible—this, given sufficient technical equipment, can at least be a diverting acrobatic act; and then there is the profound metaphysical operation, striving always for a cosmically unattainable ideal, which shapes all music according to a preconceived Musical Idea—with the result that everything ends up sounding like an imperfect realization of something else.

Some recent experiences with orchestral performances, in concert and on records, give some specificity to these reflections. In orchestral music, of course, the performance situation is rather special in that individual players perform their parts under the direction of a single conductor. This situation is analogous to the production of a play, but one in which the director stands in front of his actors during the performance guiding the pace and movement of the action by body language. Orchestral execution, therefore, depends massively on the conductor's music-analytic penetration, and on his ability to translate it into realistic instrumental terms—along with the quality and disposition of the orchestral ensemble itself.

Beethoven's Eighth Symphony is full of vivid instrumental and registral ideas which both counterpoise and define the main line. Such as: the beautiful anticipations of the woodwind chords of the second movement in the close of the first; the "spreading" of sustained chords in antiphony, particularly at the very end of the first movement and in the cadence of the main section of the Minuet—an idea which generates the entire last section of the symphony, where the final chord is registered in every timbre and octave before resolving into itself. And among the remarkable qualities in the formal evolution of this symphony are the significant progressive unfolding of a large-scale "line" formed by the succession of tones at the top of the orchestral texture over the course of the entire piece; and the astounding (famous) rude interruptive C-sharp of the final movement, creating a series of crises at each of its occurrences, whose successive resolutions are like an expansive summation of the significant events of the entire symphony.

Any close listener can hear these things for himself in a performance like the one recorded for Angel by Otto Klemperer and the Philharmonia Orchestra. Klemperer is one of those rare musicians whose intense devotion to music takes the form of relevant and clear thinking, and manifests itself in fully comprehended performances of the music conducted. His knowledge of the orchestra, too, seems phenomenal; I have never heard better or clearer balancing of instrumental lines—every detail and nuance is projected without obscuring the main line of development. Most impressive is his perception of the nature of musical time. While at first there seems to be nothing remarkable in his tempos (they might be described as relatively slow), it soon becomes evident that they are just sufficiently broad to permit the precise articulation of every rhythm and phrase, and still maintain the relative speed and energy of every movement in precise proportion. The abatements and accelerations of speed conform to the inherent movement of the piece—one hears them as constituting the actual "beat" of the music rather than as elongations or compressions of a metronomic pulse. Thus, without pretension or rhetoric, the Eighth Symphony emerges wholly as itself from this recording, which may therefore, in this sense strictly, be regarded as "definitive".

[This is the first part of a two-part article on orchestral performances.]

3.24.62

MORE ABOUT PERFORMANCE

LAST WEEK I wrote of the issues of responsibility and understanding involved in the interpretation of musical works which approach formal consummation (Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, performed by Otto Klemperer, was my point of departure). But when the music to be performed is an enduring classic of the musical literature which nevertheless exhibits serious, and basic, flaws in its compositional integration, the issues for performers are rather more complex, and their responsibilities are commensurably greater.

Schubert evidently composed his Ninth Symphony out of a determination to reach toward a large-scale dramatic structure like those he admired in the "heroic" works of Beethoven. This intention is clear from the very length of the symphony and the breadth of its gestures, as well as from the careful way with which all the materials are derived from a single germinal source: the soft opening horn melody. But despite the magnitude of the intention and the considerable depth of many of its ideas, the Schubert Ninth remains a masterpiece *manqué,* a curiously incomplete sketch for a "big" symphonic structure rather than its consummate realization.

Within large proportions which appear to have been preordained, much of the developmental expansion seems like placeholding activity, filling the requisite time, like sketched-in rough-draft material slated for later intensification and internal substantiation. During whole sections, especially in the outer movements, figurations, melodic patterns, and instrumental dispositions are simply reiterated on different tonal levels, without meaningful evolution in the form of contrapuntal, rhythmic, or any other kind of development. In fact, the rhythmic motion in the large appears to consist mostly of phrases of equal lengths—which after a while creates a perceptual effect akin to that of a long, profoundly serious poem composed entirely in doggerel verse. I sometimes find myself quite involuntarily counting phrase-measures during a hearing of this piece, in grim defensive anticipation of the inevitable fours and sixes. Partly as a result of this macrorhythmic undercomposition, arrivals at points of climax and convergence are achieved only at the cost of strenuous forcing and a kind of shrill bombast which is not normally associated with Schubert's music.

Such weaknesses in continuity are particularly acute at transitional moments; some of these are perfunctory to the extent that successive sections seem just to sit side by side, narratively unconnected despite their common motivic derivation. When a structure of such large dimensions fragments into so many individually compartmentalized segments, its focus as a total event is problematic, and our capacity, as listeners, to maintain the kind of connected concentration that is required to integrate relationships which unfold over long texture and time stretches is imperiled. Compare this Schubert symphony with, say, the Brahms Second Piano Concerto, another work which develops a monumental structure from a minimal, unprepossessing melodic opening (on solo French horn, too, in both cases), to hear how the compositional concentration in all details in the Brahms concerto fills the texture-time space so repletely and so relevantly that the thread of connected event-evolution is never lost even amid the many passages of great density and complexity.

But despite all its problems, Schubert's Ninth Symphony is so full of wonderful and suggestive ideas that the value of attempts to perform it, and of continued opportunities to hear it performed, remains unquestioned. Unhappily, however, most conductors who undertake its performance approach it with reverence and awe, as an untouchable, perfect masterpiece; so in their performances, the difficulties of the piece tend to extrude like raw and gaping wounds. Or, at the other extreme, compensatory composition is gratuitously perpetrated, grafting new and entirely unmotivated continuities on the corpse of Schubert's composition, effectively destroying its authentic residual coherence, or generating new levels of intensity by "discovering" and thrusting forward hidden inner-part details as if they were significant counterpointing subplots, although they really have no substantive identity or meaning within such a role. Thus Alfred Wallenstein's performance of the symphony with the New York Philharmonic on February 25 seemed to reflect a serious awareness of the problems being discussed, but did not manage to generate a convincing response to them. The problem of creating strong points of climax, for example, was ad-

dressed simply by drawing additional volumes of sonority from an unchanging, already overloaded, instrumental texture, with a commensurate increase in forcing and straining, but not in power. Similarly, some of the frailest elements of the structure were, perversely, most heavily leaned on—particularly the two evenly-spaced, hammered-out pitch sounds which recur incessantly in the second movement; the result was not to bolster their capacity to support the structure, but rather to expose luridly their inadequacy to fulfill that role; their insistent yammering just ended up sounding tedious and desperate. This performance also featured the technique of bringing out specious "inner voices", so that I could hear the entire trombone part for the first time ever; but most of the "counterpoints" generated this way were just neutral components of the going harmony or supporting rhythmic patterns of one or two sounds. Wallenstein's approach to the Schubert Ninth was unquestionably more imaginative than average, but the net result was rather neutral, substituting emphasis for intensity, accentuation for inflection. The New York Philharmonic's playing was in about the same shambles it has been in all year, but there was something especially memorable in the faint gasping wheeze with which this particular performance ended.

The late Bruno Walter's last recording of the Schubert Ninth Symphony has just been released by Columbia. This performance is far more polished and musically plausible than Alfred Wallenstein's; Walter's orchestra is superior, and he pursues a mostly reasonable expository argument. But the larger continuity that he generates seems to derive from some principle outside the context of the music being performed, as if there were some ideal music to which all should aspire. Thus the variable trajectories of this piece are reduced to a single type, a pattern which always begins broadly and softly, gradually accumulating loudness and speed until a great climax is reached, whereupon the process is repeated, but at a level of somewhat higher intensity, generating a constant sense of progressive growth. In this process, idiosyncratic details and inflections in context are suppressed in favor of this extrinsic "main line"; thus variations in tempo occur only within the swellings to high points, and the essential rate of motion (of all the movements) is always the same. In effect, the piece is converted into a chain of little Wagner preludes—*Tristan* Preludes, to be precise, superimposed grandly on Schubert's recalcitrant materials. (And the eagerness with which Walter flushes out proto-Mahlerian passages—as the little canon between violins and cellos in the Minuet—is touching, if not helpful.) Some passages of the Schubert symphony seriously blossom under this ritualistic procedure: the little second-movement transition mentioned above is transparently beautiful and mysterious. And Bruno Walter's mastery of the medium is always manifest: the orchestral sonority seems always unambiguously and fully representative of his purposes.

But when I compare Walter's performance with the recording of the Schubert Ninth by the late Wilhelm Furtwängler, the radical distinction between a universal and a contextual performance conception becomes obvious. In the first movement, for example, both Walter and Furtwängler take a slower tempo for the second theme, then accelerate again as they approach the development. But upon reaching the climactic end of the exposition, Walter immediately slows and softens again, preparing to begin another cycle of soft-slow-to-loud-fast. But the only motivation for the original tempo difference earlier on is that the movement as a whole is constructed, as are many of Schubert's symphony-sonata structures, on two distinct and opposing time qualities, which coincide with the two main thematic configurations; this opposition is essential to the drama of the whole development, where the two themes are simultaneously expanded. So Furtwängler, precise on this point, maintains the fast tempo from the end of the exposition right into the development, making sense of the basic formal idea, and extending the essential connective thread over the conventional section boundaries. Furtwängler's performance is all over illuminated by this kind of penetration, following Schubert's ideas precisely according to their self-created modes of coherence. Given such an articulative space, the unique and engaging qualities of the music come forward, while the disintegrative potential of its compositional insufficiencies is virtually neutralized.

Among other recent orchestral recordings, Otto Klemperer's performances of several Mendelssohn works will be a particular revelation to anyone who thinks of Mendelssohn as a superficial composer because of the fluency of his language. The exploratory depth and far-reaching originality in his outstanding works often go unperceived because they are not announced by theatrical hysterics or thundering proclamations. But Mendelssohn's forms are no

less expressive because he did not compose with overtly resistant materials, that he inclined toward malleable ideas which could be developed and shaped into total structures both unified in exterior and subtly differentiated internally. Similarly, the rhythmic energy of his music arises less from strong local profiles than from the inflections underlying continuous larger units. In these respects his instincts are closer to Bach's than to those of his contemporaries (although he seems to inherit his relation to Bach from the later works of Beethoven); the qualities of energy and cumulative acuity that flash from the Scherzo of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* music have a strong inner kinship with the musical imagination which underlies, say, the Prelude of Bach's E major Partita for solo violin.

The most remarkable performance on these recordings is undoubtedy that of the "Italian" Symphony. Mendelssohn's absolute security in setting down notes and his skill in articulating and controlling an outwardly undifferentiated motion are awesomely invoked in the realization of this piece. Each of the four movements builds a distinct idea of perpetual motion, expressed differently. In the first, which appropriately has the motile quality of an Italian *opera buffa* patter aria, a chattering tremolo runs through the center of the texture joining together all the parts of a fully developed structure without ever blurring the articulations of event-boundary outlines, even though it hardly ever misses a beat. In the second movement, the perpetual-motion idea takes the form of an even march of eighth notes which marks out the bass under the opening melodic phrases, then continues to move through all the areas of the texture, becoming buried (but still clearly audible in Klemperer's performance) in the inner voices in the middle section, where it is a counterpoint to the slowly unfolding principal melodic line. The third movement has two kinds of motion, a rocking figuration that is alternately part of the main melodic curve and part of its accompaniment, and a dotted rhythm in the middle section, which are magically combined at the end of the movement. In the last movement, the *perpetuum mobile* finally comes to dominate the foreground of events, and a highly intense and concentrated trajectory is developed from several contrasting rhythms opposed both contrapuntally and in successive blocks. Klemperer is alert to every aspect of this development, especially its progressive evolution through the whole symphony. Although all his Mendelssohn recordings are beautifully played in this sense, the "Italian" Symphony has a special tensile lucidity that is totally absorbing.

Records

MENDELSSOHN: *Hebrides* Overture; Symphony No. 3 ("Scotch"). Angel (S) 35880. Incidental Music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Angel (S) 35881. Symphony No. 4 ("Italian"). Angel (S) 35629.
All with the Philharmonia Orchestra; Otto Klemperer, cond.

SCHUBERT: Symphony No. 9.
Berlin Philhamonic; Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. Decca DL 9746.
Columbia Symphony; Bruno Walter, cond. Columbia MS 6219.

4.28.62

RECORDS: *SALOME*

RICHARD STRAUSS: *Salome.* Birgit Nilsson, Eberhard Waechter, Gerhard Stolze, Grace Hoffman, Waldemar Kmentt. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. London A4247; stereo OSA 1218.

EXTREMES, extravagance, and exaggeration are *Salome's* image, mythology, and publicity. Characterizations of it (and of her) have tended to hysteria—responding in kind to the hysteria of the piece itself—ever since its premiere in 1905. As a collection of cheap theatrical effects, it is reviled; as a consummate music-dramatic masterpiece, it is revered. But either way, its radical banality is being measured and engaged within the framework of traditional conceptions of opera or music drama. And *Salome's* own super-updated Wagnerian sonorous surface cultivates and encourages such conventional music-stylistic associations. And does so treacherously, meaningfully, and deliberately: radicalism is its intention, not merely its language or style; and the strenuous manipulation of the expectations created by these surface associations is crucial, and fundamental, to *Salome's* enterprise. Such a blatantly "radicalist" intention, it seems to me, constitutes Strauss's real individuality among his peers at this stage of his life; Berg, in *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, and Schoenberg, in *Moses und Aron* arrived at surfaces of far more radical appearance under the stringent demands of an almost oppressively traditionalist sense of musical significance and purpose. *Salome*, then, at the time of its composition, was—and probably still is—an invention *sui generis*, a particular extraction and combination of traditional materials for a thoroughly contemporary purpose.

Strauss's deviant intentions toward the music-dramatic environment are evident in the very first sequence of events which *Salome* unfolds. At first, the clarinet runs ascending over a scale of peculiar contour, then sounds a closely related motivic phrase against a transparent background *tremolo*. Compressed into a quarter minute or so, this introduction lays down a C#-minor tonality, and a highly flavored harmonic and melodic signature. A new clarinet run now terminates in an abrupt modification of context: minor is suddenly major, and, as though in response to an irresistible signal, Narraboth enters immediately in an unnaturally high tenor register on the crucial note which effected the modal change. He continues with an imitation of the clarinet's run and part of its motive (the rhythmic pattern of which is associated throughout the opera with the name of Salome, at whom Narraboth is here staring transfixed). Cellos now initiate a new phrase, whose opening pitch-sounds reverse those of Narraboth's entrance, in a contrasting harmonic area, a connection sealed by Narraboth's line as it rises finally to the high point of its beginning. Motion continues forward, however, as the violas extend the phrase beyond the end of Narraboth's. All this takes place within one and a half minutes from start, and despite the complexity of the web of associations, is all lucidly audible. Attention is arrested by the high intensity of Strauss's characterization, and by the tightly made texture of cogent relationships which seems like a supercondensed, epigrammatic version of Wagner's "symphonic" style and, perhaps, of the harmonic architecture of Mahler's symphonies.

So we know where we are, intensely located in this drama-space, and now, following Narraboth's "speech", the Page, also staring, but he's staring at the moon, complements Narraboth's ecstasy with muttering forebodings, almost buried under the persisting cello line; and suddenly, in the interplay between them, the initial saturation of color and texture slackens into a neutral orchestral timekeeping, a dull motion-spinning hole in which we grope unavailingly for the developmental thread now inexplicably abandoned. But just as we're about to register a letdown the orchestra wrenches us totally out of joint with a sound that depicts the noise in the offstage hall where Herod's banquet is on. And what realistic "noise" this is—not shocking or complex music-sound, but randomness, confusion, and utter discontinuity from any previously heard context: noise, in short. Which dies away as suddenly as it came on and now without preparation here's the opening again, Narraboth repeating his first spasms at an even higher pitch than before.

Here then is *Salome's* essential form, method, and approach. Throughout the opera, arresting beginnings flatten into neutral setups

for startling new beginnings, so maintaining unceasing suspense, unmistakable to the sleepiest of audiences, but utterly innocent of any development of any seriously pursuable music-dramatic structure. In place of dramatic contrasts arising from inflections within a "style", and ultimately creating for a given work its own "style"—the classic music-dramatic pursuits of Mozart, Verdi, and Wagner—Strauss's theater unreels a propulsive chain of raw "styles", juxtaposed for maximum disconnective effect. The deep working-out of the opening moment is but one more textural tool of the composer's artful stagecraft.

Oscar Wilde's *Salome* was Strauss's source text; a comparison of the play with the libretto transparently exposes Strauss's formal intentions: apart from excisions of superabundant imagery probably unsustainable in the translation from spoken to sung stage, the opera's verbal text unerringly deletes every touch and detail of subtle dramatic construction and deep ironic humor that civilizes the original play. Wilde's *Salome*, beneath its sensational surface, was a dialectic of ideas. Much of its interest and form stem from the running theological debate which counterpoises and motivates the ostensible plot. The debate involves everyone: Salome's visionary paganism is an aspect of her refusal to relinquish Jokanaan, and Herod's vacillation is represented as a profound moral weakness, of which his "honor" is itself an ironic symptom. With characteristic bite, Wilde has Herod mistake a reference to Jesus for one to Caesar and, just like the Jews, the Alexandrians and Syrians dispute with each other and among themselves, while the Nazarenes also fail to agree on exactly which miracles Jesus has performed and gossip disputatiously about his travels. Against this background, Jokanaan, immobile in Wilde as in Strauss, is the still point about which the petty energies of the action revolve, and his victimization constitutes a crowning irony: he is sacrificed to the weaknesses of all the others.

For Strauss's purposes, all this structure and thought was so much excess literary baggage, tangential and diversionary to his direct conquest of the theatrical audience. In his *Salome*, the Jews are all cardboard villainy—their music is the "noise" mentioned earlier—and the Nazarenes are all plaster saints. Wilde's significant connective tissue is also sundered, as every incident is projected monolithically, bereft of context and minimized in coloration, sustained just sufficiently to prepare and propel the next effect and climax. The dialectic of the play becomes a serial march of sharp confrontations: Narraboth stares at Salome; Salome overcomes Narraboth's unwillingness to bring Jokanaan to her from his cistern; Salome stares at Jokanaan, and begs him to make love with her; Narraboth pleads with Salome to desist, and, failing, kills himself; Herod stares at Salome and tries to seduce her; Herodias tries to persuade Herod to have Jokanaan killed; Herod persuades Salome to dance before him by swearing to give her whatever she wishes; Salome dances, then argues violently with Herod for Jokanaan's head, which she finally wins. Except for the final scene (Salome's *Liebestod,* with appropriate *Tristanian* cues), this sequence determines the course, and delimits the depth, of Strauss's music-dramatic conception.

The musical characterization of Salome herself is much admired; but to me it seems pretty weak and vague, consisting mostly of vivid phrase-beginnings which rarely find meaningful continuations. Jokanaan is, musically, a pallid shadow character, although his "angel of death" motive is arresting, and stands out as the only significant evolute of ideas which extruded importantly early on. Herod is, for me, the real triumph of *Salome*: his weakness and vacillation are wonderfully realized by extravagant, spasmodic elongations and contractions of phrase, drastic shifts of register, and a voice-orchestra conjunction that projects a real sonic image. The monotonal responses of Herodias and Salome are inspired environment for Herod's compulsive gushing. I can even imagine the characterological style of *Wozzeck* in the psychological imagery of Herod's choked-up even-note staccato verbal articulation over a background of ineluctably revelatory low woodwind noises.

Herod's scene does, altogether, seem to me the center of interest of the opera, beginning with the imaginative "infiltration" of qualities of a forthcoming scene into the transition from the previous; the interrupted bassoon figure that accompanies Herod's lapses of memory is a potent instance. And Herod's "aria", spanning the entire scene around vast interruptive gaps, is the unique formal-dramatic fusion in the piece. Unhappily, the silly interpolated quarrel between the Jews and Nazarenes disrupts the continuity, finally, beyond the capacity of the "aria"'s abrupt resumption to recapture the flow.

Obviously, Strauss intended Salome's Dance of Seven Veils to be the climactic moment, even, probably, built the entire opera with

the idea of arriving at it (the Dance was composed first). His miscalculation here was complete, for this is *Salome's* real moment of disaster. In context, it emerges as a patchwork of motivic snatches from earlier sections, crudely strung together, and—in its ultimate paroxysm—ineffectually frenzied. This is followed by a series of mounting anticlimaxes, desperately working up ever greater accretions of sound and volume that just seem undercomposed and overdressed (they were, in musicological repute, the first composed, which may account for both the problem and the miscalculation). Still, despite its final collapse and ultimate shallowness, the phenomenon of *Salome* is fascinating for the strange territories that Strauss's peculiar cynicism led him to explore, and the remarkable extent to which he was able to conceive and sustain a gigantic work by means of an impossibly contrary and perverse compositional process.

Birgit Nilsson's performance as Salome in the London recording fulfills Strauss's principal requirement, most often ignored, that she be "a sixteen-year-old princess with an Isolde voice", whose gestures are precise and restrained amid the pervasive surrounding orchestral violence. Gerhard Stolze's performance as Herod is especially interesting by virtue of the range of vocal techniques and qualities he employs, as numerous as Strauss's bag of styles. The virtue of Georg Solti's conducting, the orchestra's playing, and the performance as a whole is their accuracy and faithfulness to the best musical qualities of the work, rather than to its invitation to facile theater.

5.12.62

BACH'S *ST. MATTHEW PASSION:* A BERNSTEIN VERSION

LEONARD BERNSTEIN's explanation for the omission of about a third of the Bach *St. Matthew Passion* from his performance of the work with the Philharmonic on April 24 was typically disarming, if not very convincing. Had these "inevitable sacrifices", which he acknowledged to be deplorable in a work that "is all gold and no dross", not been made, it would apparently not have been possible "to bring this monumental creation to our audiences" as "an entity". But both Bernstein's assumption that the only sacrifice entailed by such cutting was of "somebody's favorite moment", and the actual nature of the cuts he made, are symptomatic of the quality of musical intelligence by which every aspect of the performance was guided.

One's sympathy for Bernstein's practical difficulties is considerably decreased by the fact that he thought it possible, after excising major portions of a work whose every element is in precise formal balance, still to present "this monumental creation" as "an entity". Superficially, of course, the *St. Matthew Passion*, like the other late Bach choral works of which it is the most imposing, presents a surface design of seeming simplicity and conventionality—a succession of "numbers" whose outer proportions are regular and predictable. Thus it may have been sincerely believed by Bernstein that, even after eliminating a large number of admittedly "golden" arias, recitatives, and chorales, there would remain enough equally inspired similar pieces to convey the essence of the whole. But the "simplicity" of Bach's late works is entirely on their surfaces, and actually signalizes the increasing subtilization that evolved through his entire creative life. For this very reason, Bach's early music (especially in the cantatas)—by virtue of its frequent formal contrasts and abrupt sectionalization, which give it a surface of high "dramatic" intensity—often appears far more overtly "original" than his later work. The asymmetrical outer proportions of the early works, however, conceal a rhythmic and harmonic phraseology that is itself rather symmetrical and square; whereas the conventional formulas adopted later serve principally as firm referential frames for intricate internal constructions in which phrase patterns rarely repeat identically, and where every note is an important modification of the total context, while ultimate formal balance is reached only at the conclusion of an entire musical structure.

In the *St. Matthew Passion* the mature-Bach structural mode, extended to the furthest imaginable limit, controls every detail of a musical drama that lasts nearly three hours and contains nearly eighty individual "numbers". The most remarkable aspect of this form is its construction on several levels, all of which contribute to the steady progression toward the culmination in the final chorus. Thus the overall tonal movement is not only mirrored in the harmonic detail and in the connections among successive sections, but also in the parallel development of three dramatic-formal groups, whose members are interspersed with one another: the recitatives of the Evangelist, which carry the narrative; the arias, which are dramatically the points of reflection; and the chorales, which represent in their succession the purest distillation of the formal design. Every stage of the development is heard in reference to the extended choruses at the beginning and end, whose tonal relation marks both the total progression of the work and the internal connective procedure.

The most concentrated instance of this parallelism is in the five versions of the so-called Passion chorale, the last of which immediately follows the description of the death of Jesus. The first three appearances of the melody are harmonically identical; but each drops one half-step lower than its predecessor, in obvious symbolization of the gradual progress of Jesus toward the grave. At its fourth appearance, its harmony is more chromatic and complex than before, and foreshadows the modal change from major to minor that recolors it in the fifth version. In that final form, the pitch level is brought still lower, the harmonization is greatly intensified, and the (tonal) ambiguity of each phrase-ending creates the highest point of tension anywhere within the *Passion*. The relation between the final chord of this chorale, and the recitative that immediately ensues, describing the rending of the veil of the Temple, and initiating the final resolution of the drama, reflects the relation between the first and last choruses, implicitly identifying the particular moment with the entire dramatic trajectory.

Plainly, any attempt to edit such a structure must recognize the necessity to preserve this tissue of essential connections which, far more than its individual episodes alone, determines the "entity", the *St. Matthew Passion.* It almost seems that the only way to achieve this would be to recompose the surviving remnants, but that, it might be expected, would prove to be a discouraging undertaking, even for a musician as dedicated to his subscribers as is Mr. Bernstein. The quality of his present approach to this difficult problem may perhaps best be indicated just by mentioning his omission of the fourth, dramatically and musically pivotal, step of the crucial Passion-chorale sequence described above, which is, thereby, essentially deprived of meaning.

But in fact, the reasons for any one of Bernstein's deletions remain obscure—unless for the obvious motive of avoiding the most difficult solo and choral numbers (one of which also requires the use of a viola da gamba)—if one supposes that they have proceeded from a comprehensible concept in some way commensurate with his enthusiastic public appreciation of this work. On the purely narrative level, for example, how can one justify the omission of Judas's bargain with the high priests—since on that depends the ironic bite of Judas's question to Jesus, *bin ich's?* (is it I?)? And despite Bernstein's expensive use of a huge chorus, and his placement of it on the stage in front of the orchestra, his excisions nevertheless almost eliminated its crucial dramatic and musical functions in the second part, where the fast tempos and diatonic harmonies of the omitted choral passages dramatize the slowly unfolding intensification of the solo episodes. More subtly baffling are omissions like that of the alto recitative and aria (*Erbarm' es Gott*) that culminates a tonal tension carefully built throughout the section preceding it—a section which was otherwise included, and whose terminal cadence was left gasping in futility by the sudden, unmotivated embarkation to new areas. If performances (and scores) of the complete *St. Matthew Passion* did not exist for comparison, such a "moment"—whoever's favorite it may be—would certainly have to be regarded as a disruptive music-dramatic misstep.

The destructive simplicity of Bernstein's editorial approach was also unfortunately characteristic of other aspects of the performance he conducted. One wonders if the large forces he employed were intended as some compensation in enhanced mass for the reduction in length. Or whether an English text was used to restore some of the intelligibility lost in the abridgment, although it had the quite opposite effect of destroying the close interconnection between the structure of the vocal lines and the phoneme and accentual structure of the original German text. As a whole, the performance that emerged hardly invited serious criticism. From the outset, the instrumental and choral parts revealed a strong disinclination to synchronize rhythmically, and Bernstein's interpretive conception consisted principally of maintaining a purely metrical phrasing, in contradiction of the special relation in the work of phrase-rhythm to meter. The 'romantic' aspect necessary to every Bernstein performance was here manifest in the greatly elongated retardations at the ends of chorales and concerted movements, by means of which cadences were achieved by means of sheer frictional drag; in the sudden dynamic swellings in the midst of otherwise uninflected phrases, and in the alternate inaudible whispering and hoarse shouting of the chorus (the latter occasionally accompanied by the percussion of someone's foot stamping on a wooden platform).

The performance seemed especially confused about the recitatives, which were performed as disjointed fragments in a slow, portentous tempo, with none of the melodic shape, formal impulsion, or tight connectivity which one can hear in, for example, the recorded performance by Hermann Scherchen. Scherchen's performance (which, to be sure, has some of the same flaws as Bernstein's, notably the perennial end-of-movement drag) also reveals the wealth of rhythmic articulation generated by the harmonic and melodic movement within even metric and dynamic frameworks, and the aerated texture essential to the projection of Bach's counterpoint, in which the basses must be kept from absorbing and blurring the individual timbral lines while clearly articulating their own. Bernstein's performance not only seemed unaware of such possibilities of large formal articulation, but was unable to give a clear account of even the simpler textures. Consequently, it hardly seemed even to attempt to balance the massive total array of forces assembled.

Under such conditions, it is not surprising that the performances of the solo singers also suffered from the prevalent absence of coherent discipline, with the distinct exception of William Wildermann, who sang the part of Jesus. Bur after all, Mr. Wildermann has sung at the Metropolitan Opera, where even five-hour works such as *Die Meistersinger,* which are certainly not "feasible for a regular concert program", are nevertheless performed in their entirety.

7.28.62

STRAVINSKY'S *THE FLOOD*

EVEN NOW, on his eightieth birthday, some of the subtler influences of Stravinsky's presence in our musical midst remain unexplored, perhaps for the very reason that so many blatantly obvious imprints of his rhythmic, harmonic, and formal personality are so superabundantly evident. It seems to me, for example, that our recent understanding of Schoenberg and Webern, the discovery of their universality that has catalyzed the focus on their music as the conceptual reference for postwar composition, was greatly assisted by the qualities of Stravinsky's development. For even though Schoenberg's mastery and importance were always understood, most of the musical world was, during his lifetime, unable to dissociate the chromaticism and complexity of his music from a stigma of expressionism and "revolutionary" modernism. Schoenberg himself, despite his frequent insistence on his primary concern with intramusical meaning, was never able convincingly to stimulate a more careful perception of his atonal and twelve-tone music, especially since he continued, even through his later years, to produce works whose subjects and texts reflect the superheated melodramatic style of the *Stadtstheater*. The lurid aspects of *A Survivor from Warsaw, Ode to Napoleon,* and the "Chaos" movement of the multi-composer *Genesis* Suite always seem to register a stronger image than do the subtleties of the violin and piano concertos, the reconstructed classicism of the Fourth String Quartet, or the hyperextended neoformalism of the String Trio.

Stravinsky, on the other hand, produced during those same years a series of musics whose "Apollonian" diatonicism demonstrated, with unmistakable aural immediacy, that originality and modernity were not necessarily identified with revolution or chaos. These "neoclassic" pieces, which were clearly referenced in sound as well as in structural conception to traditional contexts, not only offered new insights into Classical music itself by finding in it unsuspected developmental possibilities, but also served to "classicize" our attitude toward contemporary music as a whole, at a time when it was generally thought—almost as frequently by composers as by everyone else—that its salient aspects were wilful iconoclasm and programmed anti-coherence.

Stravinsky's music that followed his "pure" neoclassical pieces—beyond the Concerto for two pianos of 1935 and the Symphony in C of 1940—gradually infiltrated more chromatic qualities into a still predominantly diatonic surface and began to manifest formal interests, already latent in some earlier works, which related to those of Schoenberg. This drift was especially pronounced in the Symphony in Three Movements of 1945, the Mass of 1948, the graveyard scene in *The Rake's Progress* of 1950, and in sections of the 1951 Cantata. A kind of non-twelve-tone serialism based on canonic polyphony followed in the 1952 Septet, the 1953 Shakespeare Songs, and the 1954 *In Memoriam Dylan Thomas*. Stravinsky's ultimate employment of a twelve-tone syntactical language (principally based on Webern's, rather than Schoenberg's, practice), for all that it seemed a spectacular turnabout to the makers of facile controversy who imaged the aesthetic issues of contemporary music as a competitive opposition between Schoenbergianism and Stravinskyanism, was just one further step in this series of moves. In following only his creative necessities and predilections, Stravinsky reached a point where he recognized and assimilated the radical "classicism" of Schoenberg and Webern as akin to his own despite the superficial contrast in sensibility. Those two composers became for him—and coincidentally for the rest of us—traditional masters; and he accepted their tutelage as he had previously appropriated that of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven—that is to say, idiosyncratically and with a non-negotiably Stravinskyan selfhood. Thus Stravinsky's truest disciples among today's composers are not the parasitic idolators of his various "styles", but those who have been guided by his powerful precept to contribute to the further development of ideas about structural possibility and integrity implicit in the music of Schoenberg and Webern as well as that of Stravinsky himself.

Stravinsky's own celebration of his eightieth birthday is, quite naturally, some new music: a "Biblical allegory" for speakers, singers, chorus, orchestra and dancers entitled *The Flood,* whose principal trace of octogenarian self-indulgence is that it was composed for television, and is therefore "popular" in approach. This is a si-

tuation in which Stravinsky has always delighted: to undertake a commission under what seem to be impossible conditions for serious composition, and then to turn them about into exactly what he wanted and needed to compose. He seems to take a special pleasure in carefully fulfilling the letter of such a commission so that the commissioner gets precisely what he has asked for, but hardly what he expected. Stravinsky's method is to reinterpret the traditional meanings of words in his own terms, with the same kind of meticulous rigor—and similarly fresh results—with which he re-examined traditional musical procedures in his compositions.

Thus when his publisher, during the twenties, requisitioned a "popular" work, Stravinsky decided that "popular" properly meant "universal" and so proceeded to set Latin psalms (universal poetry in a universal language) to music. The "popular" work that resulted was, of course, the Symphony of Psalms. Similarly (although with somewhat less spectacular musical results), when Woody Herman and Billy Rose commissioned Stravinsky during the forties, they were rewarded with the *Ebony* Concerto and the *Scènes de Ballet,* respectively.

Both these commissions, instead of "using" Stravinsky as intended, allowed him to discover, in the formulas of big-band jazz and Broadway, elements that he found congenial as compositional hypotheses, and which he elevated far beyond anyone's belief, but even further beyond the tolerances of his bewildered impresarios. Evidently *The Flood* appeared equally enigmatic to the people at Breck Shampoo and CBS Television, who jointly commissioned and presented it on June 14. Until that date, the merciless truncation performed by Billy Rose on *Scènes* to make it properly serviceable for his purposes seemed to set an unmatchable standard for philistine insensitivity. Those responsible for the hour-long TV program entitled *Noah and the Flood,* however, managed even more effectively to prevent the least idea of the musical or dramatic nature of *The Flood* from being conveyed without actually having to change or omit a single note. Their technique was to crush the delicate and refined music of *The Flood*—which was a negligible fifteen-minute interlude within the "spectacular"—into insignificance between the millstones of a pseudo-profound anthropological prologue having to do with Flood Myths and a long, disorganized, totally inappropriate review of the Stravinsky-Balanchine collaboration. The remaining time was, of course, filled by Breck Shampoo commercials accompanied by their own distinctive, if uncredited, music.

Nevertheless, however extensive the damage done to mass culture, the essential fact is that a new and interesting Stravinsky work was called into being, and slipped unobtrusively past the heavy-footed promoters. This, of course, was part of Stravinsky's *jeu*—an external counterpart of the "inside" games that run throughout *The Flood* and are an inseparable part of its speciality.

Generally, the public's idea of the "musical jokes" played by composers tends, quite inaccurately, to center on obvious buffooneries or on the suspicion that baffling difficulty and complexity themselves constitute a kind of tongue-in-cheek hoax. But actually, a substantial composer's deceptions are much more likely to take a subtle and quite opposite form in, for example, the invention of seemingly simple "effects" that can be accepted at face value, but which also evoke, beneath the surface, whole worlds of relevant and provocative associations. Mozart once wrote that he tried to compose enough bravura into his piano concertos to insure the applause of "the long-eared ones", but at the same time hoped that the ideas of real musical value he had worked into the texture would engage the interest of the *cognoscenti.*

The richest *double-entendre* in *The Flood* is unquestionably the whistling-wind music in the ballet section depicting the flood itself. This consists first of fragments, then the whole of a twelve-tone row is repeated in an insistent and literal *ostinato.* The idea works remarkably well as a "stage" effect, but its hidden appropriateness is still more fascinating. One is reminded of Classical "storm" music—Beethoven's *Pastorale* Symphony most notably—that inevitably included sweeping runs over the chromatic scale. A twelve-tone row is—in its simplest form—a particular arrangement of the pitches of the chromatic scale, so that Stravinsky's twelve-tone storm is both twelve-tone and purely neoclassic. Again, the literal repetition of a row in its original form seems at first rather surprisingly crude in view of the subtlety of Stravinsky's customary twelve-tone practice. But it does conform to a prevalent popular oversimplified image of twelve-tone music, and perhaps Stravinsky regarded it as only proper that in writing a "popular" twelve-tone work he make use of a "popular" idea of what this signifies.

Altogether, this section is one of the most interesting and original in the work; the remarkable burbling flutter-tongue woodwind sounds

(undoubtedly intended to portray the aquatic aspect of the calamity) are the freshest instrumental sounds heard since *Movements*. But these also function on more than the simple level of onomatopoeia or striking sound-invention. They are, in fact, merely the central instance of the tremolo ideas around which the entire work is built. One seems to hear every possible variety of repeated sound, of which some are familiar from earlier Stravinsky works, but other are new. Up to now, Stravinsky seems to have avoided much explicit use of tremolo, probably because of its association with Romantic—and especially Wagnerian—cliché. Repeated-note figures have, however, become an important part of his recent vocabulary, notably in *Agon* and *Threni,* so that their central role and full-blown exploration in *The Flood* may be yet another of Stravinsky's straight-line turnabouts.

Stravinsky's intention to make *The Flood* his work of the tremolo is unmistakable from the very outset; the string tremolandos of the opening section, introducing the story of the Creation, remind one of the "thick fogs" of the "Chaos" section of Haydn's *Creation,* a parallel that could even have been intentional. Another level of the tremolo idea is the recurrence throughout *The Flood* of a characteristic series of chords. In the dialogue between God and Noah, these chords themselves are played as tremolos over the wonderful, slow drum-roll that always presages and accompanies the voice of God—or rather voices, since it was Stravinsky's happy idea to have God speak in a two-voice, polyphonic texture resembling a primitive medieval psalmody. Despite the originality of the idea, these, as well as some of the other vocal passages, seem to me rather literal and square in comparison with the instrumental sections. Quite obviously, any such weaknesses are purely internal, and have nothing to do with any deficiency in the underlying "Gothic" conception, as has somewhere been suggested—a strange judgment, given the compelling contrary evidence of the Mass, *Canticum Sacrum* and *Threni.*

To return to the tremolos: the "Building of the Ark" ballet section, which reminds me of the opening and last three sections of *Agon* and also parts of *Threni,* begins with pairs of repeated sounds, then gradually builds up into a veritable polyphony of tremolos going at various speeds (the five successive horn blasts are unforgettable), and then subsides into pairs again. After the "Flood" section itself, where nearly every note is attacked with a flutter, a roll, or a tremolando, the opening sections are reintroduced—a structural parallel of the repetition of notes and the recurrences of chords. The final words of Noah's last speech, "And so a world begins to be", occasion the return of the opening Creation music, and the cycle seems to begin again, with the reprise of Satan's music (Satan's "pride" is like Oedipus' by way of the Shakespeare Songs) and, finally a second choral "Sanctus". The linear twelve-tone idea that opens the work also presides over the fading-out textural dissolution with which *The Flood* ends.

Obviously, such a descriptive glance hardly begins to probe into the significant aspects of a new work; a fuller evaluation must await the publication of the score. From the recording alone, *The Flood* seems at least to contain some of the most arresting movie music you've ever heard. However, the degree to which even after only a few hearings I begin to discover hints of an inner web of tight and complex associations leads me to suspect that in *The Flood,* as everywhere in Stravinsky's music, there is far more than immediately meets the ear.

Some relevant recordings:

The Flood (1962); Mass (1948). Columbia Symphony Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft. Columbia ML 5757/MS 6357

Monumentum pro Gesualdo (1960). Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Igor Stravinsky, cond. Columbia KL 5718/KS 6318 (stereo).

Symphony in three movements (1945); Violin Concerto (1931). Isaac Stern, violin; Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Igor Stravinsky, cond. Columbia ML 5731/MS 6331

Works for Two Pianos and Four Hands: Concerto for two pianos (1935); Sonata for two pianos (1944); Eight easy pieces. Gold and Fizdale, pianists. Columbia ML 5733/MS 6333

Jeu de cartes (1936). Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond. Victor LM/LSC 2567.

Serenade in A (1925); Sonata (1924). Charles Rosen, piano. Epic LC 3792 (mono) BC 1140

Concerto for piano and wind orchestra (1924). Seymour Lipkin, piano; New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond. Columbia ML 5729 (mono) ML 6329 (stereo).

10.27.62

MUSIC AS A HOUSING PROBLEM

THE INAUGURATION OF Philharmonic Hall earlier this month crystallized an image of pure self-enclosed public-cultural activism as explicitly and ambitiously as it has ever been crystallized. Right from the start, it was evident that what this grandiose project of producing a great new concert hall has in fact produced is, practically speaking, an absolutely unreconstructed replica of existing traditional concert spaces (Carnegie Hall, for example), with superficially "modern" details of exterior and décor, but without any form of response or accommodation to the special needs or characteristics of the performance of contemporary music, or of the performance of music in the contemporary world. Since Carnegie Hall (which was far more "contemporary" at its inauguration, in that it provided ideal acoustic and spatial conditions for the advanced music of its time) still remains, Philharmonic Hall will evidently be assured of attracting the big box-office events of coming seasons only by virtue of its superior glamour—which primarily consists of its "newness" alone, for its acoustics are considerably inferior and its rent considerably higher.

Such conventionality of structure, design, and, presumably, function, is also reflected in the statements about underlying aims and purposes which have been made by the directors of Lincoln Center. Predictably, most of these have stressed the sheer magnitude of the project, and the vastness of the activity it is supposed to encompass. Beyond these generalizations, I have been unable to find a single enumeration of specific intentions or responsibilities, or any other indication of the existence of guiding principles. The closest one can come to anything of that kind is by digging out possible implications of such a statement as that of John D. Rockefeller 3rd, which emphasizes the "seven years filled with thousands of hours of planning and action", and the "enormously complex task of bringing Lincoln Center to the point of fruition [which] has been the self-imposed responsibility of devoted men and women from all segments of our society". Such reliance on numbers and "authority" is also revealed in his assertion that "Lincoln Center exists because leaders in the arts, education, business, labor, the professions, philanthropy, and government believe that the arts are a true measure of civilization."

It may be comprehensible that a businessman, even when acting as a spokesman for a project of this kind, should imply that Lincoln Center's main purpose is not to further the development of a vigorous artistic community, or to support the growth of higher norms of artistic awareness for both performers and listeners, but rather to offer still more manifestations of the "art" which corroborates and confirms the respectability of the respectable elements of our society. But the same implication must be drawn from the "Appreciation" signed by William Schuman, the President of Lincoln Center, who is a composer and must know better, but whose text evades the real challenges of the contemporary artistic situation in favor of a fictitious "challenge of a great audience, [which] holds the performer's highest reward", and goes on solemnly to aver that "Lincoln Center asks of an audience that it seek more than entertainment" only after making it perfectly clear that neither Lincoln Center nor its audience need feel any great urgency, beyond their "natural" inclinations, in this direction.

Perhaps it is unwise to try to derive a sense of Lincoln Center and Philharmonic Hall from the texts of statements made under the pressures of fund-raising and amid an atmosphere more reminiscent of a political-club benevolent association than of a cadre coming to grips with a complex, tricky, and difficult interface among highly disparate "segments of our society". But the same quality of thought which seems to have gone into the public face of the planning of the Center, and which has characterized the institutional behavior of the American public-music-performance establishment, was strenuously projected by everything about the programs and performances of the opening-week festival. Preparation for the week's programs seems to have been largely restricted to the devising of two principal "gimmicks": the participation of several of this country's most prestigious performing organizations; and the inclusion on each program of at least one "contemporary" work (and/or an American one). Beyond this, the programs that resulted exhibited no particular idea or ideal, or any particular or even coherent vision of the contemporary or historical musical landscapes. Here was the week-long

dedication of a modern musical monument in a modern cultural capital in which was performed not a single work by Schoenberg, Webern, or Berg, any but a single chamber work by Bartók, or anything by Stravinsky other than *Le Sacre* (now almost aged fifty) one more time, and a student-orchestra performance of the little Divertimento from *Le Baiser de la Fée*—while an entire evening was devoted to an irrelevant opera vaguely derivative of Debussy and Stravinsky (Manuel DeFalla's *Atlantida*), and other programs featured long but diversionary works by Vaughan Williams and Rachmaninoff.

My disappointments with the "American" programming—which, since this was specifically an American celebration, may be considered as a separate issue—were predictably similar. Except for the commissioned new work by Aaron Copland, and the Second String Quartet by Elliott Carter (performed on the Juilliard Quartet concert), the American works presented were mainly of the kind by means of which our orchestras manage to convince themselves that contemporary American music has as little present as it has had a past. The existence of some really remarkable American orchestral music, such as the Carter Variations, Stefan Wolpe's Symphony, or Roger Sessions's Divertimento—none of which has yet been performed in New York—would seem to have offered Lincoln Center an unparalleled opportunity to enhance its cultural prestige by conferring it, for once, on the cause of presenting American composition in all its aspects. Such a project would, necessarily, include the all too familiar facile, of course, but also the complex, difficult, and path-breaking.

A real surprise of this festival was that the timidity of the contemporary-music programming was actually surpassed by that which determined the selection of older music. Leonard Bernstein's inaugural program was obviously not intended as a serious concert in any normal sense (except for the premiere of the Copland *Connotations for Orchestra*), but rather as a demonstration of the hall's capacities with regard to maximally sustained maximum volume. The Boston Symphony (under a new conductor, so perhaps excusably) played the *Eroica* Symphony and *Til Eulenspiegel;* the Philadelphia Orchestra played Ravel's two *Daphnis and Chlöe* Suites, and the Cleveland Orchestra ventured Schubert's C Major Symphony and Brahms's Violin Concerto. Only the second Philharmonic program took any initiative; but its only novel idea was to transplant three chamber-orchestra warhorses into the framework of a "big" orchestra concert.

The direct juxtaposition of chamber and orchestral concerts within the same festival underscored how much more demanding the musical, technical, and ensemble norms of chamber groups have come to be than those of large ensembles. The most striking evidence of this disparity was in the difference between performances of Beethoven works by the Philharmonic and by the Juilliard Quartet. Leonard Bernstein conducted the Gloria movement from the *Missa Solemnis* (on opening night), and the overture "Consecration of the House" (at the first subscription concert), while the Juilliard Quartet played Op. 59, No. 2 on their concert. In some respects, particularly in the choice of unusually fast tempos, the performances were superficially similar. But the cogency of "tempo" cannot be determined either by traditional practice, or by clock-measurable "fastness" or "slowness", but only by its experiential relevance to the cognitive sense and structural proportions of an entire work. Thus the tendency of many contemporary performers to play older music faster than was the tradition may arise from the assimilation and absorption into subsequent music of forms and vocabularies which were original in that older music when it was composed, but which now resonate as entrenched music-cultural intuitions.

And, too, since instrumental techniques are also always developing, a given passage may be, in essential respects, perceptually equivalent to its originally specified speed of execution when actually being played considerably faster by today's more technically "advanced" performers. This is not to say that slow, careful tempos cannot still produce profoundly revelatory performances—witness Klemperer's readings of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Brahms. The point is that where traditional music is concerned absolute tempo is as much a fiction as is absolute pitch and absolute instrumental sound (although in recent music these qualities seem to have narrowed in their allowable margin of deviation, and perhaps allow of none at all in the performance of electronic music). Deviations within these dimensions are problematic in principle only when they are so extreme as to alter the salient characteristics of a musical form: in the realm of pitch, when registral or timbral characteristics begin to be affected (as, for example, when the open string of a violin is tuned so low that it can no longer "speak" properly), and in the realm of tempo, where instruments are driven beyond their physical abilities

to articulate, where durations are so compressed as to become indiscriminable as distinct individual events or so elongated that they cannot be perceived in a connected temporal configuration.

On such terms, the Juilliard performance of the E minor quartet was as cogent and precise as any I have heard. I was particularly struck by the subtlety of their weighting of each detail according to its position in a hierarchy of elements, and of their delineation of the intervallic and harmonic relationships, first stated within and between the two opening phrases, whose developmental possibilities the quartet explores.

By contrast, the Bernstein performances seemed indeed much too fast, since the performers were individually and collectively unable to articulate at the required speeds. I have noted here before the extensive deficiencies of the Philharmonic's instrumental and ensemble execution, but their lapses in intonation and attack seem to have increased to a point of crisis. The principal deficiency of Bernstein's tempo conception (in the "Consecration" performance) was the absence of any clear relationship of the sectional tempos to the overall sense-making characteristics of the work. In the long slow introduction to the main fugal Allegro, the phrases were over-differentiated and fragmented so that the highly concentrated connective thread was continually broken, lost amid erratic and irrelevantly emphasized details. As a result, the fugue itself, played at a speed that left most of the orchestra progressively further behind, seemed almost a separate piece, in the absence of any auditory projection of its development and resolution of the issues initiated in the introduction.

This disparity in the care and thought expended on performance, as between string quartets and orchestras, explains, at least in part, why advanced twentieth-century composers (except for Stravinsky) have composed more abundantly and significantly for quartet than for orchestra. Cause and effect are here reciprocal, and the difference in vitality and discipline becomes more marked as time goes on. And, insofar as Philharmonic Hall is concerned, the prevailing deadness of the orchestral attitudes exhibited there served to re-emphasize such issues, such that they became uncomfortably prominent in the absence of any counterbalance of authentic concept or idea.

Once upon a time, in a different context, Felix Mendelssohn wrote of the builders of musical monuments who "speculate with great names in order to give themselves great names, [and] do a deal of trumpeting in the newspapers, and treat us to ever so much bad music with real trumpets. If they wish to honor Handel in Halle, Mozart in Salzburg, and Beethoven in Bonn, by founding good orchestras and performing their works properly, then I am their man. But I do not care for their stones and blocks as long as their orchestras are only stumbling-blocks, nor for their conservatories in which there is nothing worth conserving."

11.10.62

COPLAND'S *CONNOTATIONS*

THE PRESENCE of Aaron Copland among the composers who have been commissioned by the New York Philharmonic for its inaugural season at Lincoln Center is, for all its plausibility, still something of an anomaly. While most of the other commissionees have been for long composing music of predictable stylistic consistency, Copland's music has, on the contrary, been consistently responsive to new developments, progressively assimilating new features into his stylistic manner. In the Piano Quartet (1950), Piano Fantasy (1957), and Nonet for Solo Strings (1960), resemblances to twelve-tone-generated configurations and continuities become increasingly apparent in the qualities of the linear contours, although the harmonic context remains firmly tonal-sounding. In *Connotations for Orchestra,* composed for the Philharmonic series and first performed at Philharmonic Hall on its opening night, the twelve-tone context pervades the derivational material for the whole fabric of the music, harmonic as well as melodic. Because this material is "chromatic"-sounding, the sonorous qualities of the new piece are much less explicitly tonal-like than anything in Copland's earlier music.

The twelve-tone aspect of *Connotations* consists mainly of a more or less rigorous derivation of all its passages from the three four-note brass chords with which it opens. Since these chords are made of the total content of the chromatic scale, they may be said to imply a certain ordering on the collection of twelve available pitch elements, as three four-note segments of a twelve-tone set. Beyond this, however, the compositional procedures of *Connotations* have little relation to twelve-tone-systematic qualities as such; that is, Copland makes no consistent attempt to build his musical ideas on the acutely particular properties for formal coherence and hierarchization inherently available within the twelve-tone syntax, wherein a particular ordering of the chromatic scale functions as a referential basis for a network of permutational relationships in a way very roughly analogous to the functioning of harmonic relations in a tonal work with reference to a "tonic". This, if only by definition, is the sense in which music is holistically "twelve-tone"; but the distinction is far from academic, since there is going to be a radical difference, from every syntactical, formal, and aesthetic perspective, between a sonic structure whose principles of coherence, the exact significations of all its elements, depend entirely on such an organizational assumption, and one in which similar principles are invoked as freely associative elements which contribute, along with other elements, to the specific coherence and internal clarity of a given musical context. In an interesting sense, Copland has taken imaginative advantage of the characteristics of his informal method to generate hierarchic levels among sections of *Connotations* according to their relative freedom of derivation from the "basic set" reference; the alternation of such sections creates an "inside" scheme like that of a Bach fugue, alternating strict "exposition" with unconstrained developmental "episodes".

Whatever the degree of twelve-tone involvement in *Connotations,* its qualities are closer, in all cogent respects, to Copland's own earlier music than to the music of Schoenberg or Webern, or any of the other "classical" twelve-tone inventors. In fact, the compositional attitude Copland has sustained throughout his creative life is precisely inverse to the infocussed concentration on subsurface implications and on the intensive functionalization of every textural detail as a significant articulative unit in a meaningful total structure—the transcendent structuralism of Schoenberg, Webern, Berg, and their modern descendants. Copland's music is strenuously concentrated on the acute articulate presentation of each individual event and action, on the establishment of sharply characteristic sonic profiles explicitly for the power of their gestural charge, rather than for larger or deeper formal tensions or possibilities they might entail. The technical problem in composing this kind of music is that of continuity: once stated, an essentially localized—and therefore essentially static—gesture tends to generate a quality of immobility, so that there is a perpetual compositional tension in the effort to sustain a constant sense of intensity in gesture and image over the longest possible timespan. Again, since the necessity for absolute clarity of profile necessitates the restriction of the component elements to a minimum number and complexity (usually a few fundamental triads and a narrow melodic range, reiterated unmodified or transposed wholescale to other tonal levels: in this sense, Copland has always been an instinctively "serial" composer), a composition issuing from a single gesture can rarely sustain a

long-spanned or highly ramified trajectory (listen, for example, to the separate movements of *Statements for Orchestra*).

Therefore, when composing works of large dimensions, Copland's tendency has been to oppose contrasting gestures in successive passages, creating through their alternation and successive intensification a semblance of traditional continuity that overrides the inertial closure of the gestural interiors. The relevance of this practice to the theater is apparent, and Copland's ingenuity in inventing and combining vivid melodic-harmonic-rhythmic shapes contributed, in his output dating from circa 1928 to circa 1945, to his single-handed development of a remarkable personal genre of theater and ballet music (whose surface resemblances to Stravinsky are as misleading as are those of *Connotations* to Schoenberg). The outstanding results—*Billy the Kid* and *Appalachian Spring*—are obvious masterpieces, of a new kind.

In his non-theatrical music, Copland seems to take the popular designation of "abstract" quite seriously; he seems to embody in each such work a kind of gestural contour which seems to be trying to express "abstraction" itself quite literally as a quality. Every piece of this character, beginning stunningly with the Piano Variations of 1930, seems to have been left in a starkly unfleshed precompositional state, left to speak in the form of a schematic delineation of gesture and utterance rather than as a fully textured rhetorical organism. Embellishment and inflection are strenuously repressed, so that each successive attack appears to stand in for an entire textural region with uniform expository assertiveness.

In these respects, *Connotations* lies directly in the line of the major piano music: the Variations, Sonata, and Fantasy, down to the cut of its thematic and motivic materials: the three initiating chords (actually the same chord registered three different ways) are like those at the beginning of the Sonata, except that instead of the diatonic triad with "dissonant" note integral to the "neoclassic" gesture of the Sonata, the "chromaticism" of *Connotations* is manifested in a chordal construct consisting of a diminished triad with an added fifth. Strong reminiscences of the theme of the Variations surface, too, in the very first noticeable horizontalized event in the strings; and later, the telescoping theme of the Third Symphony appears fleetingly to confirm the motif of self-quotation. In orchestration, too, there is evident allusion to the "transcribed piano" style of *Statements* and the Orchestral Variations.

Connotations, like the most path-breaking earlier works, takes the form of a set of variations. But the sense of effective over-arching directionality which galvanizes the Piano Variations is not in evidence here; instead there extrudes an often uncomfortable sense of mechanical formal contrivance in the passage among variations, as each successive climax overpredictably surpasses the preceding in timbral weight, volume, and resonance, while the absence of an inner sense of significant intensification leaves the gestures sounding hollow.

And where the narrow range of pitch material in earlier works posited a clearly defined basis for the perception of change and inflection, the wider latitude of the "twelve-tone" material of *Connotations* generates a mushier sound consistency which masks rather than illuminates the subtle moves from "strict" to "free" elaborations, and emphasizes the purely external connections among the variations. I am aware throughout the piece of an unintegrated relation between horizontal and vertical qualities beyond the literal, sometimes over-literal, "horizontalization" of the underlying harmonies. And the rhythmic contours, surprisingly four-square for Copland, also seem like an applied dimension of texture not obviously motivated by the total sense of what else is transpiring. This rhythmic problem is particularly exposed in the variation that begins with a percussion solo; here—as in the orchestration of the Piano Variations—it seems to me that Copland miscalculates by equating the resonant percussive clangor of the piano with the "dead" impacting of orchestral percussion instruments. It is probably not coincidental that the sections of *Connotations* which leap to the ear with instant vividness are two solo piano interludes which are like intensely concentrated summations of the essential contents of the whole work, and bring back, if only momentarily, the electricity of the Piano Variations.

Unquestionably, this essay at an *"avant-garde"* gesture was an act of serious courage for Aaron Copland—just how courageous it was was certified on the spot by the edgy near-silence which greeted *Connotations* at its first performance. That the considerable resourcefulness and care with which the work is invested is not fully projected by its auditory imprint may be salient evidence of the particular strength that the twelve-tone *syntax* may have as a means for the significant compositional control and articulation of the twelve-tone *material.* It is, moreover, a valuable strength rather than a dismissable failing of Copland's new work that it raises, and contributes much substance to, serious thoughts about serious contemporary musical questions such as this.

11.24.62

LIVE PERFORMANCE IN A CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

THE SPECIAL VALUE of a live concert is not only the presence of significant music performed with skill and penetration, but also in the cogent musical intelligence conveyed by the construction of the occasion as a whole. But such cogency, whatever form it may take, is hardly to be expected within the rigid and unrealistic framework of the modern concert-giving world. Ever since composers and performers became functionally, intellectually, and artistically alienated (say, after 1920), the realm of public musical performance has been artificialized, out of contact with the living growth of music, sustained mainly by narcissism and cultural inertia.

The result is that concert programs are designed to serve the celebrity of performers rather than the enlightenment of listeners, and that works are chosen, not for their individual or inter-individual qualities, but according to a mechanical formula in which each is merely a representation of one of the "types" of music that has come to be standard on a mainstream concert program. Even responsible and serious musicians must conform to the "representative-program" requirement if they are to continue being engaged by concert managers. And even in the cases where the individual works are chosen with wisdom and care, the total event structure is always going to be arranged to insure the invariable representation of the inevitable "categories" in the approved order.

The problem about these otherwise innocuous practices is that they supplant something of serious importance: the performer's essential function as the public exponent and interpreter of a developing musical literature within a living musical culture. This literature simply cannot be adequately represented by largely historical concert programs, no matter how seriously intended they are. Nor, for that matter, can it be fully served by those indispensible "new-music" events which, as literally "avant-garde", reveal only the furthest points reached by new musical thought along a road which is, as far as the concert-goer is concerned, increasingly uncharted. Not only does the "new music" need to be heard often and in many contexts and circumstances, but its development and origins in tradition need constantly to be defined and re-evaluated. It is only in fulfilling this function that public performance of *all* music can reacquire cogency; the proper "standard repertory" should be the body of works which form *present* tradition, indispensibly including those newly identified "classics" in terms of which any intelligible attitude toward the entire literature of music from the present-day perspective must be formed.

The changes in attitudes and formats which such an awareness would entail are radical. For one thing, twentieth-century music is increasingly less homogeneous in its range of media, so that a piano, violin, or string quartet recital in the old sense is not likely to be productive of relevant perception; a mixture of media, however more cumbersome and expensive, reflects much more accurately the contemporary temper. And rather than professing to "serve the public" by pleasing an audience that really has no idea of what it wants, or might come to want, performers must begin to cultivate in their audiences an awareness of substance and quality through the experiences created by their concerts. In that context, the place of historical music is genuine and essential; the experience of a Beethoven violin sonata on a program consisting also of chamber music for varying ensembles by, say, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Roger Sessions, and some younger innovators could be a seriously creative event addressing clearly what was still alive and developing in Beethoven's music, as well as how the recent music is deeply involved with Beethoven's tradition.

Up to now, concerts reflecting any of these awarenesses have taken place mainly on university campuses, where their quality and frequency has been severely limited by the inadequacy of the available performing resources. So the concert of twentieth-century "classics" given in New York on November 8 at Carnegie Recital Hall under the direction of Gunther Schuller was an initiatory event of the highest significance for our public musical culture, as much for the sheer stunning professionalism of these "modern-music" performances as for its demonstration of the continuing musical potency still derivable from an evening of "familiar" music. The musical quality of the program was such that no thematic gimmicks were necessary to give it the semblance of im-

portance; nevertheless, Gunther Schuller felt obliged to title his concert "Twentieth Century Innovations", and to describe his series as a group of "music-historical formats". Which raised such quite unnecessary questions as whether Darius Milhaud's "poème plastique" *L'homme et son désir* and Messiaen's *Oiseaux Exotiques* qualify as primary innovations of this century alongside of Webern's Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 10, Stravinsky's Octet, and Schoenberg's Kammersymphonie.

As it was, the clarity of Schuller's performances made it optional to read his program notes. Perhaps not especially searching or original as a conductor, he still seems full of knowledge about the ways instruments articulate, project, and combine, as well as how they were specifically intended to do so by each composer in each individual work. The program he chose really brought out his best qualities, since all the pieces except for Schoenberg's make their most important points via instrumental characteristics. The Milhaud *L'homme* is one of the most interesting of his "South American" works, chiefly because of its textural antiphony, intricate (though overextended) rhythmic ostinato underlays, and a prophetically continuous background of (mostly *pianissimo*) percussion. Each of the Webern pieces projects its essentially simple formal idea in a single intense timbral image; the most remarkable is the sustained fabric of mandolin-guitar chords in the third piece. Messiaen's birdcalls are inoffensively garrulous and gossipy, and mostly cleared out space for the wonderful pianist Paul Jacobs and the ensemble of winds to demonstrate how scintillatingly they could overcome immense technical difficulties.

Schuller's reading of the Stravinsky Octet was particularly resourceful in its careful recreation of Stravinsky's own (performance) approach, particularly in the subtly unemphatic way beats and accents are incised. Instrumental balances were explicitly calculated to produce clear and specific harmonic and linear structures, although some articulative trouble developed in the most intricately dovetailed figurations (as, the scalar runs of the second movement). In the Schoenberg Kammersymphonie, however, Schuller was less successful in sustaining the long and involuted sense-making thread through the hyperextended complex spans of dense contrapuntal and harmonic evolution. Even so, this performance always gave experiential access to the remarkable capacity of Schoenberg's composing "ear" to project a clear unequivocal sense of sonic location, despite a certain formal confusion arising from the idea of controlling a full-blown chromaticism with the clean-cut practices of straightforward Classicism.

Perhaps the most auspicious aspect of this concert was the appearance in this kind of event of an ensemble of freelance players drawn from the élite of New York's instrumental aristocracy. Together they gave an almost matter-of-fact demonstration of flawless ensemble technique in terms of balance, attack, agility, and articulation—all on three rehearsals. If this series continues at this level, it could become a superlative model for the kind of thorough reinvigoration of public musical activity which I have been earnestly advocating.

1.12.63

RECORDS: J. S. BACH'S *BRANDENBURG CONCERTOS*

BACH: *Brandenburg Concertos* (complete). Hugh Bean, violin; Adolf Scherbaum, trumpet; Gareth Morris, Arthur Ackroyd, flutes; Sidney Sutcliffe, oboe; George Malcolm, harpsichord. Philharmonia Orchestra. Otto Klemperer, cond. Angel 3627 B (S).

THE SIX Bach *Brandenburg Concertos* are a prophetic realization of a remarkable structural idea: the creation of large-scale instrumental forms whose essential articulations are projected mainly through tone-color variation, in terms of matching and contrasting timbral volumes, weights and intensities. Each concerto displays a unique facet of the idea of instrumental differentiation and similitude, and every ensemble is not only distinctively composed but also displays a particular degree of textural density, contrast, brilliance and dynamic and registral range. These qualities also determine the nature of the melodic and rhythmic materials which, in a sense, are reversed in function so that they take on a curiously "neutral" role like the one ordinarily assigned to an instrumental "medium" whose function is to direct attention to the principal carriers of the forward motion. As a result, too, the usual developmental pattern of variable melodic and harmonic elements defined against more or less regular instrumental repetition also tends to reverse, so that melodic and rhythmic figures, and even the harmonic movement, seem only a reflection of the striking changes in instrumentation.

Thus in the first movement of the first concerto, the rich-textured ensemble is divided into three homogeneous timbral groups (oboes, horns, strings), each of which maintains its own repetitive melodic-rhythmic pattern against the others in various combinations of simultaneity, giving the sense of the constant addition and subtraction of large volumes of independent sonorities whose appearances contribute to the total ensemble without losing their individual identities. On the other hand, the instrumental group of the sixth concerto (violas, violas da gamba, cello, bass and continuo) creates a sonic atmosphere of minimal differentiation. Therefore, the harmonic and melodic movement is equivalently uniform and slow throughout, and the texture is either steadily maintained or consists of the alteration of a few large blocks. In this context, even the subtlest changes in dynamic, register and timbre, which would go completely unnoticed in more active surroundings, can be rendered intelligible and, despite the overall stasis, can satisfy the conditions of a complete formal statement.

The most intriguing aspect of these works is unquestionably the way they make the listener intensely aware, as perhaps no other music does, of the sharply individual characteristics of instruments, in terms of how they are made to sound, how they respond, how their responses to the same general articulative command (such as staccato or legato) are dissimilar, as well as how their particular way of being fingered, bowed, blown, struck, etc., determines the very different melodic and rhythmic figures that can be attained.

Otto Klemperer's recorded performance of the *Brandenburg Concerti* is the first to reveal a full awareness of their special qualities and a deep sense of how they are to be projected. Unlike every other conductor who has attempted them, Klemperer is not misled into finding them "pretty", or imposing a "grand manner" which is supposed to lend them a substance they presumably lack in themselves, or invoking performance practice rules which may apply to all of the ten thousand other Baroque concertos, but cannot possibly apply to a group of works which follow the generalities of such conventions at no perceivable point. Instead, he copes brilliantly with such problems as that of balancing, in the Second Concerto, a solo group consisting of such utterly contrasting instruments as trumpet, flute, violin and oboe, all of whom are not only constantly exchanging roles (trumpet plays accompaniment to violin!) but sometimes play together as a four-voiced contrapuntal complex. He is also aware of the futility of emphasizing the reappearance of the fugue subject of No. 4, last movement, since this is the one most clearly established element and thus tends to be heard at the expense of the other voices in any case. Dynamic problems are especially severe, since perceptible crescendos and decrescendos would utterly destroy the structure of fixed volumes on which all the sense of the concertos depends. But this, in turn, has nothing to do with the pedant's "no dynamics", which simply means the abandon-

ment of the possibility of making distinctions between sectional intensities.

Among the most successful aspects of the performances are the rather slow tempi adopted by Klemperer. Particularly in the opening movement of No. 1, where dense textural elements are in continual juxtaposition, crisscrossing in the same register, the deliberation leaves exactly the necessary amount of room so that notes belonging to different timbral groups pass one another without colliding, and hence preserve beautifully the sense of individuation within the ensemble that is essential to the movement. The cross-rhythm in the horns that signals the cadences is also rendered perceptually significant for the first time in my experience.

The performance of No. 5, however, seems clearly superior to all the rest, in large part because of the superlative harpsichord playing of George Malcolm, the superlative sound of his harpsichord, and the excellent quality of the recording. The most exciting experience in the entire set was actually to *hear* the little curl with which the harpsichord enters amid the ensemble in the first movement. Almost as memorable was the conductor's maintenance of the sense of phrase during the long stretches of flute fragments, as well as the imperceptible bringing of the flute sound *under* the harpsichord in preparation for the cadenza—this is done by a decrescendo, but it is so controlled that it sounds like a change in registration.

The soloists are uniformly flawless, but one notes especially Adolf Scherbaum's high trumpet playing in No. 2 and Hugh Bean's articulation of every note in the whirlwind violin music of No. 4. The ensemble precision, especially in the wind attacks, and the beauty of instrumental sound attained by the Philharmonia under Klemperer has been noted here before, but it seems, if anything, still more unforced in these performances. Perhaps the difference is principally in the recorded sound, which, as mentioned above, is superb.

3.16.63

CONVERGENCE AND COLLABORATION: COMPOSERS, PERFORMERS, ELECTRONICS—AND DARMSTADT

THE SUDDEN reinvolvement of composers and performers in each other's concerns and activities has been one of the most interesting developments in postwar music. During the first half of the century, their progressive alienation seemed to have become a permanently inescapable fact of musical life, and the performance of new music was mainly notable for its absence or hopeless inadequacy. The consequences of such a situation for composers were especially serious because most of the important works of the time embodied new concepts of structure whose perceptual significance and validity could be established, ultimately, only through accurate performance. As a result of the frustrating ignorance and indifference with which they were confronted, composers were forced into a paradoxical position: on the one hand, they asserted the essential superfluity of the performer's "interpretive" role; on the other, they found it necessary to increase the technical demands of their works to match the growth of their ideas, and thus became even more in need of the performer's "executive" participation.

But just when the availability of electronic instruments had finally suggested one resolution of this dilemma, by building completely correlated performance directly into the compositional act and thus circumventing the performer entirely, there began to appear—perhaps in response to the very prospect of eventual loss of function—a new kind of performer who not only had mastered the technique and vocabulary of "classic" twentieth-century music as a matter of course, but also seemed ready to devote himself to the conquest of the most challenging new music. In response, even those composers whose predilections almost demanded the precise control of complex relationships obtainable only with electronic resources found themselves drawn to re-examine the possibilities still latent in "live" performance. Milton Babbitt, for example, has become as closely associated with Bethany Beardslee and Robert Helps as with the RCA Music Synthesizer, and has produced instrumental, instrumental-vocal and vocal-electronic works closely related to his purely synthesized music.

At the same time, the existence of electronic media had far-reaching implications for "non-electronic" composers: the necessity, when composing electronically, to generate each sound in terms of its acoustical components, all of which were previously available automatically by the mere specification of an instrument, brought about for all music a fundamental revision of every assumption about musical sound, articulation and combination. Evidently, when we innocently say "oboe" or "violin", we invoke the confluence of a large number of complex and dynamic physical, physiological and psychological factors (for example, so many physical characteristics of a low oboe note are different from those of a high one that it is difficult to determine why we hear both notes as part of the same "tone color" complex). A similarly thoroughgoing inquiry into the "presentational" implications of performed music, "virtuosity", the ensemble situation, the concerto idea, etc., became the basis for entire developments of personal approaches to structure and style, most notably in the works written since 1945 by Elliott Carter.

And even the characteristic "performance technique" of much electronic music, that effortless rattling off of streams of brightly separate pitches in lightning-quick and prismatically varying succession (a sound that is supposed, by the usual prophets of doom, to signify complete dehumanization) has so delighted many composers of instrumental music that they have tried to achieve an analogous texture, and have dared their performer to compete, like John Henry, with the indefatigable machine. Carter's most recent works, particularly the *Double Concerto,* are saturated with this idea and draw much of their considerable fascination from it; and the newer music of Stefan Wolpe (as well as of such younger composers as Robert Erickson, Kenneth Gaburo, Roger Reynolds and Charles Wuorinen) seems almost a literal attempt to compose electronic music "live".

But the renewed vitality of both performance and composition that has resulted from this interaction is of a very different order from the spectacular radicalism of the European

Darmstadt school (a number of whose recorded works are listed at the end of this column). On the surface, their approach seems merely a more complete exploitation of a similar *rapprochement,* in which the performer is actually given an active role in the determination of the nature of new music. To begin with, this entails the development of a whole vocabulary of novel sound materials and articulative devices, along with transcendent agility in their production in any number and combination, at any speed. The expressive qualities inherent in these resources then, naturally, become central components of new music, as composers structure their works to appropriate and explore the new sensibilities and images made available by the innovations of their performer colleagues. The most extreme manifestation of this phenomenon is unquestionably the conversion by Severino Gazzeloni of the basically monotonal flute into a veritable one-man orchestra that can produce percussive sounds (by key-tapping), glissandos, a range of sound from piercing whistles to barely audible sighs, and uncountable varieties of shakes, swells, flutter-tonguings, etc., which have called into being an entire genre of solo flute works.

But there is a problematic inherent in this idealized "partnership". The discovery of new performance techniques is significant only when it arises from the composer's need to project an original idea in precise aural terms; and it usually conflicts with the conventional patterns to which performers have become habituated. Bach's struggle to discipline his choirboys, Beethoven's rage at the quartet players' "miserable fiddle", Brahms's concerto "against the violin", the "unplayable" chord around which Stravinsky's Violin Concerto is constructed, the "six-fingered violinist" for whom Schoenberg admitted to have composed his concerto, and the "unperformable" vocal writing of the Webern Cantatas, are all instances of the broad enlargements of technique brought about by such necessities. But when this situation is reversed, as in the Darmstadt works in question, the new music itself becomes, ultimately, another vehicle for more or less dazzling acrobatics which, once heard, have exhausted their musical interest. Even the fully "composed" works on Gazzeloni's record (including Castiglioni's *Gymel,* Maderna's *Honeyrêves,* and Matsudaira's *Somaksah*) and the composed *Frammento* by Sylvano Bussotti recorded by Cathy Berberian (Gazzeloni's counterpart in a female vocalist), are musically distinct from one another mainly in the extent to which they exploit the virtuosity of the performers. Thus the collaboration that, according to the Darmstadt ideology, has created an entirely new musical world, is really new only in the degree (and even, perhaps, the disingenuousness) of its capitulation to the ascendancy of the virtuoso-performance culture, and of its reduction of the creative compositional function to the status of movie-script writing or the skeletal crafting of seventeenth-century carpet concertos.

In the context of this basic orientation, it seems natural that other aspects of musical doctrine identified with Darmstadt would contrast at every point with the concerns of traditionally serious musicians. The Darmstadt doctrine that electronic music should be free of any kind of identifiable traditional-music references, for example, leads them into generating wholescale successions of novel sonorous events among which are created no perceptual basis for the articulation of meaningful differences or similarities in context; and thus the "newness" of the local sound is neutralized, ultimately, by the grey sonic "sameness" which seems the invariable output of a series of events connected primarily by such extravagant dissociation. By contrast, the electronic music of Milton Babbitt's *Vision and Prayer* seems far more externally "different"—and internally individuated—in its sound as music, immediately and ultimately, despite its conspicuous avoidance of "new sound", probably because its "differentness" is being perceived against a measurable frame of traditional reference (namely, a twelve-tone organization in which linear, rhythmic, timbral, dynamic and registral elements are perceptually interrelated).

The Darmstadt composers' lack of concern for this kind of cognitive continuity in the musical language, and in the perceptual apprehensibility of their new music, was evident even at the historical beginning of their activity. Early on, their version of "totally controlled" music, ostensibly derived from Anton von Webern's epiphanies, seemed to be formed according to abstract principles of supposed internal-structural correlation that had nothing discernably to do with Webern's radical distillation of wholly tradition-rooted music-perceptual qualities; and the net effect of such arbitrary rationalism is, predictably, a virtual randomness in the perceptual surface of the sound objects composed according to its algorithms. Conse-

quently, the encounter of the Darmstadt composers with the "actual" randomness of John Cage's output created an immediate affinity for his ideas among them, as the arbitrary total-systematic and the systematically totally arbitrary were evidently not just akin, but essentially equivalent, musically and philosophically as well.

Thus, even the Darmstadt music whose "sound" is overtly Webern-like betrays an obvious blockout of the awareness that Webern's sound arose as a direct consequence of his intense "classicism", his search for the absolute minimum of statement required to produce a discernible form, pursued with a miraculously sensitive instinct for precise choice of pitch and, even more, for precise dimension. To extend such a sound, with such implications, through a conventionally expansive development, as Bruno Maderna does in Serenata No. 2; or to convert its refined tracery into brute aggressive primitivism, as Luigi Nono does in *Polifonica-Monodia-Ritmica* (with, nevertheless, an undeniable *macho* flair); or to exaggerate all its deliberately understated relationships by converting small, coherent groups of individual pitches articulated by rests into frantic sound-clusters stretching to the outer limits of the audible range, separated by heavy silence, as Niccolo Castiglioni does in *Tropi,* is grossly to disengage from the musical interest of those who, from the music of Schoenberg as well as Webern, learned to value intense, precisely realized invention, subtlety, and integrity within the "atonal" context.

But the very concept of compositional responsibility is, finally, abdicated entirely in those works whose very identity consists only of setting up "situations" within which performers can, in varying degrees, decide what to play. Unfortunately, although such improvisation might aspire to compensate for the loss of "newness" after first performances, the usual result is not only that all presumably different performances of a work will sound alike, but that different compositions written for approximately similar instrumental combinations will also sound alike. For under the pressure to produce instantaneous "new music", it is primarily a player's most firmly entrenched instincts—read, musical habits derived from the patterns of the music he has already been most accustomed to play—which will most firmly determine the output of this "freedom" to compose and invent spontaneously in the act of public performance. Thus, despite the description by Karlheinz Stockhausen of his intention in composing *Zyklus* to create a work with "no beginning and no end", the resultant music seems just about what would happen from confronting a percussionist with several percussion instruments, and instructions not to play too loudly. Such verbal conceptions seem to be the principal medium through which the Darmstadt composers seek still to shape and determine the experience of their music—on the same record sleeve Mauricio Kagel articulates the concept of his *Transicion II* as the "grammatical problem of how the past, present, and future can be fused in one single declension."

Another creative problem that seems inherent in "indeterminate" music is that even the farthest out players, if left on their own, begin to fall into the clichés of their own discoveries, into generic patterns and configurational routines, as they are left unconfronted by the challenges of the new demands and new ideas of the compositional Other. And the restriction of a player's performance activity to the single "school" of his own circle, cultivated intensely within the Darmstadt "collaboration", encourages a peculiar hermetic egoism in these performers which contrasts vividly with the mindset of other younger players, seriously seeking to develop a significant re-creative relation to the entire historical and contemporary musical literature. From the Time recordings listed below, it is not apparent that either Severino Gazzeloni or Cathy Berberian has developed sensational ranges or qualities of sound, nor the executional power to function creatively or commandingly within even unproblematically "controlled" contexts (witness Gazzeloni's suprisingly weak performance of Olivier Messiaen's "normally" composed *Merles Noirs*). There is really no common reference among the conceptual and executional qualities in the performances of these musicians, and those in the playing of the Juilliard String Quartet, Bethany Beardslee, Robert Helps, or the conducting of Robert Craft, Jacques-Louis Monod, or Gunther Schuller.

Perhaps the most explicit substantiation of such observations is the way in which the music of Luciano Berio stands out in its surroundings on these Time records. One is at once aware of the totally different experience of genuine "hearing" that is unmistakable in music organized, however inexplicitly, on a thread of perceptible idea, and developed with coherence,

integrity, and compositional ingenuity. That *Differences,* with its engaging but rather limited interplay between instruments and their own sounds recorded and manipulated, is by so much the most interesting work I have yet heard by a Darmstadt composer, makes it seem especially valuable that there are in our world so many other simultaneous, diverse spheres of musical activity where important new music is being composed.

Records

KAGEL: *Transicion II.* STOCKHAUSEN: *Zyklus. Refrain.* David Tudor, Aloys Kontarsky, pianists; Cristoph Caskel, Bernhard Kontarsky, percussion. Time. S/8001.

BERIO: *Differences.* MADERNA: Serenata No. 2. NONO: *Polifonica-Monodia-Ritmica.* English Chamber Orchestra, Luciano Berio and Bruno Maderna, conds. Time. S/8002.

BERIO-CUMMINGS: *Circles.* BUSSOTTI: *Frammento.* Cathy Berberian, voice; Francis Pierre, harp; Jean Pierre Drouet, percussion I; Boris de Vinogradov, percussion II; L. Berio, piano. Time. S/8003.

CASTIGLIONI: *Tropi;* FELLEGARA: *Serenata.* KELEMAN: *Etudes Contrapuntiques.* YUN: *Musik für sieben Instrumente.* Hamburger Kammersolisten. Francis Travis, cond. Time. S/8006.

BERIO: *Sequenza.* CASTIGLIONI: *Gymel.* EVANGELISTI: *Proporzioni.* MADERNA: *Honeyrêves.* MATSUDAIRA: *Somaksah.* MESSIAEN: *Merles Noirs.* Severino Gazzeloni, flute. Aloys Kontarsky, piano. Time. S/8008.

4.6.63

THE PRESENCE OF ELLIOTT CARTER

WHENEVER I have discussed recent compositional activity in this column, references to the work and thought of Elliott Carter and Milton Babbitt have been a persistently recurrent leitmotif. To a great extent, this is obviously a critical judgment; but it also reflects the remarkable degree to which their influences have been felt in almost every important area of present-day American composition. Of all the composers of the now-emergent "middle generation", these two have made the decisive discoveries, have developed musical languages which are not only unmistakably their own, but which also have crystallized the thinking of most of their younger colleagues, as the languages of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, in the twenties, did for theirs. In fact, Carter's First String Quartet of 1951 was surrounded then by an immediate and widespread excitement that inevitably called to mind the impact of Stravinsky's "revolutionary" works, if on a considerably smaller scale; and if Carter's Quartet is, in this sense, the *Sacre* of the postwar generation, then Babbitt's *Vision and Prayer* is its *Pierrot Lunaire*.

The parallel, moreover, has deeper implications than such a superficial historical conceit may indicate. For Babbitt's music is clearly on the Schoenberg side of the ubiquitous twentieth-century duality, which is to say that it approaches the problem of creating new sound structures entirely from within, so that all its sonorous qualities derive from necessities of structural articulation; then, too, as the most consequential twelve-tone composer-theorist since Schoenberg, Babbitt is in another sense his direct heir. Carter's affinity to Stravinsky, on the other hand, is evident in his direct preoccupation with textures, modes of presentation, and other "external" ideas that form the basis for internal coherence as well as for surface continuity. In the presented sound of their music, however, the analogies are paradoxically reversed: the cool, lucid pitch constellations that arise from Babbitt's Schoenberg-derived procedures are a genuine evolution (via Webern but free of his Teutonic squareness) of the *secco* manner of Stravinsky's music from *Petrouchka* to *The Flood* and beyond; whereas the highly charged, multilayered surface of Carter's works recalls the Schoenberg of the Five Orchestral Pieces, Op. 16, and even more the Berg of Opus 6.

But neither Carter nor Babbitt can be regarded as continuing a purely European tradition within the American environment, nor as somehow manifesting what European music itself might have been had not Schoenberg and Stravinsky emigrated to America. Carter's music particularly is rooted in the traditions of prewar American music; but both he and Babbitt share a characteristically American '"independence" in their searching re-evaluation of conventional assumptions and traditional functions, within which they seek out fundamental principles of continuity and relationship. Thus, the moral and intellectual influence of Schoenberg and Stravinsky on American music had been immense, but it was only with the appearance of the Carter First Quartet that the possibility of an American music on a wholly new level of structural and artistic cogency was perceived.

Indeed, any assessment of the galvanic effect of that work must proceed from an awareness of the way that Carter has translated the loosely conceived and arbitrarily realized gestures of prewar "American" music into a coherent set of formal and articulative procedures, and, in so doing, has created a new kind of musical continuity. In his early theater works, composed before the Piano Sonata of 1945-6, hints of this style are already, with hindsight, unmistakable, but there they arise more from a context of literary "appropriateness" than as integral events in a consistent structural fabric. Thus, such a balletic orchestral work as *Pocahontas* (1937)—whose presentational character is explicit—contains many more such prophetic moments (as: the abrasively opposed "levels" at the opening of the second movement, the "out-of-phase" pulsating bass in the third) than does such an "absolute" work as the Symphony No. 1 (1942).

The remarkable discovery that enabled Carter to convert such mildly adventurous incidents in a largely conventional framework into a significantly new compositional approach was the realization that these theatrical "situations" could provide the basis for analogous instrumental situations. With instruments as "charac-

ters" in more than a fanciful sense, their "characteristic" sonorities and articulative styles became primary molders of structure. The Piano Sonata (recently recorded for Epic by Charles Rosen), an early probe into this expressive landscape, takes its basic departure from the resonances and overtone qualities of the piano-instrument itself; so that, although "neoclassic" tonality is still prominent, a listener is made aware of a more essential "harmonic" movement in terms of the degrees of brilliance and range, projected out of the tonal pitch conjunctions, through which are built the successive intensifications and resolutions of each movement.

The balletic device of superimposed "levels" also becomes, in Carter's evolving music, a basic mode of articulation: the 1948 Cello Sonata opens with a long section in which a regular pulsation of staccato piano notes both defines and opposes the irregularly inflected movement of the legato cello line, whose changes almost never coincide with the piano's attacks. Carter's resourceful response to the threat of stasis here is to plot carefully (as also in the Piano Sonata) the progressive widening in the sonorous range and the imperceptible changes in the relative weights of the instrumental "parts", so that the seemingly rigid motile texture is given an ongoing sense that propels it with cumulative force into the second section, where the rhythmic tensions are dissolved.

The first full exploitation of these ideas as the sole generators of a major composition was in the First Quartet. Here, each movement is an intensive exploration of a different situational relationship: four-part independence in the first; a single continuous line in the second; the opposition, approach, and re-opposition of two violently contrasting "levels" (sustained consonances in the two violins, brusque interjections in the viola and cello) in the third; and a "variations" procedure in the fourth that divides the texture into sharply characterized "melody", "accompaniment", and "figuration" elements, whose constantly shifting relative placements in time and space generate an urgent forward motion.

The way in which these sonorous levels are kept distinct amid the crowding handfuls of notes is one of the most distinguishing qualities of Carter's music. Though the intent is primarily gestural, it is supported acoustically by the careful choice of each pitch for its sonorous ability to maintain the audibility of the individual components of a texture. This entirely nontraditional attitude also defines the unique "harmonic" sound of Carter's music, which is as "chromatic" as Schoenberg's but has none of Schoenberg's "antitonal" tensions; since Carter's forms imply no analogies to traditional functions, as Schoenberg's clearly were intended to do, the range of sounds in his music can be chosen from the gamut of available elements without creating disturbing incongruities.

Each of Carter's more recent works seems to derive from the isolation and full exploration of one of the ideas with which the First Quartet overflows. For example, the Variations for Orchestra (1954-55), which were performed earlier this season by the Philadelphia Orchestra, seem to be almost a direct continuation of the last movement of the Quartet, even to the extent of quoting its material, but especially in their development of tempo change as a variational device, and of the filmlike "cutting" and "flashback" techniques that characterize the Quartet's special performance "breaks". The "scenario" of the Variations was described by Carter himself as a progression from maximum to minimum differentiation—and back. Within this general plan, the sections also seem to follow an "inside" one, in which two separate "plots" derived from elements of the opening are developed in alternating variations, then brought together and resolved at the end. The sense of movement in terms of tempos rather than rhythms is most striking in the fourth variation, a series of retardations and sudden returns to tempo, and in the sixth, where an even-note line gets faster and faster, then is "imitated" at the original speed, giving the ear a jolting reorientation to slow-motion that feels like jumping from a quickly accelerating train onto one just beginning to move; at the end, all the lines seem to run away together and disappear over the top of the orchestra.

In the Second String Quartet (1959), the idea of individual instrumental characterization reaches toward an extreme realization; the work seems to consist of four independent paths traversed through four separate instrumental parts, each with its own characteristic material and manner, whose interrelation is that of carefully planned fortuity. The "simultaneous solo" quality of the work is still further emphasized by the four semi-"accompanied" cadenzas, one for each instrument; the cadenza idea itself is, in fact, the extreme limit of instrumental self-sufficiency. Thus, in the recent Double Concerto for Piano and Harpsichord with two chamber orchestras (1961), both solo parts (to judge

from the recording alone) appear to be composed entirely of cadenza fragments. But a paradox arises here, for the instrumental differentiation represented by "total cadenza" is offset by the essential neutrality of all cadenzas, so that the solo material, in both piano and harpsichord, seems "over-identified". Of course, this work is too intricate, fragile and unfamiliar to be fully perceived as yet. And the presence of such clearly brilliant moments as the overlapping of sustained wind notes which balance with pure pitch (eliminating the "percussive" attacks of the harpsichord and piano) the purely unpitched percussion of the opening, indicates that even the sections which now seem to come close to disintegration may actually be coherently formed. And perhaps disintegration itself has here been controlled and transformed to function as still another new voice within Carter's remarkable polyphony.

Some relevant recordings:

ELLIOTT CARTER: Double Concerto (1961). Ralph Kirkpatrick, harpsichord; Charles Rosen, piano; Gustav Meier, cond. Epic LC 3830; BC 1157 (S).

Eight Etudes and a Fantasy (1950). New York Woodwind Quintet. CRI 118.

The Minotaur (1946). Eastman Rochester Orchestra, Howard Hanson, cond. Mercury 50103.

Pocahontas (1937-39). Zurich Radio Orchestra, Jacques Monod, cond. Piano Sonata. Charles Rosen. Epic LC 3850. BC 1250 (S).

Quartet No. 1 (1951). Walden Quartet. Columbia ML 5104.

Quartet No. 2 (1959). Juilliard Quartet. Victor LM/LSC 2481.

Sonata for Flute, Oboe, Cello and Harpsichord (1952). Anabel Brieff, flute; Josef Marx, oboe; Loren Bernsohn, cello; Robert Conant, harpsichord. Columbia ML 5576; MS 6176 (S).

Symphony No. 1 (1942). Louisville Orchestra, Robert Whitney, cond. Louisville 611.

Variations for Orchestra (1955). Louisville Orchestra, Robert Whitney, cond. Louisville 58-3.

5.4.63

JAZZ AS "CONTEMPORARY MUSIC"

WHETHER OR NOT Gunther Schuller meant to imply, by devoting his entire final concert of Twentieth Century Innovations to jazz and jazz-based composition, that jazz is the wave of the musical future, and whether or not the particular "recent developments in jazz" represented on the program constitute only a limited area within the total activity, the concert made it strikingly evident that a wide diversity of approaches and means is as characteristic of contemporary jazz as it is of formal composition. The first half of this program consisted entirely of efforts to generate "formal" compositions out of the special properties of jazz materials, efforts which carry the idea of jazz outside the improvisational context altogether, into that of fully notated and predetermined music. On the other hand, the pure improvisations by Eric Dolphy on the second half went to another extreme by totally suppressing any of the constraints of traditional jazz which provide frames of reference against which the individual qualities of individual jazz improvisations can be articulated.

The basic difficulty posed by both of these "radical" approaches is the necessity to define the actual perceptual nature of jazz itself, to determine which are the essential factors whose presence, even when dissociated from the contexts of traditional formulas, still generates a meaningful sense of "jazz". From this point of view, the Dolphy improvisations seem like the jazz analogs of the Darmstadt experimental musics discussed here recently. Dolphy's systematic subversion of any reminiscent features of the tunes he is nominally improvising on beneath an endless stream of personal intrumental mannerisms (which seem to remain the same for every number, consisting prominently of a monochrome kazoo saxophone sound, and cumulatively quick-changing juxtapositions of shorter and shorter patches of fast high-energy configurations in vastly separated spacial registration) have a strong kinship with Severino Gazzeloni's "avant-garde" flute playing. Dolphy's extreme exaggerations of essentially conventional jazz patterns—not anything like a reinvention of the fundamental materials, procedures, and purposes of the jazz artform—simply creates a drastically constricted and primitive subjazz, producing a lot of energy in which it seems that nothing much is going to happen.

Of the composed pieces, the four by Andre Hodeir that opened the program revealed the deepest and most fruitful awareness of these questions, progressing chronologically in the subtlety and range of their solutions. In *Paradoxe I* (1953) for jazz quartet, a fully organized pitch-motivic succession is simply squeezed into jazz-figurational shapes over a regular beat. The "paradoxical" aspect is the simultaneous tracery of two melody lines that are motivically similar but keep attacking out of phase, so that one is always playing grace-notes to the other's on-beat attack. This is an evident, if not very successful, attempt to overcome the underlying problem of jazz as long-term musical unfolding—its essential rhythmic inertness on all but intensely local time-levels. In *Bicinium* (1956) for jazz octet the earlier approach is broadened by superimposing on the relentless beat two musical units, highly differentiated in all respects, but especially in timbre and mode of attack (one group dovetails a continuously arching line, the other flashes out isolated staccato pitchpoints). *Tension-Détente* (1956), another octet piece, goes beyond these basically unitary structures by working out a harmonic plan of action that begins with close-together abrasions that dissolve into a swinging, independent counterpoint and then reintegrate as "consonances".

But the most ambitious by far of the Hodeir pieces was his vocal-instrumental *Jazz Cantata* (1958) in seven brief movements. There the rhythmic and formal limitations of jazz textures are ingeniously overcome by using individual textural patches as the indivisible single elements of a wide-ranging form, like the successive groups of "still" images that make up a film. The material within the patches, moreover, is itself so freshly and individually invented that the contrasts and interrelationships are given real "edge". The vocal sections, which mostly consist of the fastest and most brilliant scat-singing imaginable, were performed by Susan Belink, who, as one suspected from her performances earlier this year of works by Eric Salzman and Ben Weber, can sing as many pitches as quickly and widely spaced as can be composed, and with pristine timbral clarity and accuracy.

After Hodeir's clearly projected intention to solve the compositional problem while main-

taining a lucid jazz sense, Lalo Schifrin's *Ritual of Sound* (1963) seemed to bear only a numerological relation to blues structure (at least according to the program notes), and none at all to jazz continuity or sonority. What Schifrin has produced is merely a mildly Darmstadt-like piece, with the verbal periphery, rhythmic discontinuity, and point-to-point (rather than patch-to-patch as in Hodeir) succession-clichés of post-Webernian routine, without either the constant inside-outside punning on jazz-twelve-tone analogues within a highly complex structure such as one finds in Babbitt's *All Set* (performed on an earlier Schuller concert), or the flexible movement from "totally organized" texture to free-jazz improvisation and back through relating intermedial degrees, such as one hears in Schuller's big-band *Transformations* and other of his "third-stream" works. Of course, Schifrin's piece was scored for a jazz instrumentation, and one of the real joys of the evening was to hear this kind of music played with the sharpness and fluency unique to jazz players.

But if Schifrin's music is reasonable compositionally, without fulfilling its pretensions to jazz or modern-music originality, Duke Ellington's *Reminiscing in Tempo,* one of the earliest (1935) essays in formally ambitious jazz, seems only a loose medley of apparently routine choruses with a corny refrain (though perhaps Schuller's declared enthusiasm for it has subtler grounds than I can discern), and falls into the traps that also make Gershwin's "serious" music so grossly inferior to his nominally "commercial" work.

As far as individual performances are concerned, the "collective improvisation" at the end of the concert revealed the same relationship between the spectacularly "far out" Dolphy and some of his less "personal" but more musically coherent colleagues that can be observed in the "straight" modern-music world. Don Ellis on trumpet in particular improvised with a fluency and subtlety whose phrase and pitch relation to the underlying ongoing ensemble music I found extraordinarily perceptive and inventive—Dolphy's solo seemed strangled and self-enclosed by comparison. Altogether, the level of instrumentalism was so high that it will be years before I'll be able to look a symphony wind player in the eye. There were, too, the bass playing of Richard Davis, whose pitch- and timbre-sensitivity and delicate dexterity were unshakable even in the throes of the Dolphy quartet; the trombone playing of James Knepper, who finds nothing but resources of agility and fluidity in this essentially sluggish instrument; and the saxophone playing of Phil Woods, inexhaustible in its variety of perfectly controlled gradations of color, dynamics, and phrasing.

11.16.63

BENJAMIN BRITTEN'S *WAR REQUIEM*

BENJAMIN BRITTEN is the most artful and accomplished of the fabricators of those collections of sonic effects and gestures that have an immediate impact of great inspirational communication, and are the popular "masterpieces" of our time. In that context, Britten stands out as master, with a range of techniques and resources, and an instinct for their precisely appropriate manipulation, whose virtuosity is fascinating in itself and completely unapproached by any other composer of the genre. Britten's musical manner is concise, alert and sophisticated—traits that are disarmingly attractive in a realm dominated by the windy pretensions and clumsy monomania of such composers as Sibelius, Vaughan Williams and Shostakovich. His music exhibits a broad musical literacy, a willingness to turn even the esoteric, complex and challenging resources of any period to his own advantages, that make self-imposed primitivisms like those of Orff's various *Carmini* seem even drearier; and his ability to provide the semblance of connection and continuity among the moments of an extended work, often through quite elaborate, cunning and multi-layered juxtapositions of widely varying devices of association and reference, are simply beyond comparison with the transparently superimposed consistencies of, for example, Menotti, Dello Joio or Hovhaness, or the crude successions of jarring contrasts that serve as the sole means of progression in works like Barber's *Vanessa* or Robert Ward's *The Crucible.* In a way, the composer whom Britten most resembles is the Hindemith of the twenties and thirties, but Hindemith was at once far more involved with serious compositional issues, and far less capable of producing such interesting and attractive-sounding scores.

Within its limits, moreover, Britten's ingenuity is quite genuine. Even a demanding listener can enjoy at least a first hearing of music in which all the standard tricks and tools of the musician's trade are deployed with consummate deftness, and without the least distraction by abrasive (and what in this context would be pretentious) dilemmas of original composition. And the knowledgeable music lover is apt to be delighted by the sly and appropriate allusions that Britten works into his pieces—a technique which, combined with much of his surface rhythm and texture, immediately invokes the shadow of Stravinsky (thus providing an extra allusive fillip). Indeed, Britten in many ways seems to satisfy the popular image of Stravinsky that Stravinsky himself always frustrates.

At the top of his form, when he is able to maintain a continuous flow of bright ideas as in works like *The Turn of the Screw, Serenade,* the *Spring Symphony* and the *Cantata Academica,* Britten provides musical entertainment of a civilized kind that has practically vanished from the "serious" music domain since the days of Offenbach. When he fails, because of a precious affectation of naïveté, as in the mystery play *Noye's Fludde,* or an apparently cynical indifference to a potboiling job, as in the operatic *Midsummer Night's Dream* (done last season at the City Center), or an attempt to tackle a real compositional task beyond his capabilities, as in the Donne and Michelangelo Sonnets and the *Sinfonia da Requiem,* the results are predictably catastrophic; for in the absence of the tension of real creative aspiration, one is left only with auditory vacuity and embarrassment.

In the *War Requiem,* whose New York premiere was given by the Boston Symphony under Erich Leinsdorf last month, Britten's methods are put to a particular test by the need to sustain interest over ninety minutes of music without the cooperative ingenuity of a stage director to get past the dead spots. The process obviously begins with the title, with its solemn promise of elevation and special message, combining man's eternal concern and our century's particular vexation in a single stroke. This promise, moreover, is heightened by the interspersion of Wilfred Owen's poems among the verses of the Latin Requiem, a touch of unmistakable "originality". Britten fulfills the duality in his musical setting, not only in the obvious opposition of the male soloists and prevailing bass timbres of the Owen poems against the chorus, soprano and boys' choir in the liturgy; but also by the divergent "styles" of the two levels: the Latin texts are bound into a "traditional" rhythm and phraseology, while the Owen settings have sometimes a suspended motion, sometimes a vacillating rhythmic pulse that clearly establishes a "modern" reference. These are given constant motivic connections, and as the work proceeds they "converge" until, presumably, they "merge" in the final *In Par-*

adisum. The illusion of progressive forward motion is guaranteed by motivic connections that undergo simple changes that are flatteringly easy to perceive as "structural" events, and grand conceptual unity is provided by many literal cyclic recurrences, particularly the bells at the beginning and end of the first half and a prominently returning interval or two.

The correct attribution of pathos and profundity is assured by the adoption of the manners of Mahler, Beethoven and other appropriately evocative composers, and the unfailing presence of the right solemn, brilliant or sad noise required at any moment by the text. And Britten is not averse to borrowing a good dramatic idea even from a source as esoteric as Berg's *Altenberg Lieder;* thus a "drone" chord (in fact, very close to Berg's chord in Berg's registration) is sustained through an entire texture of fluctuating density in the tenor solo, "It seemed that out of battle I escaped", as a signal of eternity. Perhaps such an adaptation, in which the bare "idea" of the original is presented without its encumbering subtleties, is a reasonable means of transmitting some of the qualities of an urgent twentieth-century classic to the general audience; but it was curious to reflect that most of those who found Britten's passage so remarkably original and effective will probably never hear, or even hear of, the Berg original.

But the best connoisseur's game in the *War Requiem* is the series of direct allusions to the famous Requiems of the literature, as well as to such contemporary "war" pieces as *Histoire du Soldat* and *Alexander Nevsky.* These are often matched textual section for section, even using the original pitches, but always ingeniously worked into the "motivic" scheme of the whole. Thus one hears Berlioz's *Requiem* in the legato-staccato opposition of the opening, in the *Dies Irae* with its Gregorian parody and opposing brass choirs, and the shimmering high-register orchestration and vocalism of the *Sanctus.* The *Hosanna* sounds like a collage of interstitial patches from Berlioz's *Hosanna.* The bass of the *Confutatis maledictis* is precisely the same as the ostinato bass figure in the Mozart *Requiem,* and the *Lacrymosa* has the prosody of its counterpart in Mozart, and the Mozart melodic curve in inversion, while the texture and harmony are like the middle section of Berlioz's *Lacrymosa.* Even Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* appears, in the Hindemith fugue in the Offertorium, and the final chorus is so closely modeled on the *Dona nobis pacem* of Bach's *B Minor Mass,* with the same curve, rhythm, layering of choral entrances, and even the same use of trumpet and tympani, that the words (here *Recquiescant in pace*) seem incongruous. A subtler way of evoking a familiar response is the characteristic use of Baroque-like word-painting, which in Bach was a convenient way of giving the surface of his music a semblance of accessibility that shielded the complexities within; Britten's use of it here to engender such an imputation is thus a curious and precise reversal of function.

Britten's consummate professionalism is perhaps most admirable in the way the *Requiem* builds to all the right kinds of climaxes, resourcefully holding enough in reserve to insure that sufficient volume is available to make the last climax the "culmination"; this, too, requires a superb orchestral and choral know-how that also remembers the conventional "characters" of individual instruments. And the prime requisite of such pieces, that they be capable of giving the large audiences the impression of being "in" on something great and important, is admirably accomplished by Britten in the simplicity and directness with which everything is presented, so that even the "esoterica" come from the best-known places in the best-known pieces (which Stravinsky did in quite another way by quoting the *Barber of Seville* Overture in *Jeu de Cartes,* but then quickly overmastering the original), and the "complex polyphony", "motivic development" and "cyclic recurrence" are calculated to give a warm sense of superiority to anyone who has attended a music-appreciation class. On the other hand, the *War Requiem's* obtrusive message of profundity, the broadness and familiarity of most of its strokes, and the sense of great overextension that one gets during the last third, where Britten's store of fresh patterns seems to have run out, make it rather less diverting than Britten's frankly theatrical pieces, where the visual distractions and plot lines tempt him to dare more intricate "inside" fun.

As far as the performance was concerned, the *Requiem* obviously fulfills the requirement of all such potential repertory pieces, that their effects remain effective even when performed by a semi-professional orchestra and chorus while lying on their backs. Sitting up, the very professional Boston Symphony, with the aid of the Boston Pro Musica Chorus, the Princeton Columbus Boychoir and vocal soloists Phyllis Curtin, Nicholas DiVirgilio, and Tom Krause, did it so superbly as to obviate any extreme urgency of further performances in this vicinity.

Recent Britten Records:

Cantata Academica (and other choral works). Oiseau-Lyre.50206 (mono), 60037 (stereo).

Noye's Fludde. London. 5697 (mono), 25331 (stereo).

Serenade for tenor, horn, strings. London. 5358 (mono).

Spring Symphony. London. 5612 (mono), 25242 (stereo).

Turn of the Screw. London. 4219 (mono).

War Requiem. London. 4255 (mono), 1255 (stereo).

11.30.63

RECORDS: BACH, STRAUSS

BACH: Cantata No. 76, *Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes*. Ingeborg Reichelt, soprano; Hertha Töpper, alto; Helmut Krebs, tenor; Franz Kelch, bass; Heinrich Schütz Chorale of Heilbronn; Pforzheim Chamber Orchestra; Fritz Werner, conductor. Epic LC 3851 (mono) BC 1251 (stereo).

THIS IS one of the richest of the late cantatas, in which the most astonishing events take place within a framework of apparent regularity—in direct contrast to Bach's early cantatas, where external idiosyncracies often mask an underlying squareness (in *Gottes Zeit,* for example). Thus, the real strength of the late Bach is his mastery as a phrase maker, as a builder over great spans of musical time of individual phrases into cohesive, structural balances, regardless of the intervention of many different numbers, all seemingly complete in themselves. In *Die Himmel erzählen* one's attention is held throughout not only by the unceasing invention within each of the parts, but especially by the way each movement adds a distinctive, unitary block to a gradually accruing totality that opens out further with each new event until its completion in the final chorale. Perhaps the most wonderful succession of this kind is the joining of the tentative, suspended close of the alto recitative in Part I to the ensuing chorale setting, with its strongly pulsating, swinging *ostinato* bass.

The conductor, female vocalists, the chorus and the instrumentalists clearly know their business in this music, but the male soloists are rather fuzzy and rough, as is the recorded sound. Nevertheless, the performance as a whole is a far better representation of the cantata than Scherchen's old Westminster record, which came dangerously close to caricature in its self-important and erratic fussiness.

STRAUSS, Richard: *Death and Transfiguration,* Op. 24. *Metamorphosen* (1945). Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, conductor. Angel (S) 35976.

KLEMPERER has been able to find whatever pure *Liebestod* and *Liebesnacht* are scattered among the loose ends of *Death and Transfiguration*. To the work's unsuspected virtue, it appears that it can be *played* magnificently, and that some of the orchestral ideas suggest the ingenious mastery of later Strauss. And the performance is a fascinating demonstration of Klemperer's control over the total unfolding of a stretch of musical sound.

Metamorphosen, on the other hand, is certainly Strauss's most subtle composition, a tour de force of continuous exposition, beginning from a thematic configuration that joins the *Eroica* funeral march to the King Mark scene in the second act of *Tristan,* and developing through a profound re-examination of traditional compositional resources in Schoenberg's, rather than Stravinsky's sense. Strauss's remarkable achievement in this gesture of his oldest age is in the way the line of development and the listener's ear are guided firmly and unambiguously through immense complexities of texture and harmony, in both the small and the large. In this performance, at least, an unbroken, continuously variable fabric of music for 23 solo string instruments, based on blatantly familiar material (even arriving at the end at a complete statement of the Beethoven theme), and interrupted only once, near the end, by a caesura of any kind, projects a wide-ranging sonic structure of such originality that it seems more a challenge to the musical future than a last stirring of the musical past.

RECORDS: WAGNER

THE NOTORIETY of Wagner's grandiose schemes and dogmas, and the boldness with which he employed them in his operas, has fixed the attention of most listeners and performers on these extraneous qualities as the principal bases for perceiving and evaluating his accomplishment. On such terms, Wagner can be admired only by those who equate pure self-importance and aggrandization with mastery, and must necessarily be despised by those who don't. Fortunately, there is far more to hear and discover in his works than either the merely presumptive awareness of big ideas such as "synthesis of the arts", or the sensuous ecstasies of cleverly manipulated masses of sound (and flesh, usually) over hypnotically long time spans. For the continuously absorbing focal points in Wagner's late works is the extraordinary translation of loose and arbitrary literary "programs" for music drama into musical and dramatic functions that redefine every aspect of traditional procedures and elements in all the perceptual realms of opera in terms of a formal totality generated by their interaction.

Thus, the great length of the late Wagner works is not a result of uncontrollable melorrhea, but arises from the need to find a rate of event-changes and a dimensional scale in which a conjunction of ideas that take place on several levels at once (visual, verbal, vocal and orchestral) is perceived as an individual element in a composite whole.

A Wagnerian passage that might be an entire section of, say, a Schubert song, or a full exposition of a thematic idea in a Mozart symphony, may function for Wagner as does a two- or three-note motive in the earlier music. Similarly, the Classical analogue to his sequences and repetitions would not be the incessant reiteration of whole passages, but the building up of individual events through the juxtaposition of related details.

It is, in fact, precisely in this realm of time-rate awareness, in which the relation of "detail" to "event" is constantly modulated over a wide range, that Wagner's superiority as a master of large-scale structure is most evident. Unlike some of his predecessors (Berlioz, in particular), the extended dimensions of whose works were often simply a proportional mapping of traditional functions onto a broader and hence more easily apprehensible canvas, Wagner perceived the possibility of an enormous expansion in the degrees of relationships that could be expressed without destroying the traditional contexts of perception. The crucial nature of this attempt to preserve broad intelligibility is evident in the social consequences for music that followed in the early twentieth century, when the limits of the gigantistic solution were reached and surpassed, and a new syntax, far more difficult for listeners and performers conditioned by a centuries-long tradition, had to be developed to encompass the increasingly numerous relational resources required by composers. In this sense, the extreme compression of Webern, and Schoenberg's attempt to reconstruct Classical articulative procedures, are genuinely "consequences" of the aftermath of Wagnerism.

In the music dramas themselves, the operation of Wagner's deep awareness of the implications of his ideas on every level of structure produces a dramatic development of unique power and richness. For example, the "time scale" of the *Ring* cycle—a single work whose four movements take four evenings to perform—is as unambiguously established by employing the entire length of the prelude to *Das Rheingold* to unfold the opening chord as the compression of Beethoven's *Eroica* and Fifth Symphonies is indicated by the terseness of their initial events. And each of the *Ring's* movements has a distinctive sonorous character that is directly correlated with the evolving dramatic imagery. Thus in *Die Walküre,* the predominant visual and verbal images are of light and brightness (after the welling up of the Eb chord from the depths of the Rhine to the heights of Valhalla in *Rheingold* has, in the manner of an "introduction", outlined the total range of the cycle): the lightning and wind at the opening, the flashing of the magic sword, the moonlight at the end of Act I, the flights of the Valkyries and the magic fire at the end. The transparent orchestral context not only mirrors these qualities, but gives them coherent relationships through the timbral identification of "white" sounds such as the chorusing of the Valkyries, the open horn and trumpet triads, and the culminating bass-less and weightless

Magic Fire music, which seems to absorb and fulfill the sonorous tendencies of the entire work.

Following this, the first and second acts of *Siegfried* are suddenly rooted in another realm entirely, in images of darkness and savagery: the underground cave of the first act, and the dark forest of the second, at the gloomy center of which is the cave of Fafnir, the dragon. The extraordinary sonorous realization of this framework is accomplished by the almost complete absence of important upper-register sounds through the two acts (except for the forward-and-back-relating hints of the Magic Fire music, and the starkly detached song of the Forest Bird); the entire development takes place through a predominance of the viscous sonorities of tubas, trombones, bass clarinet, low string (the violas are virtually the upper limit of the orchestra) and the bass register of the horns. And just as the dragon is the extreme image of darkness on the textual and visual level, the contrabass-tuba notes that accompany his basso profundo, which are heard unaccompanied at his death, are the lowest pitched sound in the entire *Ring,* the registral nadir of the total dramatic structure.

The reappearance of high register in the last act is, therefore, not only a strikingly dramatic idea in itself, one that illuminates the transformation of the opera's context by Siegfried's discovery of Brünnhilde's brilliance; it also projects an overarching sense of the suspended development of a whole dramatic level during Brünnhilde's sleep, a level that is re-engaged on her awakening at precisely the point where it was left, at the conclusion of the second movement of the *Ring,* i.e., *Die Walküre.*

The solo violin passage that rises to its highest register in direct musical counterpoise to the immediately preceding rumbling of Fafnir is thus a "re-awakening" in every dimension of the *Ring's* structure. And the immediately following passages develop this image with an imaginative precision of great subtlety; the succession of high-register flute, oboe and harp sounds is suddenly galvanized in the single piercing high-horn chord that signals Brünnhilde's awakening. (A further dramatic subtlety made possible only through musical association is the identification of this horn timbre with Siegfried's characteristic motif, and its simultaneous distinction from his major-mode solo arpeggios by her minor-mode single chord.) The first words that Brünnhilde herself sings are "Sonne", "Licht", and "Leuchtender Tag", whose images are reflected in the transparency of their woodwind-quartet accompaniment.

The inexhaustible riches of these multi-dimensional structures were all conceived in terms that can be realized in performance. But the interpretive and executive burdens that such realizations impose on conductors, orchestra and singers, are nearly as far today from the practical capabilities of opera-house companies geared to the relatively uncomplicated machinery of the rest of the standard operatic repertory as they were when Wagner felt impelled to build his own theatre as the only way to secure reasonable performances of his works. Under these conditions, the virtues of recorded performances are obvious, since they can employ distinguished singers in every role, as well as first-rate symphony orchestras equipped to cope with both the numerical and technical requirements of Wagner's scores. Thus the recordings listed, whatever their individual qualities, contain performances so far superior to anything I have ever heard in an opera house that specific objections seem superfluous. Solti's is perhaps the more estimable of the complete recordings, in orchestral finesse (the imperceptible seams in the chord-changes are a superb stroke) and the vocal distinction of its cast (especially Hotter as Wotan, Neidlinger as Fafnir, and Stolze as Mime; but even Birgit Nilsson seems more focused on pitch and less inclined to scoop in the *Siegfried* recording than in the earlier *Walküre*). Still, Leinsdorf has few equals in his precise control of the position, nature and manner of every sound in a complex context, in the exact terms presented by the score, and his recording is an impressive demonstration of how far responsible textual precision will carry a performance toward a genuine formal realization. A more profound precision in the choice of the exact articulation and texture through which to balance and sustain a formal totality—as well as some remarkable singing—is perceivable on the 1935 Walter recording of Act 1 of *Die Walküre.*

WAGNER: *Die Walküre.* Birgit Nilsson, Gré Brouwenstein, Rita Gorr, Jon Vickers, George London, David Ward. London Symphony, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. RCA Victor LD/LSD 6706 (5 records).
—Act 1. Lotte Lehmann, Lauritz Melchior, Emanuel List. Vienna Philharmonic, Bruno Walter, cond. Angel COLH 133.

Siegfried. Birgit Nilsson, Wolfgang Windgassen, Hans Hotter, Gerhard Stolze, Gustav Neidlinger. Vienna Philharmonic, Georg Solti, cond. London OSA 1508 (5 records).

1.27.64

PAUL HINDEMITH

THE NEWS of Paul Hindemith's death last month brought vividly back to mind the inescapable importance that his ideas and influence once exerted in the musical world. Only a few years ago his history seemed a focal reflection of the most critical issues of twentieth-century composition, and the approaches presented in his music and writings were seriously discussed as the basis of a new International Style, a common practice that would reestablish the wide intelligibility and social function of the composer's work and release him from the frustration of endless, lonely, experimentation.

Hindemith's impact on American musical life was perhaps the most remarkable phenomenon in the trajectory of his public history. His enormous prestige when he first came here was strikingly indicated by the fact that he was the only composer of the group of illustrious European immigrants (which included Bartók, Krenek, Schoenberg, and Stravinsky) who was ever appointed to a major American university, and the only one whose works were played by all our major orchestras and ensembles almost from the moment he arrived. Naturally, such a formidable penetration of the American musical establishment deeply impressed the younger composers, who soon regarded a period of study with Hindemith at Yale as an obligatory credential of conspicuous professional promise. The steady flow of students and disciples continued until Hindemith's return to Europe in 1953, and there is probably no American composer above the age of thirty who has not encountered, in some crucial way, the force of Hindemith's teachings and attitudes.

Thus it is astonishing to realize how remote that force has become from the central concerns of our musical activity, how completely Hindemith's influence vanished during the last years of his life. The death of Schoenberg, in contrast, seemed a historic cataclysm, and after thirteen additional years we have only begun to comprehend the implication of his accomplishment and to realize the extent of its potential for further development. And although every serious American musician today regards acquaintance with every new Stravinsky score as an essential component of his professional equipment, it might be difficult to find one who could even name a major Hindemith work of the last ten years.

Unquestionably, the whims of fashion and the emergence of more facile and dependable paths to musical notoriety are, as Hindemith himself believed, largely responsible for this eclipse. But there is something more fundamental involved also, a fatal flaw in the essential premises on which the presumption of his mastery and authority rested, as well as in the convictions out of which his own compositional methods were formulated. At first, Hindemith's qualifications as a significant and effective musical thinker and creator seem manifestly impressive: he had a phenomenal musician's ear, whose perceptive and memorative capacities were legendary; a prodigious facility in every practical aspect of music (his first important public activity was in performance, as a virtuoso violist and member of the Amar-Hindemith Quartet); and a wide acquaintance with the historical and theoretical literature of music, ranging from Greek and Medieval philosophy to nineteenth-century acoustical science. Furthermore, the audacious "modernism" of his first compositions, and the progressively increasing "seriousness" and "importance" in the subject matter and style of his later works (proceeding from the sensational *Murder, Hope of Women* (1921) to the settlement-house socialism of *We Build a City* (1930), the ethical and moral concerns of *Mathis der Maler* (1938), and the metaphysical profundities of *Die Harmonie der Welt* (1957)), as well as the apparent ease with which he could handle the most complex polyphonic textures and constructive devices while turning out finished works in incredible profusion, all contributed to his enshrinement as a profound creative mind and consummate technical master of musical resource.

But the assumption that such qualities of expertise, facility, and technical mastery are not only necessary but sufficient guarantees of superior compositional attainment is an old and troublesome fallacy. Its potential for misdirection is particularly great in a period like ours, when well-established criteria of formulation and comprehension based on consistent musical practice are unavailable, and everyone has

been thrown onto the discriminative resources of his own perceptions. Hindemith himself seems, in retrospect, to have been a victim of this misconception, to which, indeed, his extraordinary abilities made him especially susceptible. For he seems not to have perceived a fundamental distinction between two basic, and virtually incompatible, species of musical cognition: between, that is, the "musician's ear", which has the capacity to perceive and reconstruct musical facts, and the "composer's ear", whose nature it is to formulate musical conceptions and then project mentally those concrete details, materials, and successions that uniquely express it.

Even a "composer's hearing" of other music, or of bodies of music, is crucially marked by this distinction. Much of Stravinsky's composed music, for example, seems to derive from his having heard, within the sound-content of traditional music, unique musical phraseology, which then emerges in his own works through a keenly selective manipulation of crucial elements of the traditional framework. Schoenberg, on the other hand, seems to have heard in Classical structures the possibility of mobilizing their powerful coherences through a new perceptual context. The result is a "new sound" in Stravinsky and a new kind of structural continuity in Schoenberg; for our perception of musical qualities is ultimately determined by the interaction of the presentational framework with its constituent elements. By the same token, composition is essentially a process of choice, of selection of best alternatives from available resources. Here, the musical sense image functions like a Geiger counter that directs the composer by its special sensitivity to precisely those elements and relationships most relevant to its realization.

Hindemith's musical hearing, in contrast, seems—on the evidence of his own composed music—to have been fixed at a more purely reproductive stage, and thus it seems to have depended for its local as well as its long-range conceptions on the literal procedure and manner of existing music. The "modernity" of his earliest period was conspicuously achieved by systematic "violations" of conventional contexts, and even the new-traditional music of his later years is like a skeletal tracery of the elements of some individual or composite model, whose form and style are generalized into fluoroscopic abstraction. In both instances, the principal effect on a listener is a sense of almost-familiarity, either blatantly or elusively out of focus. Despite the abundance of ideas of widely differing appearances and levels of interest in Hindemith's prodigious composed output, the results seem in some pervasive sense always fundamentally the same: they project a kind of neutrally "harmonic" non-sound that always has its own unmistakable quality, but which undergoes no significant perceptible variation from work to work.

In such music, the choices of specific events and successions can be governed, if consciously at all, only by precept. Lacking an empirically developed hearing-basis to guide his elections, Hindemith was, I think, forced to postulate objective "laws of (music) hearing". And since the success or failure of any individual work could not be determined by testing its actual effect against a preconceived image, he had to devise objective conditions, whose presence could be considered prerequisite for artistic quality.

These needs determined the nature of the system that Hindemith followed and proposed as a new common practice. For him, it represented a self-justifying assertion of the superiority of the Medieval *habitus* of artisanry, in which strict and assiduous devotion to the practice of craft, and dedication to the highest ethical ideals, infused ethical and moral value into the fruits of one's labor. And paradoxically, his very dependence on the external authorities of "science" and "nature" seemed to him to provide a guarantee of universal validity, in contrast to the "arbitrariness" of Schoenberg's twelve-tone method, which Hindemith, on such grounds, strenuously opposed. But Schoenberg's system was actually based on flexible hypotheses of what one could learn to hear, and depended on direct perceptual testing in its employment, so that its limits were constantly being extended and modified in as many individual directions as there were imaginative composers to explore them. Hindemith's rules, on the other hand, being presumably rooted in the absolutely certain knowledge of the totality of what could be heard, acted as arbitrary moral referees of "right" or "wrong". Hindemith himself was so enthralled by this mystical doctrinalism that he even recomposed some of his earlier works to conform with the new system. And whereas Schoenberg's system liberated Schoenberg to produce a wealth of increasingly original works, Hindemith's creative life was permanently stunted by his intransigent adherence to a rigid method that perpetuated his severest limitations and ultimately reduced him, in ef-

fect, to an imitator of the least lucid characteristics of his own pre-existent music.

The ultimate decline in the influence of such a method was clearly unavoidable, given its progressively unrealistic abstraction from direct musical experience. Only the most docile worshippers could have remained content with a discipline that confined them to the endless imitation of imitation Hindemith, while their colleagues in camps of lesser moral virtue were making exciting discoveries of new resources and exploring new perceptual domains. Eventually, even the public's hearing seems to have caught and passed Hindemith's own, for recordings and public performances of his work became increasingly rare. Today, the remnants of his influence are mainly to be found among the conservative academicians of European conservatories and in music-education mills of the American Midwest, whose adoption of an artistic idea is usually a definitive sign of its final exhaustion.

Still, no matter how self-induced Hindemith's failings may have been, his effort must be respected as one of the serious attempts to discover a coherent syntax for the new musical materials of our time. I find it depressing that this has been so quickly and easily forgotten by most of the musical world, and that Hindemith's death has evoked scarcely more retrospection or response than a few sighs of uncertain nostalgia and uneasy regret.

2.10.64

RECORDS: *FIDELIO*

BEETHOVEN: *Fidelio.* Christa Ludwig, Jon Vickers, Gottlob Frick, Walter Berry, vocal soloists; Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus, Otto Klemperer, cond. Angel (S) 3625.

Fidelio. Leonie Rysanek, Irmgard Seefried, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Ernst Häfliger, Gottlob Frick, vocal soloists; Bavarian State Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Ferenc Fricsay, cond. DGG L38 390/91 S.

FIDELIO is really a unique work, not in the obvious sense that it was Beethoven's only opera, but in its realization of a remarkable dramatic idea through a succession of conventional *Singspiel* number types that have fantastically burst the bounds of their crude basic situations to create fully formed and intensely individual compositions. In this respect, it diverges drastically from the Mozart-Wagner tradition, where deepening formal development was mirrored by a continuous expansion in surface continuity, beginning most strikingly in Mozart's famous finales, and reaching its extreme limits in Wagner's "endless melodies". But whereas these externally more integral approaches were still conceived within the framework of operatic pace and rhetoric, the phraseology of *Fidelio* derives from the concentrated intensity of Beethoven's instrumental music, and creates, in characteristic Beethoven fashion, a vocal and dramaturgical environment of its own.

Thus the apparent incongruity of *Fidelio's* heavily elaborated "numbers"—isolated amid empty stretches of spoken dialogue like massive icebergs in a formless sea—actually represents an extraordinary translation of the dramatic qualities of the instrumental works into the perceptual terms of musical theatre. The key image, through which the development of purely musical "characters" is projected into the development of tangible characters in the opera, is that of internal "states of mind"; in the treatment of most of the libretto the important music is sung to texts that are primarily introspective self-examinations or proclamations of attitude and are delivered as interior monologues suspended above the action (even in combined ensembles) rather than being addressed to anyone on or off the stage. In these terms, the spoken recitatives, which are the sole carriers of the conventional action, provide an essential framework for surface activity and the passage of time (whose complete suspension in the principal musical numbers creates a sense of a dramatic level "out of time", a transferral of the plane of activity from the physical surface to the psychological interior).

The clear establishment of these formal levels provides the effective context for the second-act Melodrama, where the orchestra's presence seems to sharply juxtapose the internally "real" utterances of Leonora in the dungeon against her actual matter-of-fact speech and ostensible action as Fidelio (and here the opera cliché of double identity is given genuine dramatic significance). The wonderful transformation of speech into singing during this passage thus becomes the focal point of the entire opera.

Like many of Beethoven's most original formal ideas, the large-scale conception of *Fidelio* was much less consequential for later composers than were some of the incidental means through which it was realized (particularly the foreground use of the orchestra, so crucial for all of Wagner). As a result, it has remained somewhat unassimilated in the operatic environment, and continues to be difficult for performers. Singers find its melodic successions awkward, and no other work in their repertory requires them to produce a variety of speeds and manners of articulations as though they were first violins in a Beethoven string quartet; and opera conductors, for the most part, are simply not equipped to solve the problem of creating a progressive continuity out of its peculiarly self-contained syntax.

Under these conditions, Klemperer's characteristic abilities and insights take on the proportions of a major revelatory experience. His approaches to sonority and rhythm are perhaps most remarkable; the troublesome re-introductions of orchestral sound and beat after the intervening dead air between sections all seem part of an uninterrupted, inflected, continuous thread. The ensemble singing and phrasing, even in the formidable rhythmic and harmonic complexity of the first-act trio "Gut, Söhnchen", and in the floating suspension of the earlier

quartet, is shaped with marvelous coherence. In Leonora's "Abscheulicher", the horns, whose interaction with the voice forms one of the most extraordinary sonorous conceptions in music, are much more integrally related to the entire framework than I recall from other performances, and the result is the projection of a unitary sonority in which the bassoons and basses play a definitive role, instead of the usual concerto for horn, voice and muffled accompaniment.

On the other hand, the thrusting horn accents at the opening of Act II create a completely contrasting kind of sound-image, carried progressively through the oboe solos in the middle section of Florestan's arias to the subdued and irregular string chords at its end that presage the following melodrama. And among the inexhaustible range of sound that one discovers, the most beautiful perhaps is the prisoners' chorus in Act I, which grows wonderfully from the first stirrings of the strings to the full choral-orchestral sonority, and then progresses through its little *scena* within this unitary fabric of luminous sound into which a whole range of nuances and inflections is inlaid.

Fricsay's recording reveals a much simpler sense of contrast and rhythmic propulsion, which generates an impressive directness and considerable forward momentum. Since Fricsay never pushes the pace beyond the breaking point, his approach works well, producing a bright, attractive and healthy-sounding performance which is greatly enhanced by one of the best recorded sounds I have ever heard. The result, however, is ultimately more about what is typically Mozartian in *Fidelio* than what is special in it, particularly in the conversion of the work into a singer's opera with the orchestra in a largely accompanimental role. It is surprising, also, to observe that although Fricsay takes a considerably quicker pace than Klemperer, he loses rather than gains proportionately in rhythmic intensity and definition; and although everything is much more sharply articulated in Fricsay's performance, the subtler control exercised by Klemperer produces a much wider range of accentuation, and a sense of bolder extrusion in particular places because of the overall delicacy.

Among the singers, Leonie Rysanek's singing as Leonora is straighter-out and less varied than Christa Ludwig's, whose persistent alto coloration gives an individual viscosity to her entire range, which is now effectively enlarged well into the soprano domain. Rysanek, too, is less particular about how to produce notes and how to relate successive sounds, although within these limitations her singing is entirely competent and unusually accurate. There is no real comparison between Ernst Häfliger's evenly produced Florestan and Jon Vickers' superb range of volumes, inflections, accentuations and vocal qualities from piercing intensity to sotto voce muttering, all clearly placed in a coherent musical context. As far as Fischer-Dieskau's Pizarro is concerned, I have never been impressed by his substitution of semi-pitched theatrical declamation for real singing, although he does it with great energy and skill and manages to sound quite nasty; Walter Berry in the Klemperer recording produces strong, pleasant, reliable, undistinguished sounds. Since Gottlob Frick is the Rocco in both, there is no choice here, but I found him the least impressive of the Klemperer singers.

I also found the use of separate actors for the speaking parts of the DGG recording disturbing, especially in the melodrama; they make a more effective theatre piece out of it, but it is not, after all, as an effective theatre piece that *Fidelio* is most interesting. But in the end, one would never have been able to guess the special originality of *Fidelio* from Fricsay's performance, just as one could hardly have missed it in Klemperer's.

MILTON BABBITT AND THE AMERICAN MAINSTREAM

THE FUNDAMENTAL conceptual problem confronting the twentieth-century composer is the fundamental intellectual dilemma of every contemporary thinker: how to reconstruct the possibility of meaningful order in the relativistic anarchy following upon the disintegration of traditional absolutes and traditional absolutism. Tonality, in this sense, was the metaphysical certainty of music, both metaphorically and materially. Its disestablishment as the universal ground of musical language, following the discovery, in the Wagnerian aftermath, that its resources were not infinitely extensible (notwithstanding the heroic efforts of the later Mahler and the earlier Schoenberg to prolong their vitality) produced a commensurately metaphysical crisis for those who urgently needed a musical language in which to speak. To this crisis, the first twentieth-century generation of composers, the generation of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Hindemith, Varèse, responded by searching for new absolutes rooted in what they perceived as universal or "natural" principles.

But to the generation following theirs it was painfully evident that musical qualities could be "universal" only within the output of the composer who had formulated them. This second, post-World War II generation faced the full implications of the metaphysical impasse, and was forced to recognize that the magnificent exterior of early twentieth-century music was more a final insight into the resources of traditional ways of thinking than a genuinely new musical medium for the consolidation and extension of new, urgently needed, structures and ideas. Part of this generation simply refused to acknowledge the existence of the dilemma, and retreated into ritual reproductions of the literal surfaces of early twentieth-century stylistic models. Another part has (with a certain curious alacrity) declared all hope abandoned, justifying its despair by the strange practice of first constructing artifacts according to manifestly absurd procedures and then declaring that the absurdity of the result proves the futility of further efforts to cultivate coherence.

Such escapist attitudes have not, however, gained much currency among American musical thinkers, in part undoubtedly because of the profound impress of the tradition carried here in the persons of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Bartók, and Hindemith, but certainly as much because of the American intellectual environment in which their development has taken place. Rather than embracing existential despair, they have preferred the paths of rational retrenchment offered by philosophical empiricism, struggling to create meaning and coherence on purely relativistic grounds. To do so, they have explored beneath the surface of twentieth-century tradition to determine what might be made perceivable on the strength of what had already been made perceivable in existing music. In this way, a new compositional hypothesis could be "tested", not against absolutes, but in terms of the already acquired experience of a composer himself and of his experienced listeners. Surely the significance of exploring the extent to which human-rational control can be extended over situations of extreme complexity is as crucial for survival in our century as was the discovery and investigation of the individual consciousness for the last.

Of all the composers in the postwar generation, Milton Babbitt has most fully envisioned and articulated this world of responsibilities, and most wholeheartedly accepted its consequences along with its opportunities. Babbitt's practice has been to extend the properties that give internal coherence to "classical" twelve-tone music to every dimension of presentation and sound. Thus he creates a fascinating new contrapuntal environment in which polyphonic threads are traced not only through lines of pitches, as in traditional music, but also through "lines" of register, tone color, volume level, mode of attack, and time-position. Every musical event is infused with multiple functions, and the resulting syntax is so "efficient" that a single sound may convey as much information as, say, a whole section of a Mozart symphony—with predictable perceptual consequences for a listener whose conceptual framework remains unadjusted. The correspondence with Webern's practices is evident; but whereas Webern maintained clarity in a concentrated framework by severely limiting the number and complexity of events and relations, Babbitt, departing from Schoenberg's richer and more suggestive

polyphony, populates the same articulative space with a much greater concentration of occurrences and associations.

Babbitt's Composition for Twelve Instruments (1948), for example (performed recently on Gunther Schuller's series), may be compared to a mosaic composed of geometrically shaped tiles, from any one of which can be traced a different but equally meaningful pattern running through an entire dimension of the whole—whether one follows the path of all tiles of similar shape, or color, or size, those on the same vertical or horizontal or diagonal, or within any area of a given size. And the integral content of the whole derives from the interactive perception of all these configurations as a simultaneity.

The intelligibility of so many interrelations is achieved, in this and other early Babbitt works, at the sacrifice of a certain scope and variety in line, texture, and articulation; all the elements tend to be of the same type (single-impulse attacks in the Composition for Twelve Instruments), and the emission of sounds from the total range at about the same frequency throughout the text makes the continuity seem somewhat "frozen", as though its motion were more an alternation than an action.

Later works develop a far greater subtlety of textures and ranges of materials, resulting primarily from a penetrating re-examination of traditional presentational qualities in the same spirit that structural resources were previously studied. Here manners of presentation function as integral compositional elements, particularly in vocal works (as, the song cycle *Du* and the Composition for Tenor and Six Instruments) where the characteristically *legato* voice line floats amid the surrounding sharp-edged instrumental parts as though it were both pursuing an independent course and contributing a unique dimension and perspective to the ensemble polyphony. And in *All Set* for jazz ensemble, characteristic jazz sounds and articulations (curtain drumming, plucked-bass beat, horn riffs, etc.) are deployed to project a twelve-tone structural idea, where the constant punning between jazz and twelve-tone implications of configurations is a significant aspect of the compositional design.

The most stunning demonstration of the cumulative force of Babbitt's progression of evolving compositional resource is the new *Philomel* for soprano, recorded soprano, and synthesized accompaniment (first sung by Bethany Beardslee on the Ford Foundation's series), which seems to break out onto a whole new level of possible coherence. Here, the marvellous dramatic sequence of John Hollander's text (based on the Philomel-Procne myth), from the mute terrified woman rushing through the woods, through the stages of transformation into an eloquent songbird, is carried out by means of parallel transformations on a seemingly limitless number of musical dimensions. The strangled cries of the voice at the beginning gradually merge into a sustained vocal line that seems to trace a wider arc at each of its appearances; successions of pitches in the tape accompaniment gradually accelerate into choruses of Beardslees, transmuted into bass, alto, and piccolo Beardslees, and finally merged again into the single sound that sustains the "live" soprano's final note with a breath capacity uniquely available to mythical beings and synthesizers. Babbitt's music is always full of arresting things to listen to, but I suspect there will still be new things to hear in *Philomel* as long as tape machines and singers like Bethany Beardslee are in the world.

I don't mean to imply, nor do I believe, that Babbitt's practice is the only possible response to the contemporary predicament; I have dwelt on his work mainly because it represents the most completely committed acceptance of the condition of thinking and being alive in the present moment, without nostalgic backward glances in the fugitive hope that some of the old-time transcendentalism could still be recaptured. But the possibility—necessity, even—of diversity is inherent in the very nature of the situation we are in; and some of the most impressive and original contributions have been made by composers whose work retains strong associative bridges to the immediate past. Elliott Carter, especially (as I have already, and extensively, noted) has transformed the theatrical gestures of prewar American music into the essential elements of a dramatic polyphony in which they are able to function as superimposed but autonomous simultaneous "levels" of action. And even some of those who go much further toward a reliance on pure gesture, like Stefan Wolpe or Ralph Shapey, still sustain strenuously coherent referential contexts which distinguish their work from the decontextualized theatrics of the nihilistic *avant-garde*.

The Piano Variations by Charles Wuorinen—a younger composer developing in full view of all these issues and evolutions—makes the interesting move in relation to this divergence of combining pure gesture with con-

trolled pitch succession, within a highly personal phraseology, sustaining the effective growth of a "theme" consisting of a succession of widely spaced events over most of its length, until finally the textural density explodes into more purely gestural energy. The same preoccupations have also produced such a quite different music as that of Gunther Schuller's Double Wind Quintet, whose beautiful sonorities and astonishingly fluent instrumental writing can only be described as "musical" in the older sense, despite the unmistakably *avant-garde* framework out of which they arise. And in Arthur Berger's Chamber Music for Thirteen Players, ideas that derive from characteristically Webernian, Schoenbergian, and Stravinskyan sources are crystallized and transformed by an acute and sensitive compositional ear into a delicate fabric where the distinctions between lines and fragments, polyphonies and sustained sounds, rhythmic energy and ornamental ramification, are kept in a subtle and elusive flux which responds palpably to the minutest gradations of change. And George Perle's Three Movements for Orchestra (heard, unfortunately, in Amsterdam rather than New York) generates a sound image which seems almost literally traditional on its surface, but whose "motives", "chords", and "phrases" take constantly unexpected turns that ultimately impose their own subtle logic on a listener's consciousness. But the enumeration of significantly interesting and relevantly divergent compositional practices emerging within our musical culture could go on indefinitely—and any appearance of comprehensiveness would itself negate the very aspect of the new music in our world—its unlimited creative plurality—which has been been its most exhilirating, unique, and absorbing quality.

RECORDS: VIRTUOSOS

BRAHMS: Double Concerto, Op. 102. Pablo Casals, cello; Jacques Thibaud, violin; Alfred Cortot, cond. (with Mendelssohn: Piano Trio No. 1). Angel COLH 75.

MOZART: Violin Concerto No. 4, K. 218. Bruch: Violin Concerto in G minor, Op. 26; Scottish Fantasy, Op. 46. Vieuxtemps: Violin Concerto No. 5, Op. 37. Jascha Heifetz, violin. New Symphony, Malcolm Sargent, cond. RCA Victor LM/LSC 2603.

BEETHOVEN: Sonatas: "Moonlight" (Op. 27, No. 2); "Les Adieux" (Op. 81A); "Pathétique" (Op. 13). Artur Rubenstein, piano. RCA Victor LM/LSC 2654.

MOZART: Piano Concertos Nos. 17 and 20, K. 453 and 466. Artur Rubenstein, piano. Alfred Wallenstein, cond. RCA Victor LM/LSC 2636 and 2635.

MOZART: Piano Concertos Nos. 19 and 20, K. 453 and 466. Rudolf Serkin, piano. Columbia Symphony, George Szell, cond. Columbia ML 5934/MS 6534.

CHOPIN: Three Etudes and Scherzo No. 1. Debussy: Three Preludes. Beethoven: "Pathétique" Sonata, Op. 13. Vladimir Horowitz, piano. Columbia ML 5941/MS 6541.

RUBENSTEIN–HEIFETZ–FEUERMANN: Trios (Beethoven, Op. 97 ["Archduke"]; Brahms, Op. 8; Schubert, Op. 99). RCA Victor LM 7025.

THE HEIFETZ–PIATIGORSKY CONCERTS (Mozart: Quintet in G minor, K. 516; Mendelssohn: Octet in Eb, Op. 20; Schubert: Quintet in C, Op. 163; Franck: Piano Quintet). RCA Victor LD 6159.

BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto Nos. 3, 4, and 5. Artur Schnabel, piano. Philharmonia Orchestra, Alceo Galliera, Issay Dobrowen, conds. Angel COLH 3, 4, 5.

LISZT: Six Paganini Etudes; Années de Pélerinage; Three Petrarch Sonnets; Tarantella. Alfred Brendel, piano. Vox PL 10,800.

SCHUMANN: Davidsbündlertänze, Op. 6; Carnaval, Op. 9. Charles Rosen, piano. Epic LC 3869/BC 1269.

WHATEVER one's attitude toward the era of traditional virtuosity from a purely musical point of view, it produced some extraordinary playing of a kind that seems to be disappearing with the currently oldest generation of performers. What these players attempted was the realization of an ideal instrumental sound, reproduced steadily and effortlessly, under all conditions of musical context and mechanical demand. "Music" was secondary, a medium through which to project the instrumental image rather than the other way around. This is particularly evident when such a strongly self-contained work as the Brahms Double Concerto is involved; Casals's performance (recorded in 1929) is a fascinating demonstration of the authority with which his nasal, almost vocal sound penetrates every phrase and detaches it from its surroundings like a solid object illuminated in relief against a neutral background, here supplied by Cortot. Thibaud's violin is also dominated by Casals's pervasive resonance, especially in the octave passages in the slow movement, where the violin seems to have become an upper registration of the cello, and forms with it a new single-instrument sonority rather than that of an ensemble.

Heifetz's playing is so intensely concentrated on violinism that it doesn't even concern itself with phrases to any significant degree. His handling of the Mozart Concerto reveals an impressive analytical precision in determining exactly which of his inexhaustible violinistic skills and manners will be best displayed by any given passage. Mozart, however, offers little scope for such objectives compared with Bruch and Vieuxtemps, whose pieces really sound far more fulfilled and fulfilling in these performances. Isaac Stern, on the other hand, simply rushes at Mozart with his sound wide open, his

dynamic contrasts popping, and an air of great suspense and anticipation generated by a purely inspirational approach to the issues of phrasing and pitch placement.

Among pianists, Rubenstein's playing is supremely elegant, balanced and modulated, and inflected in minute degrees, so that the listener's attention is held at every moment by the sensation of constant subtle change. In his performances, Beethoven's *Les Adieux* is a succession of beautifully molded phrases, and even the explosive opening chords of the *Pathétique* are attacked so elliptically that the accentual peak seems to have passed before the sound begins. The Mozart Concertos, too, emerge as collections of passages whose notes are built into mounds of fluctuating sonorous swells from single-note spareness to a "big" sound that is almost organlike in the smoothness of its attack.

In contrast, Serkin's approach to the Mozart D minor Concerto is primarily linear, pursuing a single directional shape from beginning to end with a careful and purposeful deliberation that seems rather ponderously imposed on Mozart's more subtly ramified and inflected development. And Horowitz's performance of the Beethoven *Pathétique* is the exact virtuoso counterpart of Rubenstein's, with Horowitz's characteristic rhythmic ricochet, his sharp and clear attacks, and a sense of highly contrasted events succeeding one another instantaneously without ever blurring or straining either his digital resources or the piano's mechanical capacities. These qualities are given rather better scope elsewhere, however, most especially in the Debussy *Les Fées sont esquisses danseuses,* where one gets a wonderful sense of the ticking off of each note in the fastest figurational passages, and different kinds of articulation are simultaneously projected as though from different sound sources. Ultimately, here as elsewhere, the result misses connection with the overall *sense* of the note successions; they seem more exhibited than played. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the Chopin B minor Scherzo, the most sustained work on the record, is the least successfully played, particularly in comparison with Rubinstein's judiciously shaped and phrased performances (such as on RCA Victor LM/LSC 2368).

Chamber music performances by groups of stellar virtuosos have always been natural popular attractions but they have more often than not turned out to be unsatisfactory performances from everyone's point of view, since the distinctive individual instrumental "signatures" tend to conflict and cancel one another out. Thus the most evident characteristic of the Rubenstein-Heifetz-Feuermann set (reissued from the prewar "million-dollar trio" recordings) is the dismal failure to create a Beethoven sonority, a Brahms sonority, or a Schubert sonority; what is heard instead are the Rubenstein, Heifetz, and Feuermann sonorities in alternation, combination, and confusion. And since they seem to have made no concerted attempt to phrase or articulate according to some unitary or communal conception, one hears three players travelling in the same general direction, but not really together.

The recent (1961) Heifetz-Piatigorsky concerts represent a further exacerbation. The ensemble playing is perfunctory and neutral, achieving only a restless fluidity in which everything falls into place, but not necessarily into any place in the design of the work.

Schnabel was the anti-virtuoso of his time; instead of the beautiful or spectacular moment-to-moment playing of Rubenstein or Horowitz, or the one-dimensional linearity of Serkin, Schnabel's performances reveal awareness of works as totalities, in which each action is a significant defining element. This sense of overall shape, of a total articulation rather than a local drive or sensibility, is so firmly maintained that Schnabel's performances seem fundamentally accurate even though all kinds of details are slurred, as they were all through his career in mechanically complex passages. These Beethoven concerto recordings, made at the end of his career in the mid-forties, are not the most impressive or representative examples of Schnabel's playing; by this time, the digital disasters were so pervasive as to impinge on his ability to articulate his ideas—the last movement of the *Emperor* Concerto is a poignant case in point. But although none of these performances measures up to the series made with Malcolm Sargent in the thirties, Schnabel's dramatization of the diverse dynamic of interaction between orchestra and piano in each of the three movements of the Fourth Concerto (in the first movement, the orchestra takes the principal assertive and expository role with the piano responding and backgrounding; in the second, the piano and orchestra assert sharply differentiated texts side by side; and in the last, they share the foreground, even interrupting and completing each other's utterances), and espe-

cially his absorbing ideas about the phrasing and tempo of the second movement, communicate essential insights into the work's inner structure.

The specialized discipline of old-time virtuosos, and the extraordinary resources of instrumental resonance, dynamic nuance, and control that their peculiar objectives evoked, are almost nowhere to be found among their successors in the younger generation. Those who aspire to popular virtuoso glamour are more inclined toward pure extrovert theater, creating excitement by driving everything to extremes of density and contrast, creating tension by skittering on the brink of uncontrollability, and pushing sonorous brilliance to the edge of shrillness.

Others have elected to follow the musically "serious" line of Schnabel (or, perhaps even more pertinently, Rachmaninoff, who additionally possessed all the magical virtuoso pianism that Schnabel missed). In their playing, instrumental properties are treated as means to realize compositional ideas, and hence it is the work rather than the instrument whose sound is identifiable. Of the younger performers regularly involved in the context of normal concert activity, Rosen and Brendel are especially conspicuous both for their musical intelligence and pianistic capacities. Brendel's Liszt playing is a spectacular demonstration of his ability to produce floods of figurational notes with absolute evenness and distinctness in such a way that they never obtrude into the foreground, and thus permit the clear definition of the underlying rhythms in their largest as well as all their immediate levels. In Rosen's performances, on the other hand, no two notes are played identically; each seems to have been individually molded in terms of its hierarchical relation to the other elements in the relational network. The result is music-making of articulateness and intelligence, as close to a transparent external image of the inside of the music being played as one could have imagined ever hearing.

RECORDS: VERDI, PUCCINI

VERDI: *La Traviata.* Renata Scotto, Ettore Bastianini, Gianni Raimondi. Orchestra and Chorus of La Scala, Milan; Antonio Votto, cond. Deutsche Grammophon SLPM 138 832/34 (S).

Il Trovatore. Antonietta Stella, Fiorenza Cossotto, Carlo Bergonzi, Ettore Bastianini. Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala, Milan; Tullio Serafin, cond. Deutsche Grammophon LSPM 138 835/37.

Rigoletto. Joan Sutherland, Cornell MacNeil. Chorus and Orchestra of L'Accademia Santa Cecilia; Nino Sanzogno, cond. London OSA 1332.

PERHAPS the liveliest impression one receives from a fresh encounter with these almost unbearably familiar works is the sense of how much compositional profundity can be achieved even from within the most unlikely traditions and disciplines. For even such straightforward number-works as *La Traviata* and *Il Trovatore,* constructed from set pieces of simple sequential patterns, have a stylistic integrity and an economical deployment of resources that forecast the potential of a master compositional strategist. In particular, the detached perceptivity engendered by such a redundant listening experience allows one to discern behind the succession of smash-hit tunes a rhythmic compression and phrase control that is completely directed and directional, and a superb sense of timing that permits the dramatic, verbal and musical events to be fully comprehended and finely balanced within the total span.

Rigoletto, moreover, although composed earlier, impinges far more intensely and individually on one's awareness by its skintight molding of traditionally well-verified materials to the ebb and flow of a total dramatic progression, building through hairline precision of choice in every dimension to a swift and powerful forward drive. Strikingly individual vocal profiles are picked out from among the interior pitches of a continuous progression, so that—as in Mozart—the voices seem to be moving "inside" the overall forward flow, while maintaining and developing their distinctive qualities.

Both the *Traviata* and the *Trovatore* recordings show the traditionalist competence that is the most impressive quality presently to be found among European performances of "standard repertory" works. Here, as elsewhere, fidelity to the image of some sacred "source" performance results in a closer approximation to musical coherence and cogency than one finds in many superficially far more brilliant or "original" approaches. The most notable feature of this tradition in Italy is its special balance of clarity with smoothness, rhythmic and accentual acuity with sustained continuity, timbral and vocal brilliance, as well as harmonic firmness achieved with the lightest possible textural emphasis (compare this with the somewhat brittle harshness that sometimes results from the French preoccupation with extreme clarity, and the frequent sonic dullness and indistinct texture that arise from the German insistence on both vertical and horizontal homogeneity).

And it seems (from these recordings at least) that the other principal characteristic of modern Italian performance—a prevailing sloppiness about standards of intonation and accuracy under the most trivially undemanding conditions—has not yet penetrated to La Scala. Although in both cases casts and conductors are drawn from the regular Scala company, the *Trovatore* is altogether the superior performance, primarily because of Antonietta Stella's singing and the conducting of Tullio Serafin, who remains the living embodiment of the original Verdi tradition.

As far as *Rigoletto* is concerned, its demonstration of Verdi's mastery as a composer of "popular" opera extends to the performance: given reasonable vocal accuracy and adequate rhythmic control, its qualities are so firmly embedded that it virtually plays itself. The only problem in this performance, therefore, is Joan Sutherland, whose mannerisms of uneven rhythm, scooping and peculiarly breathy vocal attacks call much more attention to the fact that she is singing than to the particular events of Gilda's music.

PUCCINI: *Il Trittico* (three one-act operas): *Il Tabarro, Gianni Schicchi, Suor Angelica.* Renata Tebaldi, Mario Del Monaco, Robert Merrill, Fernando Corena. Lamberto Gardelli, cond. London OSA 1364.

THE WONDERFUL sleazy sound that Puccini got in *Il Tabarro* by combining imitation jazz style and orchestration (evidently derived from French imitations of American jazz) with the traditional clichés of Impressionism and Italian *verismo* seems to me the apex of imaginative achievement for his special kind of admirable and highly effective commercialism, although I might have to admit, if confronted with particulars, that a number such as the first-act *Ha ben ragione* was inferior to *Old Man River* by all the applicable criteria. *Gianni Schicchi* is probably a more successful piece, since its neo-Mozart-Rossini *buffa* style was so much more familiar to Puccini and his audience that he could play much cleverer and funnier musical and situational associative games. In any case, these two are unquestionably Puccini's best works, full of deft theatrical, musical and orchestrational touches. *Suor Angelica,* on the other hand, is almost on the level of Menotti's crude dilutions of this style, but one can be grateful for it as the receptacle for all the sentimentality that was left out of the rest of the *Trittico.* The performances are honest and square, just right to project Puccini's jokes on his own performers.

10.19.64

RECORDS: LITURGY AND VILIFICATION

BERNSTEIN: Symphony No. 3, *Kaddish*. Felicia Montealegre, speaker; Jennie Tourel, mezzo-soprano; Camerata Singers, Columbus Boychoir; New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond. Columbia KL 6005; KS 6605 (S).

BRITTEN: *War Requiem,* Op. 66. Galina Vishnevskaya, Peter Pears, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, soloists; London Symphony and Chorus, Benjamin Britten, cond. London 4255; 1255 (S).

THE PRINCIPAL question about Leonard Bernstein's *Kaddish* is why it should have been singled out for such universal critical vilification at its first American performances in Boston and New York last year. Listening to it then, and hearing it recently on the recording, I found it unmistakably the product of a remarkable musical gift, full of effective sounds and gestures, and showing a sense of what can be done by sheer orchestral manipulation that few practicing composers, whatever their superior stature or resourcefulness in other respects, can command. It seemed, in short, just what one would most expect from the evidence of Bernstein's other music. And it seems to me particularly to deserve defense against the notably immoderate scorn with which it was treated in the press because of its obvious superiority in the respects I have enumerated to anything in the Britten *War Requiem*—a comparatively weak specimen of precisely the same popular-masterpiece genre whose immense, untouchable local prestige (the highest, undoubtedly, since the Shostakovich *Leningrad* Symphony) is in such striking contrast to the treatment accorded *Kaddish*.

Indeed, the similarities in purpose and approach of the two works are so manifest that one's first conjecture about the difference in their reception is simply that the Britten got here first. And possibly associated with this is the advantage Britten enjoys with our audience by being, as an Englishman, somewhat more exotic and hence "authentic" than any American could ever manage to be. For the works themselves are virtually counterparts of the same external idea: both derive their titles and principal texts from the most solemn and emotionally charged passages of their respective liturgies; both assert bold originality by interspersing these with contemporary texts that presumably give the whole a profound relation to the urgent concerns of modern man—Wilfred Owen's war poems in the Britten piece, and existential self-examinations in the Bernstein piece. And, in their visual-sonic appearances, both invoke full and impressive arrays of instruments and voices, occupy sufficient time spans, and produce sufficient masses of sound to be recognized as "very important pieces", and cement these imputations of high artistic purpose and accomplishment by traversing a wide variety of styles associated with appropriate masterpieces from the literature.

But in all other respects, one would have supposed that the rather pale and conventional slickness of the Britten was no match for the strenuous confessional and intensely novel manner of *Kaddish*. Where Britten's entire conceit is to reproduce traditional qualities in "contemporary" terms with such absolute control that he will appear to be a master in the traditional sense, Bernstein is like a musical Norman Mailer in his raw and restless embrace of every available sound and style, however over-familiar or marginally "far out", and in his slashing contrasts of texture and proportion, all of which seem designed to project an overwhelming image of violent and uncontrollable originality. Thus the percussion music and "twelve-tone expressionism" of the "Din-Torah" (whose "row" actually begins with the first four notes of Berg's *Lulu*) suddenly cuts back to a *Verklaerte Nacht* sound, which in turn gives way to a Lullaby that might have come out of Ravel's *L'enfant et les Sortileges,* and so forth. Unlike Britten, however, Bernstein never associates these sounds with a continuity that approximates that of their sources (except perhaps in the Lullaby), but virtually pours them over one another in a continually erratic texture whose very instability produces a peculiar kind of "dynamism".

However disheveled and episodic the results, then, the approach itself seems far more engaging than Britten's eternally recurring tritones. And many of the sonic and presentational ideas that Bernstein has had for making

his recalcitrant material perform its compulsively theatrical function result in genuinely arresting moments; I was especially struck by his way of building to the inevitable "big" climaxes by starting from a bare statement of two registral extremes and then progressively "filling in" the middle of the texture. Furthermore, the work is full of brilliant sounds and timbral juxtapositions—for example, the constantly changing relation between orchestral and choral rhythm and articulation, and the way the chorus emerges from the percussion sound in the "Din-Torah" would be memorable in anybody's piece.

Apart from all such considerations, I find it difficult to understand why anyone who could find anything to marvel at in the little trumpet curls that passed for "tone painting" in the *War Requiem* would not be even more impressed by some of the sheer musical theatre in *Kaddish:* for example, the gradual "transformation" of the "tone-row" into a diatonic "hymn" before one's very ears is a dramatization of the moral triumph of tonality that has all the earmarks of a feat of popular cultural heroics. And following this with a bit of Copland-homespun Appalachia seems a sure-fire appeal to the nostalgic dreams of our recent musical past.

But although there is nothing inherently cornier in this than in Britten's self-Berliozation, it does begin to explain the hostility *Kaddish* aroused in the critics; for one senses something painfully sincere about Bernstein's attempt, a feeling that, in some wildly unrealistic terms, he really hoped to act out the drama of an existential *Kaddish* in terms of the struggle and triumph of tonality over atonality. Thus the embarrassments of the piece are like those of watching someone act upon a complete faith in his ability to do the physically impossible—fly, for example.

In short, Britten's superior triumph seems to lie mainly in his superior cynicism; where his slyly "inside" puns flattered his listeners' intelligences, Bernstein's brutal self-exposure was too transparent an affront. In this, a comparison of the two texts is particularly revealing; obviously, Bernstein's text itself provided the most vulnerable and convenient target for retaliation—and indeed, some of the reviews consisted mostly of shocked quotations from it. On the other hand, Britten's calculation was totally ingenious; not only was his choice much more *comme il faut* and genuinely tasteful as a text in itself, but it also engaged all the sentiment attaching to Owen, and displayed as well a slick awareness of what is currently "in". For the anti-war theme has great currency these days, especially among the younger English intellectuals whereas modernized Old Testament agonizing is very old hat, entirely lacking in the cachet it used to enjoy as artistic subject matter, and carrying with it now a faintly corrupt odor of parochialism and tastelessness that seems to have begun to discourage even Broadway, Wolf Mankowitz and the *New York Post*. Besides, one can simply ignore the words of a sung text like Britten's, whereas an insistently spoken, shouted and intoned oration such as that of *Kaddish* invariably gets in the way of its musical surroundings and almost begs to be resented. Here again, the very self-destructiveness of Bernstein's approach convinces one of its utter sincerity; but the major issue of the comparison—which text is more fruitfully conceived as music dramatic material—seems nearly a tossup.

In the end one must concede that *Kaddish* does not amount to a significant new composition; but that is just what I find most disturbing about the furor with which it has been surrounded, since I am led to wonder whether all the moral outrage has not simply been an unjustified outlet for a—perhaps justifiable—irritation with Mr. Bernstein's other activities as conductor and musical personality. Such a confusion of categories, however, is equally dangerous for music and for responsible criticism whether or not it is directed at a work deserving of really serious consideration. Anyway, the very idea of a morally corrupting piece of music seems to me absurd; bad pieces, being by definition incapable of rewarding anyone's attention, can achieve public importance only by virtue of the attention they get in the press. Ignored, they fade into the featureless limbo of their kind.

11.16.64

RECORDS: BELA BARTOK

BARTOK: *The Miraculous Mandarin* (Suite). *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta.* London Symphony Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. London CM 9399/CS 6399.

THE *MIRACULOUS MANDARIN* is a remarkable early instance of Bartók's attempt to construct associative bridges between the new sounds and contours of 20th-century music and traditional coherence and continuity. In this, his approach resembled Schoenberg's more than Stravinsky's, but since the sound of his work was always based on strong tonal associations reheard and recombined in startling new ways, its external characteristics seem more closely to follow Stravinsky's development. The connection is particularly apparent in the invocation of traditional appearances in sound and style (such as the "fugue", "sonata" and "rondo"-like movements, and the tonal chords, "imitations" and "cadences" at strategic formal joints in the *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* and elsewhere) beginning in the twenties, and the appearance of an occasionally egregious "diatonicism" in the very latest works.

And just as in Stravinsky's work the most obviously "revolutionary" music, that of *Le Sacre,* is actually far less "revolutionary" in its compositional implications than some deceptively simple later works—the Symphony of Psalms, for example—so the obstreperous "bite" of the *Mandarin's* searing shrieks and volatile surface contours and rhythms are essentially a brittle overlay on a rather tame Straussian subsurface, while the seeming literalness and square "neoclassic" gestures of much of the *Music for Strings,* etc., provide the framework for an extraordinary relational idea. In fact, what Bartók attempted in the first two movements of the *Music* was a new synthesis of traditional coherence (such as Schoenberg attempted to re-create) and traditional sonic contexts (in the Stravinskyian sense) through a non-twelve-tone serialism evolved from the techniques of both men, but uniquely formulated for Bartók's personal purposes. This is, essentially, the source of the "late-Beethoven" sound of his middle-period quartets and of the first and second movements (the "fugue" and "sonata") of the *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*—for late Beethoven, too, is in a sense a recombination of historically disparate elements, fugue and sonata, Bach contrapuntal continuity and Classic motivic articulation, into a singular personal syntax.

Solti's performances are characteristic of the prevailing tendency to comprehend and control "new" music by subsuming it within a familiar, generalized formal context, rather than by any penetration into its individually unique properties. In both the *Mandarin* and the *Music,* this results in a superficially solid and accurate performance, whose very ease and security in "solving" rhythmic and sonorous problems underscores all the conventional tendencies of the works and slights their special qualities. Thus the fugue of the first movement of the *Music* is taken at a pace that succeeds in making it as "accessible" as a trivial counterpoint exercise, although the use of a full orchestra rather than the chamber ensemble that Bartók specified introduces considerable textural confusion here and elsewhere, especially under the conditions of Solti's unusually fast tempos.

12.7.64

BERGER, LAYTON, IMBRIE

ENTHUSIASM over quantitative renascences is an American fixation to which observers of the music scene are especially prone—perhaps because they find so little else to exult about. But since performances of nonstandard music in America are an infinitesimal but apparently set percentage of our gross musical product, the proliferation of sheer activity has the undeniable advantage of automatically aggrandizing the amount of interesting new music that can be heard within a given time span. Hence the most exhilirating aspect of the recent orchestral liveliness noted here last month (November 9) has been the performance, for the first time in memory, of a sufficient amount of contemporary American orchestral music to convey a sense of the direction and quality of American orchestral composition as a whole activity. It has been particularly interesting to find that the attributes of extreme diversity and idiosyncratic individualism which characterize recently composed American chamber music are evident as orchestral-composition traits also, even though opportunities in that medium have been scarce. Despite the neglect that has discouraged American composers from producing a really substantial native orchestra literature, they seem to be drawn to make a special creative effort by the elevated aura that still attaches to the symphonic image.

Such reflections are explicitly elicited by hearings of some recent orchestral pieces performed this season (mostly outside New York) which, taken together, constitute a virtual microcosm of the salient preoccupations of recent American compositional thinking. Curiously, none of them is officially "twelve-tone", though all are thoroughly "contemporary" in the way that they represent uniquely conceived and realized ideas of musical coherence. And unmistakably "American"—that is, in sharp contrast to what is nowadays prevalently "European"—in that these pieces, all composed within the last decade, share nothing like even a common "style", beyond the more fundamental affinity represented by a radically searching, investigative attitude to the shaping and developing of a meaningful musical language. Their surface qualities diverge sharply, in as many directions as there are pieces, from the precise transparency and elegance of Arthur Berger's *Polyphony*, to the multilayered "total counterpoint" of Elliott Carter's Orchestral Variations (*The Nation,* April 6, 1963), the monolithic, starkly contrasted successions of Billy Jim Layton's *Dance Fantasy,* the carefully expansive chromatic-polyphonic web of Andrew Imbrie's Violin Concerto, and the tightly constrained and methodically evolved development of the Violin Concerto by Edward Cone (the performance of which last month by the Princeton Symphony was insufficiently clear to justify further discussion here).

Polyphony, played in October by the Boston Symphony, is one of those works that ultimately generate a far more powerful originality than their surfaces initially give away; this is the fundamentally Stravinskyan aspect of the piece, rather than the few details of texture and melody which can be associated more immediately with Stravinsky's music. And in any case, the surface is itself so full of striking details of sonority and rhythm, particularly the elastic registral and time spacing, and such a sensitivity to the qualities of every musical moment, that each attack appears vividly differentiated from each other, and seems to require its own special performance nuance. But underneath its tensile, brittle surface, *Polyphony* develops a unique synthesis of "diatonic" and "chromatic", in which the juxtaposition of familiar but traditionally disparate elements creates a whole complex of new linear and harmonic relationships. Similarly, the familiar ideas of recurrence and contrast are transformed into a dramatic duality between energy and quiescence; passages of great apparent activity, such as the opening, have an equality of rhythmic accentuation which overtakes them from within with a progressive stasis that eventually engulfs the entire texture; the succeeding "calm" passages are undermined by an inner rhythmic turbulence which drives the texture into activity once again. The climax is in the final section, which repeatedly but unavailingly gropes for the opening; at the very end, the two ideas are violently juxtaposed as the violins virtually try to tear through the registral roof over an insistent, unvarying one-note tremolo—the ultimate expression in music of extreme energy without real movement—which persists to become the final sound. Erich Leinsdorf seemed genuinely to *conduct* this

piece, effectively controlling most of its ferociously difficult rhythmic transitions. Aside from the thrill of hearing, for once, all the components of a chord, from bass to glockenspiel attack, simultaneously, and of hearing a fullbodied mass of strings really produce a single line of sound, the unfair comparison of this performance with the original one by the brave but barely professional Louisville Orchestra only proves the necessity of having our most accomplished ensembles available to perform our significant new music.

Billy Jim Layton's music seems to emerge from that uniquely American tradition most prominently represented by Roy Harris: raw, primary-colored sonic profiles, blocks of pure textural idea are thrust and spun—or rather sprawled—over vast temporal and (sound)-spatial expanses; continuity derives from eternal reiteration, contrast from successive extreme stylistic inconsistency unmodulated by transition or consolidation. The important difference in Layton's music is his experience of Elliott Carter; the resultant sophistication in his choice of materials, together with the polished skill with which he can manipulate them, gives his work an assurance and sense of purpose beyond the scope of Harris's output. In the new *Dance Fantasy* (played on October 27 by the New Haven Symphony), the succession of stylistic patches from a diversity of sources, including Carter, jazz, Ives, Boulez, Copland, and a spectrum of textures and sonorities ranging from the bubbling woodwind riffs of the opening to the orchestral "white noise" of the climax to the immediately following prairie-sunset stillness, seem a daring attempt to assimilate everything in music into a personal language where each "style" functions as a macrocosmic structural "element". This performance, manifestly out of hand despite the players' heroic efforts, did project a kind of total personality out of the collage of fragments, but it was less the super-coherence of a *Finnegans Wake* than a composite dimly gleaned from the discourse of someone trying to say everything all at once—Lucky in *Waiting for Godot,* perhaps. Still, given the evident brilliance of many of its sounds, the *Dance Fantasy* stands in obvious need of an adequate performance by a first-rate orchestra. That it seems to some of us who heard it in New Haven to justify that kind of attention, and that we would be impelled to listen intently to it yet again, are perhaps the most significant observations about this puzzling piece that can be made after a first hearing.

I wasn't able to hear the performance a few Sundays ago of Andrew Imbrie's Violin Concerto by the Orchestra of America, but Carroll Glenn, the soloist then, also performs the Concerto on its Columbia recording. This piece is, from any point of view, an impressive artifact, refined and knowing in its formal control, a full and masterly realization of its compositional idea. From its very opening, it is plainly a "big" piece of music in the traditional symphonic sense associated with Roger Sessions, a traditionalism that resides mainly in the essential phraseology of the music—the breadth and rate of its successions, melodic lines, and formal articulation—rather than in any obvious conventional appearances. And the depth of the materials and their development in the Imbrie concerto more than fulfill the "symphonic" expectations its proportions arouse. Moreover, even in Sessions' formidable shadow, Imbrie's own sturdy musical mind is unmistakable, revealed especially in the lucid projection of every detail and inflection within a dense and complex polyphonic texture. And the slow second movement, where shimmering woodwind sounds are first poised against the gutty line of the solo violin, then extended into brass and percussion sounds, and finally into the solo harp and siren-high strings, is a fascinating chain of continuous sound development.

I have no score, but Carroll Glenn seems secure and authoritative, with enough resources of sound, volume, and phrasing to command most of the important contemporary violin literature. On these grounds, perhaps Columbia will take advantage of her capacities also to record the Sessions Violin Concerto, for that is a major American orchestral masterpiece whose absence from the concert and recorded literature is among our real musical deprivations.

Records

BERGER: *Polyphony.* Louisville Orchestra. Robert Whitney, conductor. Louisville 58-4.

LAYTON: *Quartet.* Claremont Quartet. CRI 136.

IMBRIE: Violin Concerto. Carroll Glenn, violin. Columbia ML 5997/MS 6597.

1.11.65

STRAVINSKY'S *ABRAHAM AND ISAAC*

NEW STRAVINSKY works always puzzle their first hearers. Their ultimate value is usually more evident from the number and urgency of the perplexing questions they raise than from their projection of a sense of overwhelming "inevitability" in the fulfillment or development of qualities latent in earlier works. Thus *Abraham and Isaac,* given its first performance at Philhamonic Hall last month on Stravinsky's and Robert Craft's own concert, seemed particularly vexing in its un-Stravinskyan paradoxes. To begin with, the principal presentational feature of the work is a long, unbroken, rather undifferentiated and unvarying solo baritone line winding along the entire length of the music's surface, and particularly uncharacteristic of Stravinsky in its evident aloofness from interplay, exchange, or quick reactive association—apart from some obvious pitch correspondences—with the articulations or materials of the instrumental ensemble. And at the other extreme, the continuity delineated by the instruments seems curiously sectionalized, in quite constricted episodic compartments whose disjunction is exaggerated by the unperturbed cantillation (ritual intoning) of the solo baritone. (And given the Old Testament text, set in Hebrew in a work dedicated to the state of Israel, the cantillatory intention seemed obvious.) Unquestionably, the flute and tuba music (in spacing as much as timbre), the woodwind chords near the end, the multifaceted string textures could immediately be recognized as marvelous sonic inspirations, and the varied perorations on recurrent words (especially "*Vayomer*") in the vocal line with its cross-related accompaniments could be associated with some of Stravinsky's most fertile ideas of vocal-music structure. But this made more startling the flat one-dimensional literal relation of the presented rhythm of the surface to the underlying, essential rhythm of event-change.

But whatever previous Stravinskyan expectations all this frustrates—in which respect it is of course typically Stravinskyan—what it ultimately projects is precisely a sense one gets from reading the Old Testament itself: a fluid, cohesive continuity of verbal style, in the language and inflection of the "narrator", maintained through a series of short, episodic, violently contrasting and casually juxtaposed sections comprising the incidents of the narration. The language, the stylistic quality of the narration, carry the central development of the thought, and the successive "events" form a kaleidoscopic backdrop. In Stravinsky's score, this emerges as a perfect "dramatic" situation for music: the voice, on the plane of thought, proceeds steadily, imperturbable, while striking off flashes of constantly changing image and event in the "sensory" instrumental domain. The relation between the levels is established not by obvious correspondences or influences, but through "contact points" of related material, intersections of similar event-content presented in completely different ways—in short, through a dramatization of the most deeply embedded property of the twelve-tone syntax which underlies the work. And the "flatness" of the rhythmic dimension is like the "flatness" of the baritone's "tone of voice": a brittle, tensile plane on which each nuance, however minute, leaves its unmistakable track.

The idea of a polar separation of narration, observation, and action is, of course, no more novel in music than in drama itself; the recitative-aria dichotomy in Baroque opera, the multiple recitative-arioso-Chorale-Chorus-aria distinctions in the Bach Passions, and the spoken narration-chorus-protagonist relationship in Stravinsky's own *Oedipus Rex* are conspicuous ancestry. But it is in the idea of the simultaneity of such layers that *Abraham and Isaac* is engrossingly unique, and in its infusion of every dimension of presentation and structure with a special fulfillment of the single dramatic idea. The real Biblical drama, after all, lies not in the simple separation and contrast of language and what it describes, but in their simultaneous interrelation; and *Abraham and Isaac,* too, generates its real tension by maintaining levels in clear separation while opening them fully to each other's ideas, so that in the end we hear them not as separate entities but as different dimensions of a whole, each dependent on the completion of the others for ultimate comprehensibility.

Here the deep sense of Stravinsky's strategy emerges: the vocal line, the dimension of coherence, in retrospect confers continuity on the episodic sectional succession, while it is in turn given articulative force by the highly differentiated, clearly demarcated patches of instrumental texture; and the catalyst that enables the clear sonic projection of such a complex and long-spanned relational idea is the powerful associative resources of the twelve-tone pitch structure.

The full range and depth of the compositional discoveries turned up by Stravinsky in the pursuit of this idea could not, of course, have been evident at any first hearing, even one so powerfully aided as by the musicianly competence of Robert Craft and some of the New York instrumentalists who played at Philharmonic Hall. Aside from more fundamental considerations, the absence of any printed text or translation for a work sung in Hebrew, and the probable impossibility of finding a properly cantorial baritone capable of sustaining the almost twenty minutes of continuous intelligent singing required by the solo part (the soloist on this occasion, Andrew Foldi, had many of the necessary qualifications but was fatally limited in his range of sound and dynamics, and in his pitch-focus precision) are formidable deterrents to an adequate experience of the work. Which makes it especially urgent that the recording already taped by Columbia records (and the score promised by Boosey and Hawkes) be released before the even more recent *Symphonic Variations* preoccupies the entire center of our musical attention.*

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* The original text of this column began with some general remarks about Stravinsky's interpenetration with the world of others' artifacts and ideas:

Stravinsky's astonishing capacity for perpetual self-renewal has come, in great part, from his awareness of the precise qualities of the "outside" ideas and frameworks through which his musical discoveries have typically been projected. His works are like sensitive galvanometers affixed to their "host" ideas, whose musical potential they transmit with such precision that—once we realize what the old man has been up to—these ideas seem not only to have been perfectly realized in music, but actually to have been permanently transformed into music. Thus, where it used to be said that Stravinsky "monumentalized" his subjects (particularly in connection with such dramatic and religious "rituals" as the Symphony of Psalms and Oedipus Rex) they seem, more truly, to have been "musicalized", as though Stravinsky's music has replaced, fiber for fiber, the elements of their structural networks the way amber replaces the substance of a "petrified" tree.

One's tendency to think of such concrete images in connection with Stravinsky's music reflects its own treatment of musical sound and form as, literally, physical entities: the famous Stravinskyan "objectivity". His "subjects", in these terms, are really "objects"; literary or dramatic ideas, conceits of musical style association, are, to Stravinsky, actual things with specific weight, tactility and outline, to be recast and reassembled as the reflectors of a compositional image. And since his compositional ear is always pressed to the contemporary musical and intellectual ground, rather than tuned in only to his own inner voices, the continuous development of his creative ideas has manifested itself, in successive works, not through the extrusion of surface qualities of his own previous music, but in each case through new, specific qualities mined out of the individual context. It is this that has always made each work such a fresh, unique, unsubstitutable experience; and since, at 83, his vital contact with the outside world and its conceptual and sensory manifestations remains as unimpeded as ever, his new music is as surprising as his old, as prickly in its challenges, and as obstinate in its refusal to permit any total picture of his creative development to be drawn in terms of any final, past-immersed quiescence.

RECORDS: STRAVINSKY

Stravinsky Conducts Favorite Short Pieces: Greeting Prelude; Dumbarton Oaks Concerto; Eight Instrumental Miniatures; Four Etudes for Orchestra; Circus Polka; Suites Nos. 1 and 2 for Small Orchestra. Columbia Symphony Orchestra. Columbia ML 6048/MS 6648.

Stravinsky Conducts Ballet Music: *Jeu de Cartes;* Tschaikowsky (Bluebird) *Pas de deux* (arr. Stravinsky); *Scènes de Ballet.* Columbia ML 6049/ MS 6649.

Stravinsky Conducts His Choral Music; *Zvezdoliki (Le roi des étoiles);* Anthem (T.S. Eliot); Bach-Stravinsky: Chorale Variations on "Von Himmel hoch"; *Babel* (Cantata); *A Sermon, a Narrative, and a Prayer.* Columbia ML 6047/MS 6647.

The Rake's Progress. Judith Raskin, Alexander Young, John Reardon, Regina Sarfaty. Royal Philharmonic. Sadlers Wells Opera Chorus. Columbia M3L 310/M3S 710.

ON THE MOST RECENT Columbia Stravinsky releases, the *déjà vu* that becomes an invention is a constantly recurrent experience, and just when a piece's external idea or scope seems most inevitably to preclude anything more than sheer musical entertainment or vaudeville, there invariably emerges a flash of imaginative insight that reshapes one's sense of the range of musical possibility. Stravinsky's appetite for composition is so voracious that he has never been able to leave any aspect of an idea unexamined, however seemingly trivial the task at hand, or to reassert a discovery previously made. Thus a first encounter with even the smallest previously unheard work from any period of his activity illuminates a unique aspect of his development, and leaves behind a sharp sonic image that cannot be generalized or subsumed into stylistic categories. Given the number of individual pieces on these records, therefore, the best one can hope to provide within the usual space limitations is a skeletal guide to help the reader "place" each work within the Stravinsky literature.

Zvezdoliki (Le roi des étoiles) 1911: An extraordinary take-off on the special resonance and sonority of Russian folk- and church-chorus singing (that "Don Cossack" sound also heard in the crowd scenes of *Boris*) which seems almost graphically to extend Moussorgsky's harmony into that of *Le Sacre;* it is *Sacre* of which one is constantly aware—even to the trills and mysterious, sustained orchestral chords in the second half—but what is arresting is the completely different quality this idiom projects through its concentrated distillation into a chordal choral texture, and stripped bare of the softening ornamentation, sonorous cushioning and long-range extension of the later ballet.

Anthem ("The dove descending") 1962: Here, at the other end of the Stravinsky chronology, the choral writing is transformed from the dark, dense, purely monolithic sonorous blocks of *Zvezdoliki* to a cool, lucent, pure polyphony that recalls Josquin. In fact, one suspects that the reference to Hercules' "shirt of flame" in the Eliot text should send one to the Josquin "Duke Hercules" mass for some of the nicer conceits, if Stravinsky is behaving characteristically on this occasion. The work itself is fascinating for its generation of the sense of a wide-ranging polyphonic rhythm and texture out of individual lines that move largely in even durations.

Chorale Variations ("Von Himmel hoch") 1959: In "realizing" Bach's Variations for orchestra (with chorus used as a contrasting timbre for the basic chorale melody), Stravinsky seems to have explored every suggestive possibility for orchestral articulation that could be extrapolated from Baroque organ style, and in so doing also discovered a "double variations" cycle latent in the structure of the work. Thus every section presents a different type of bass, inner-voice and upper-voice articulation whose combination results in a fresh orchestral sonority; and the movements alternate between the "solidity" of the bright, clear, horizontally wide-spaced sound of the first presentation of the chorale, and the sound first heard in the second variation, a filmy texture reminiscent of the Galliarde in *Agon,* that luminous intricate filigree whose bass resonance coats the entire sonority without overflowing it, leaving space for all the crys-

talline lines to interlace clearly against a background of "white" sound generated mainly by harp, plucked strings and woodwinds. Even the "tching" of Baroque harpsichord attack and the buzz of the trumpet stop on the organ become generative origins of new wind sounds in the final variation.

Babel 1944: This was Stravinsky's contribution to the notorious *Genesis* suite commissioned and assembled by the Hollywood composer Nathaniel Shilkret, for which Schoenberg composed the introductory "Chaos". *Babel* divides into four brief sections: an orchestral introduction which in its concept of the combination of narrative and instrumental music has a striking inner relation to Schoenberg's *Survivor from Warsaw*; a choral section whose choral writing suggests the "Alleluia" of the *Symphony of Psalms* but seems even more a vocal evocation of the last page of the Symphony in C with its succession of specially voiced and mutated chords; an instrumental "Symphony in Three Movements" fugato that includes some sounds and textures heard nowhere else; and a postlude with a remarkable cadence. An extraordinary amount happens within its five minutes; yet it seems, for Stravinsky, a relatively undeveloped totality.

A Sermon, a Narrative, and a Prayer 1961: Still unperformed in New York, this is yet another of Stravinsky's mappings of an ideational succession onto a musical form: the "Sermon" is a series of fragmentary vignettes with a recurrent ritornello (like those of the *In Memoriam Dylan Thomas,* the 1951 Cantata, and *Threni*), a mosaic of textural patches; the "Narrative" contrasts the horizontal sectionalization of the first part with vertically separated, simultaneous "levels" (an idea further developed in *Abraham and Isaac*) whose tremolos and ostinatos also prefigure *The Flood;* the "Prayer" is the "integrative" resolution, ingenious in its reinterpretations of earlier elements into a continuous unity. Hearing *Sermon* first with the hindsight of Stravinsky's later work, one's impression is that it seems to propose ideas more fully realized in *The Flood* and *Abraham and Isaac*; but greater familiarity may alter one's feeling that its disparity of elements is not fully reconciled.

Scènes de Ballet 1944: Stravinsky's gift to Broadway is perhaps the purest of the distillations of style that characterized his music between the two big Symphonies in C and Three Movements. The "plotless ballet" idea seems to create a context free of extraneous tensions, in which a "choreographic" form is built from within by structuring musical elements in terms of dance successions without the distractions of peripeteia or "color". Under the apparent placidity lies a minutely complex and eventful structure, in which the "commercial" elements are made to conjoin with great subtlety; here as elsewhere, Stravinsky has not "borrowed" a sensibility from the musical demimonde to aggrandize his own work with its flavor, as much as "lent" it his prodigal sense for latent resources—which in *Scènes* created for Broadway and Billy Rose the imputation of an artistic elevation they scarcely envisioned or wanted.

The *Circus Polka* might be a movement of the *Scènes,* and even seems to borrow a few of its rhythmic and sonic ideas, but the woodwind calliope and the elephantine horn-bassoon-tuba-bass music are its own.

Jeu de Cartes 1937: There are probably more ideas about transition between contrasted materials in this work than in any other single composition, a conceit that reaches its exuberant height in demonstrating how to integrate materials even from such connotatively disparate and overfamiliar—and hence undetachable—contexts as Beethoven's Fifth and Rossini's *Barber*, which are not only brought into convincing relation to the whole but are made to seem to derive from each other as well. The performance, incidentally, is much the best played on these records.

Greeting Prelude 1955: If anyone might suppose that "Happy Birthday" was an unlikely source for serious composition, the *Greeting Prelude* makes it seem in retrospect the suggestive equal of, say, "Wachet auf" or the Schiller *Ode to Joy*—and it does so in fifty superbly deployed seconds of playing time.

Dumbarton Oaks Concerto 1938: Although the *Dumbarton Oaks* is billed as one of the "favorite short pieces" on that curiously titled record, it is actually a fully developed essay in Brandenburg-Concerto continuity and texture; in the first movement, nuance and articulation come through a foreground of ticking regularity within an almost uniform registral box from start to finish; in the second, the up-and-down "knitting" of Bach instrumental tunes becomes a structure of proliferating rhythmic angles; and in the finale, a "basso continuo" becomes a march of even impulses whose constantly

changing surroundings make its accentuation and tempo seem perpetually to shift. Like the *Scênes*, it is one of the most refined of Stravinsky's inventions.

Eight Instrumental Miniatures 1961; Suites Nos. 1 and 2: From *Pulcinella* on, Stravinsky has heard new music in old, and now his own "old" music has become such a source; his insights are a kind of super-performance that reveal a range of different sounds and articulations within the little *Cinq Doigts* piano pieces that will surely astonish its small performers and shame most of its large ones. The Suites Nos. 1 and 2 were originally the Eight Easy Pieces for piano four hands, and are "genre" pictures of the Ravel-Debussy kind made sharp-edged and unsentimentally "formal", thus materially improving the genre as well as demonstrating what can be done with only a few notes and scraps of tunes. The Waltz, with its wonderfully timed stops, is an especially happy idea, and the Galop reverses the usual historical procedure by anticipating Broadway-Hollywood musical style in its energetic and mechanical "verve".

Space precludes even a minimal discussion of the new recording of *The Rake's Progress*, beyond the assurances that the work is one of the rare authentic music-dramatic masterpieces so far composed; that listeners will be much better able to discover this if they pay less attention to the skin of neo-Classic number-form and the irregular text-setting, and follow instead the progress of the first two notes sung by Ann through the work (especially to their return as the first two notes of her Lullaby) as well as the real energy of the prosodic rhythm; and finally that the recording is superior in several important respects to the old Metropolitan production.

It ought also to be noted that, except for the Cleveland Orchestra's *Jeu de Cartes,* the playing on these records generally falls far short of the standard that one would regard as minimal for such crucial musical documents; in this, the works recorded by the Columbia Symphony are considerably worse than those played by the CBC orchestra, but the latter's contributions are marred by a serious tape-speed problem that sometimes creates an obtrusive pitch differential between successive pieces. And too many other signs of careless assemblage emerge for either the listener's comfort or the honor of Columbia's intentions.

3.22.65

THE FEARFUL SYMMETRY OF LINCOLN CENTER

AMERICA'S perennial inability to establish a secure public function for the arts, adequate both to their historic stature and to our fundamental cultural objectives, is a major failure of the democratic society, and one that damages us almost as much as Socialist Realism has smothered post-Revolutionary Russian culture under a monumental provincialism. In most other domains, we have been able to rationalize a democratic function for activities formerly identified as the luxurious practices of an aristocratic or intellectual elite, and have thus justified giving them, in all good democratic conscience, our national support and respect. Speculative science and pure mathematics are recognized as the ultimate sources of socially, economically, and militarily spectacular technology; psychology serves the mundane public good as a branch of medicine and in "human engineering"; far-out structural linguistics connects not only with essential wartime cryptanalysis and hermetically efficient language learning but with postwar business and government technology as well. Even modern philosophy has found a place, however specious, as the supposed generator of educational, moral, and sociological insight.

At best, the arts are vaguely regarded as Good Things, and any further awareness is prevented by honest confusion over whether they are really entertainments, businesses, sports, religions, cosmetics, orthopedic appliances or perversions; whether they should be explicitly taxed or indulgently tax-supported (in cases of extreme doubt both approaches are often taken simultaneously); whether their practice should be encouraged and taught at every educational level as a necessary right and privilege of our citizenry, or punished by isolation, economic deprivation and denial of resources necessary to their proper execution. We seem, in short, unable to decide whether our artists would be more appropriately placed on university faculties or television shows, in pulpits or burlesque theaters, amid pantheons for culture heroes or under institutional surveillance.

Out of this tangle of contradictions there has emerged in America a kind of public art that, quite naturally, reflects and magnifies all the amibvalence and weaknesses of the public attitudes that spawned it. We tend to produce heavily moneylosing institutions governed by strict box-office principles in all matters having to do with repertory, artistic enterprise or cultural responsibility. We have developed a highly professional machine for theatrical performance which avoids any work or writer that might ruffle its audience with equivalently high levels of invention or craft.

But perhaps the most damaging reflection of our insecurity is that we leave important public activities to be privately supported, and thus also to be governed almost entirely by the whim of the privately moneyed, regardless of public interest or professional need. Indeed, when there has been enlightenment, it has invariably been because a rare wealthy individual happened to have the cultivation and taste to make some original decisions and the conviction and courage to take public risks, rather than because competent professional guidance was invited or followed. The danger of such an approach is that it is as likely to bring forth a Huntington Hartford as a Lincoln Kirstein. Moreover, considering the evanescence and controversiality of our arts' public image, it is hardly to be wondered that our public officials give them a wide berth, with the result that probably no civilized country in history has had so little official recognition of art, and so little official art.

In instances where there has been official support—notably during the Great Depression—it arose more from socio-economic than from cultural considerations. The WPA Arts Project, for example, was essentially devised to support a group of hungry people who happened to be artists, but who presumably had as much right to eat as other underprivileged members of society. Under those conditions, art was simply what they produced to preserve the appropriate amenities, a less utilitarian form of road, school, or national park.

It is crucial to the development of the current situation that after its initial "Diamond Horseshoe" stage, American patronage found its "serious" side in those depression years, when even many responsible artists confused creative and intellectual responsibility with social awareness and political consciousness. Thus the patrons who formed the sincere "loyal opposition" to the cultural Establishment were oriented as

much to social issues as to art; and the characteristic results of their concerns were institutions like the Guggenheim Memorial Band Concerts in the New York parks, and the New York City Center for Music and Drama, whose principal aims were municipal rather than creative. Indeed, the City Center was established as the direct result of Mayor LaGuardia's failure to induce the Metropolitan Opera to accept civic responsibility; it was to be an alternative providing the same "culture" as the Met did, at prices everyone could afford. No one ever questioned the artistic attitudes and literature that the tastes of a few bankers and lawyers had enthroned at the Met (and the Philharmonic); on the contrary, it seemed especially important that what was offered to all the people by the City Center be precisely the same as what prevailed at the carriage-trade institutions, so that the assertion of the public's fully equal right of access to the amenities of the privileged would be uncompromised by dubious experimentation.

Aside from the other, serio-comic, aspects of LaGuardia's low-down and frequently dictatorial advocacy of culture for New York's citizens (and his animosity to contemporary art sometimes rivalled that of his distinguished colleagues in Central and Eastern Europe), the real tragedy has been the definitive role this attitude played in establishing the quality of American patronage. Thus, in the present period of great cultural-intellectual growth, the hold of primarily *political* approaches, public and private, remains complete everywhere outside a few select universities. And in the debate among the adherents of "art for the socially elite" (no longer openly self-declared but still unmistakably represented in almost pure form by the Metropolitan Opera), "art for the underprivileged masses" (best represented by the City Center), and "art for the affluent many" (Lincoln Center's principal contribution to the public art concept), there is no one to guard, proclaim, or even gently remind anyone of the arts themselves, which are simply capital-lettered into abstract nonexistence.

How our creative professions have managed under these conditions not only to survive, but to flourish beyond any other postwar artistic community, is a matter for wonder. In a certain sense, the prevailing confusion has itself been a contributory factor, throwing up a protective screen behind which our professionals were free to function, insofar as they could afford to function as artists at all, entirely on their own terms. They were able to create, faceless though they were to the public, an "inside" professional situation (most noticeably, within the communities of the research universities). Since no one cared, they could concentrate entirely on producing an art that would live up to their own superior standards. But no matter how lively or significant their work has made our "creative" culture, the "art public" as a whole derives no benefit from it, has little access to it, or any means through which to identify with or value it, and is even largely unaware of its existence. For the result of our confusion has been to short-circuit the continuity between the public manifestations of art and their creative sources.

Thus our artists have pursued their independent development at a heavy price, since the inevitable result of such a situation is to increase, rather than diminish, their isolation, misunderstanding, and neglect. We are confronted by the spectacle of an artistic literature of major international stature that is regarded by those who ought to be its most enthusiastic public promulgators with shame and embarrassment, for all but its most derivative and trivial aspects.

The real magnitude of this schism and its ultimate implications emerge only when the hyperactive conscience of our overwhelming wealth suddenly discovers the arts' plight. In other fields, the large foundation grants given to their most conspicuous public aspects tend to trickle affluence down through the entire professional structure, eventually benefiting and supporting basic research hidden far from public concern or view. But when our large public grantors have confidently applied the same technique to the arts, the results have been catastrophic. Surely no one has yet been able to forget the humiliation that the Ford Foundation suffered from its multimillion-dollar program of opera commissions, whose principal public reward was derision, embarrassment, and empty houses, and whose professional impact—the degree to which any substantial segment of the musical world felt itself benefited, stimulated, affected or even noticed—was virtually zero. This, in turn, creates an even more serious problem since so much money, thus uselessly spent, is no longer available for potentially useful spending. Still more dangerous is the possibility that not only will such institutions as Ford feel once burnt, twice shy (and the sensitivity of foundation administrators to being unloved or unappreciated is extreme), but that in not realizing that they have poured their sustenance into a dead and severed branch, they may assume that the entire organism is beyond help.

We are, therefore, at a critical juncture: now that foundation and government officialdom have begun to show a renewed awareness of responsibility to the arts, the danger is greatest that the peculiarities of the situation will lead them in the wrong directions.* Properly directed, on the other hand, their power for good is limitless, especially considering the economic modesty of even the most wildly ambitious projects in the arts when compared with the more routinely approvable programs in scientific research. Thus it becomes a matter of essential public concern that every large-scale project proposing to advance the public arts in America be subject to the most careful and intense scrutiny to determine whether its power to shape our artistic future has been responsibly considered.

Such considerations have long been disturbingly obvious to every responsible member of the artistic community; yet the critical questions seem to have remained unasked in our journals of public opinion, and the critical scrutiny restricted to occasional discussions of acoustics, personalities, and labor-management relations. Meanwhile, in the very midst of our most vital cultural center, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts was proposed, announced, initiated, constructed, inhabited, and convulsed in bitter intramural controversy, all of which has been duly, and for the most part reliably, reported in the public press. But although this enormous complex of structures, organizations and euphemistic pronouncements is the most monumental American institution ever devoted to the arts, and the most tangible evidence of official American commitment to them, involving huge amounts of public funds and public assistance, it was allowed to grow up in our midst in an atmosphere of complete self-sufficiency, undisturbed by public inquiry and seemingly unencumbered by any responsibility for public justification or explanation. For most New Yorkers, an air of mystery surrounded those great gray hulks going up in silence under their wraps at Lincoln Square; their very extravagance exuded a faint sense of Jimmy Walker-era conspiracy, and despite all the reassuring proclamations of dedication to the public good, one had the feeling that, wherever the real party was, the public had somehow been left uninvited. And as far as the artistic community was concerned, one knew of none of its members who had ever been consulted by the Lincoln Center planners to discover what needs and objectives they would regard as essential in their fields, and would expect to find taken into account in any comprehensive public project. Yet the critical nature of the planning decisions made in such a project hardly needs further belaboring here: no one was likely to start raising another $200 million to build adequate houses for opera, theater, orchestral music, ballet, or chamber music, should those at Lincoln Center turn out to be inadequate, any more than many foundations would be likely to exercise their "freedom": to compete with Ford in giving $8 million grants wherever Ford's might leave essential gaps achingly unfilled.

Beyond this, other questions insistently demanded to be asked: how had the need in New York for these particular types of new facilities been determined; what steps had been taken to insure that the environments created and the resources provided would reflect contemporary artistic attitudes and concepts; what works would be performable in them that were not feasible in existing houses; what criteria governed the choice of participating institutions; to what general creed of public or artistic reponsibility did they have to subscribe in becoming constitutents; and what specific conditions were being invoked to insure the implementation of such responsibilities? Above all, it was important to know what would be done to develop an enlightened, receptive, mature audience and to bring it into contact, at last, with its rightful creative heritage, to discover upon what single basic premise about the needs and prospects of American cultural life this ungainly fusion of travertine-fronted conspicuous consumption, Title I, socialite fund-raising, foundation megapatronage, and civic-minded mass culture was raising its ever more ineluctable head.

As a rather more than casually interested observer of these events, I had always looked assiduously to the publicly available literature for enlightenment, but entirely without success. Like everyone else, I learned early of Philharmonic Hall's unmistakable deficiencies, but then as now its lack of success seemed to stem from far more

* Confirmation of which was already available in the *Times* of February 26, from whose report on the hearings of the Senate Subcommittee on the Arts one learns that the only representative of the artistic world to testify was the opera singer Rise Stevens; and earlier in the same week it was announced that the music profession would be represented on the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts by Leonard Bernstein and Richard Rodgers.

essential, more subtly operative considerations than acoustics, seating or "warmth" (some of which I speculated on in my regular column [*The Nation,* October 27, 1962] reporting the opening week's events). When the rumblings of internal dissension erupted into ugly public controversy, whose most predictable consequence was the further discrediting of the entire contemporary artistic world, I determined to set out on what seemed an eminently reasonable quest: to ask the people most directly involved in Lincoln Center some of the questions formulated above, to discover what they hoped for and claimed as Lincoln Center's potential and actual contributions to our existing cultural activity.

From the beginning, however, the utter fatuity of my "eminently reasonable" questions was obvious. Lincoln Center, as it turned out, grew out of no general cultural concern, no fundamental premise whatever. Nor could the question of appropriate choices of constituents ever have arisen, any more than the opportunity have been taken to force them, for once, to live up to their responsibilities by attaching moral conditions to their public subsidization. For Lincoln Center was from the very beginning simply the creature of those institutions themselves, and was designed for no more lofty or adventurous purpose than to provide new houses for the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

From various sources, I was able to assemble a composite account of the project's origins that was relatively consistent; essentially, it can be traced back as far as the Metropolitan's original search for a new home before World War I, and then to Rockefeller Center, whose major cultural adornment was to be a new Metropolitan Opera House until Otto Kahn and the Rockefellers quarreled and Kahn withdrew the Metropolitan at the last embarrassing moment, leaving the Center with a vast lacuna that later became the Center Theater. Rockefeller Center is acknowledged to be, in its basic planning concept and technique of assembly, the real prototype for Lincoln Center, with which it has such other fundamental links as prominent Rockefeller involvement and the architectural services of Wallace K. Harrison.

Following World War II, the Metropolitan's efforts focussed on two other major projects: an attempt to include an opera house in the plans for the New York Coliseum complex, toward which the company actually raised $1 million in 1954; and an option on the present site of the Seagram Building, which was quickly abandoned as inadequate in size. The Coliseum project, though ultimately vetoed by Robert Moses, provided the real impetus for Lincoln Center; up to then, the Metropolitan's jealously guarded snobbery, its unwillingness to be regarded as a public cultural institution or to associate with socially inferior organizations on such a basis, had kept its building search entirely intramural. But the Coliseum was so unequivocally public that the conspicuously privileged Metropolitan could hardly be slipped in without raising serious questions about propriety in the use of public funds. Thus common cause had at last to be made with other organizations to create a "community" in which the sum of a collection of special-interest groups would be an Essential Democratic Institution requiring public aid. Events moved swiftly thereafter: knowing of the Philharmonic's concern over the impending demolition of Carnegie Hall, and of John D. Rockefeller III's availability to head a major cultural project, Anthony Bliss, president of the Metropolitan, met first with a Philharmonic board member, then with Rockefeller. At the same time, Robert Moses suggested the urban-renewal project at Lincoln Square as a substitute for the rejected Coliseum proposal.

It was at this point that a series of purely political and pragmatic considerations determined the organizational make-up and site layout that were later proclaimed as the Lincoln Center Idea. And although his name had been uncharacteristically inconspicuous in this project, it was Robert Moses's celebrated ability to get things done, if largely through a prodigious lack of taste or any concern for *how* they got done, that ultimately determined some of the most "sensitive" aspects of the Lincoln Center project, aspects that were publicly attributed to the profound deliberations of committees of responsible citizens and expert consultants. Thus the original "package" of Fordham's Law School, the Metropolitan-Philharmonic-Rockefeller complex, the Juilliard School of Music, and Title I housing was put together by Moses. Almost immediately, however, the pressure began to build up from institutions which claimed a much more obvious right to public consideration than these private organizations, and eventually from the city administration, which backed such claims and added demands of its own. By December, 1955, one could read in the City Center's house magazine that "A tract of some eight acres in Manhattan has been set aside. . .for the relocation of the Metropolitan Opera Association and the New York Philharmonic Society. . . . It would be a fairly simple

problem of relocation if only the two institutions were involved, but almost every cultural and educational organization in the city is now eyeing the development with anxious envy. Will there be a place for us, too? . . . will the [concert] hall have a stage in which scenery can be hung? . . . what of the theater of the spoken word, and of small-scaled opera? . . . is there enough space for a chamber-music hall? . . . In order to explore some of these redoubtable questions, *Center* will, in its next issue, attempt to investigate some of the chances, dangers, hopes, and fears of the ideal Performing Arts Center."

The promised (or threatened) discussion never materialized, but Lincoln Center for Music did indeed become "for the Performing Arts" (after the appointment to the board of Lincoln Kirstein, general director of the New York City Ballet), and included in its plans a city-owned theater, authorized by the state (and paid for, I am reliably informed, by a unilateral diversion of funds from the New York State Pavilion at the 1964-65 World's Fair), to house the activities of the City Center. State involvement led quickly to the inclusion of a "musical theater" to be directed by Richard Rodgers (coincidentally the chairman of the New York State Arts Council), which is so unavoidably popular and commercial in character that Lincoln Center has not yet been able to euphemize it into high-culture virtue. And city involvement led to the establishment of a Damrosch Park, and the central plaza and fountain, whose primary guiding principle was apparently to qualify the entire site for an official "park" designation, thus placing the cost and reponsibility for maintaining *all* its outdoor areas on the New York City Parks Department. Then, the New York Public Library requisitioned a site for its music and dance collections, and a private donor contributed the Vivian Beaumont Theater to house the one indigenous creature of Lincoln Center, the unhappy New York State Repertory Theater. The precise hindsight prescience with which Lincoln Center's own brochure describes this remarkably haphazard process is, even for public relations men, a bit transparent: "To complete the representation of the performing arts and education, chief supporters of the Lincoln Center idea sought to include institutions for the dance, drama, operetta, and a library and museum."

The brochure is also illuminating on the subject of the adequacy of the financial planning involved in Lincoln Center, an area in which the bankers and lawyers who comprise almost all the membership of the boards concerned might have been expected to be competent. As the brochure so disarmingly relates, the "initial cost estimate—too low, as it turned out—was $55 million, which included funds for educational, creative, and artistic advancement and construction contingencies [sic]. . . . Early in 1963, a thorough review was undertaken . . . this review, projecting through mid-1966, showed the total cost of Lincoln Center—plant and education and creative programs—to be $160.7 million." Some sample margins of error: Philharmonic Hall was underbudgeted by some 250 per cent, the Metropolitan and the Beaumont Theater by 100 per cent, the New York State Theater was estimated at $17 million and constructed for $25 million.

And the manner in which artistic needs were taken into account at this critical stage is also well conveyed: "In the Spring of 1956, Mr. Rockefeller went to Europe with Mr. [Wallace K.] Harrison and Anthony A. Bliss . . . to study cultural institutions in London, Paris, Vienna, Milan, Strasbourg, Cologne." Not only does this list omit the cities where the most important new concepts in music-performance structures had then been realized (Hamburg and Berlin come immediately to mind), but one wonders what this expedition, innocent of anyone professionally involved in any aspect of the arts, used as the relevant bases for its conclusions—which included the momentous decision that "a performing arts center was feasible and desirable."* Whereupon an architects' committee was formed to draw up a "master plan", under Mr. Harrison's direction. Again, no artistic practitioners were involved as consultants (with the single exception of Jo Mielziner as "collaborating designer" of the independently financed Vivian Beaumont Theater), and the participating architects were far more recognizable as fixtures of the architectural Establishment than for any previous contributions in the "performing arts" field.

Under these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that constant conferences produced hundreds of individual master-plan ideas, but no consensus. Again, Mr. Moses came to the rescue; if Messrs. Harrison, Saarinen, Abramovitz, Johnson, Belluschi and Bunshaft could not agree on the physical appearance and

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* Virtually the same level of verbal cogency, intellectual subtlety, and cultural sensitivity are reflected in the report of the most recent Rockefeller-headed project, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund Panel on the Performing Arts in America, whose findings have just been made publicly available.

quality of the future of American culture, Mr. Moses had no such compunctions, and by fixing irrevocably the precise design and boundaries of his pet Damrosch Park (complete with Guggenheim band shell for those ineluctable outdoor concerts), he effectively determined the western boundary of the State Theater and the southern boundary of the Metropolitan Opera House, and hence the basic relationships of all the principal structures. After this, everyone went his own way, with Mr. Abramovitz's roadway leading from his Philharmonic Hall to Mr. Johnson's State Theater, Mr. Johnson's plaza and fountain mediating between his State Theater and Mr. Abramovitz's Philharmonic Hall, Mr. Harrison's Metropolitan Opera House glowering down from the rear central position, as though the other two were only its intermediary portico, and all done, as the brochure again relates, not with any concern for the most advanced needs envisioned by artists in any of these domains, but "to meet the special needs of [each building's] principal performing group, and the constituents were to be continually consulted during planning and construction." Whatever hints of shortcomings in responsibility or artistic vision these "existing institutions" had ever revealed were not, in this project, designed to "serve performers and audiences for generations", to be counterbalanced, examined, or challenged, but perpetuated more "officially" and irreparably than ever.

Once I had assimilated this hard fact, all that remained was to find out what needs the constituents themselves, given this kind of carte blanche, may have seen fit to fill, in the outside hope that perhaps the new prominence of their public exposure and the new glamour of their surroundings, or perhaps the assurance that new audiences were certain to be attracted by such spectacular settings, would spur them to some degree of new adventurousness or self-awareness. In the case of the Philharmonic, the answer was all too clearly at hand: after a first season of new, if timid, commissions, and a second season that featured an undeniably, if gingerly presented, "*avant-garde* festival", the third season has been the most dismal in decades—but even at best, nothing it has done at Lincoln Center has been remotely as exploratory as the most ordinary Carnegie Hall season during the Mitropolous days. Despite Lincoln Center, the decline of the Philharmonic has continued to the point where it is hardly a major cultural institution any longer, and in a period of renewed vitality in the orchestral domain it seems less vigorous and alert than the orchestras in Chicago, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Philadelphia or Boston, or even such small ensembles as those in Buffalo and St. Louis. Such problems are beyond the reach of acousticians, and one can only wonder why the provision of such an expensive and publicly exposed nursing home was deemed by anyone a warrantable public expense.

Of the original constituents, this left the Metropolitan Opera, whose discouraging traditions made the possibilities for significant improvement almost limitless. In all determined optimism, I went to see Herman Krawitz, the Met's business manager, whose attempted seduction by the Lincoln Center administration to replace the directors of the New York State Repertory Theater almost destroyed the Center's last vestige of communality (most of which had already disappeared in the fight just preceding over booking rights at the New York State Theater). Mr. Krawitz, whose unique competence as an administrator is universally acknowledged around Lincoln Center, is essentially a theater manager, so that he was able to discuss and describe Metropolitan Opera policy without taking personal responsibility for its formulation.

To begin with, I asked whether there were any works that could be performed in the new house that could not have been attempted in the old, to which the blunt answer was, "None".

But were there no new physical resources that would accommodate the demands of recent and future works and approaches beyond the capacity of the present house?

Again, the answer was no—not even recording facilities. But actually, Krawitz maintained, the point was that the old house was already capable of accommodating anything the Met might conceivably wish to perform—and could be stretched to do anything in the existing repertory—a consideration which, admittedly, made a "save the Met" campaign an uncomfortable likelihood. I was reminded of a remark made by another prominent Lincoln Center official: "One more disaster like the rescue of Carnegie Hall and we're dead."

On the other hand, according to Krawitz, there were distinct limits on what the Met thought it *ought* to do, especially in view of its "National Image", and its fundamental responsibility to its subscriber group, patrons, and board of directors. Even money is a lesser consideration than the requirement of the Met's "image" that the house (3,600 seats, more or less) be substantially filled for every performance. Under

these conditions, productions of such classics as Berg's *Wozzeck,* Verdi's *Falstaff,* Debussy's *Pelleas,* Wagner's *Flying Dutchman,* are regarded as dangerously far out—gestures toward "a better educated audience". "Nothing would please us more than to find new operas, but we must do works that have a reasonable chance of attracting an audience. And since there are so few *avant-garde* works that could, we think we are simply the wrong company to attempt to fill that role."

But if the creative present and future of opera can be realized only outside large opera houses, what possible justification is there for yet another new obsolete house to be built at public expense? And why did the Met regard a new house as essential in the first place?

Here, as everywhere at Lincoln Center, came the recurring answer: "Existing facilities are totally inadequate." When one pushes for the nature and extent of this inadequacy, it amounts mainly to discomfort and inefficiency rather than feasibility. And when one pushes further to discover specifically what the nature of the new adequacy would comprise, there is invariably proud enumeration of superior dressing rooms, orchestra pits, numbers of good seats, electronic lighting boards, side stages, elevators, rehearsal rooms, facilities for expansion—all unquestionably true, but irrelevant to any fundamental rethinking of either the role or the technique of a 20th-century company functioning in a 20th-century artistic world. Nor is there any sense that the move to Lincoln Center betokens either the desirability or necessity of a change of any kind.

Against such a background, I was particularly interested in the New York City Ballet Company, not only because it was the only Lincoln Center constituent whose tradition was based on creative exploration and an evolving repertory, but to discover how the grant of nearly $8 million from the Ford Foundation had affected its functioning. Moreover, Lincoln Kirstein, who founded the company and still heads it, and whose personality, energy, and personal fortune have dominated it and kept it alive over the last thirty years, is a man of altogether superior cultivation and education. Kirstein is clearly angered and embittered by the dishonesty, vulgarity, and cynicism that he sees enveloping the Center project; his personal experiences with the Center's direction have been notably unhappy, first resulting in his resignation from the board in 1959, and lately in his ultimately victorious struggle with the Schuman-Rockefeller administration for control of the New York State Theater. Yet, from the very first, Kirstein was quick to disabuse me of any notion that he envisioned a larger responsibility in moving to Lincoln Center; the ballet needed a new home, demanded complete autonomy, was interested in no cooperative enterprises, regarded the central direction as a necessary but despicable charade, and would pursue precisely its customary course, except in greater splendor.

Were any new ballets commissioned for the opening season? The Lincoln Center Fund had allocated $200,000 for new ballets during the World's Fair period, but most of that had gone to restaging old works. However, two new ballets, Balanchine's *Harlequinade* and Taras's *Shadowed Ground* were commissioned. What about new ballet scores from American composers? The two names mentioned, Nicolas Nabokov and Toshiro Mayuzumi, hardly represent contemporary American music; one is an old Russian friend of Balanchine, the other a Japanese composer who specializes in local color. And the last new scores commissioned by the company were such ancient works as Hindemith's *Four Temperaments,* Stravinsky's *Orpheus,* and Hershy Kay's *Western Symphony.* What about the new theater—had any effort been made to rethink the presentational framework in contemporary terms? No, the "teacup" perfected in the 18th century was unimprovable, and ballet itself was a historical form that was fundamentally unchangeable.

What, then, was the impact of the Ford grant? Was any effort being made to develop new choreographers, new composers for ballet? Choreographers were constantly being sought, as were composers; but it was more and more evident that choreography stopped with Balanchine, "just as music stopped with Stravinsky". Many were given opportunities, but all failed. And one doesn't develop choreographers by pampering them—they will fight through if they are really gifted. No, the Ford grant had principally made it possible to realize Balanchine's conceptions in full luxuriance in every detail; some of the costumes now being used (that of the prima ballerina in *Ballet Imperial,* for example) cost $1,000 each. We saw a rehearsal of an Aaron Copland ballet. I asked the conductor of the orchestra—which actually performs more difficult 20th-century music regularly than any other American orchestra—how many rehearsals he was allowed to prepare the performances, for example, of the Stravinsky *Movements* for piano and orchestra. "Two or three,

and we have at least one run-through before each performance." I asked Kirstein why $8 million was not sufficient to provide reasonable rehearsal time, adequate orchestral personnel, or competent young conductors, but his only answer was a shrug.

On the other hand, despite Kirstein's sanguine attitude toward his situation, one hears elsewhere around the company that the pretentious new house and the overflowing new affluence have been inhibiting, rather than liberating: "We all feel the pressure to see the house filled every time, to live up to our exalted reputation, and even Balanchine has become much more nervous about every new work, much more afraid of failure." And if Balanchine himself feels constrained in his own, custom-built kingdom, it seems excessive to expect young and inexperienced choreographers to burst through to full command at first attempt. Moreover, a musical responsibility so stringent that it can find "no composers" in America worthy of attention becomes suspect when it can permit, on the very next Sunday, the performance of a ballet to a crushingly banal, but undeniably new, French score.

Finally, if Kirstein is right, and American ballet does begin and end with his and Balanchine's career, one is confronted with the question of whether $25 million of public funds should have been spent to provide a magnificent setting for the decline of one man's artistic vision, and whether the Ford Foundation acted with maturity and wisdom in granting $8 million for the magnificent costuming, gorgeous presentation, and inhibiting certification of another's imaginative fancies. Surely Kirstein and Balanchine deserved this kind of recognition twenty-five years ago, when their idea was still fresh and vital (although perhaps money on such a scale is destructively out of proportion for a performing group in any case). But it seems now to have come too late.

Since, by this time, it was sufficiently clear that none of the constituents intended to assume any responsibilities not demanded of it by its audiences, the only remaining possibility was that the central direction might take advantage of the unique combined resources presumably at its disposal to create an aware and sophisticated audience that would in fact make such demands. There were, at least, the television programs on musical topics conducted by the composer Hugo Weisgall over the educational Channel 13. And the name of the Lincoln Center Fund had been mentioned several times as a hopeful resource in a generally dismal prospect. On the other hand, many people around Lincoln Center quickly dismissed its education program as another ticket-selling gimmick.

William Schuman, Lincoln Center's current President, was unavailable for comment, and I therefore called on Mark Schubart, the executive director of the Lincoln Center Fund, and put this question to him directly. Yes, the student program was primarily to build audiences for the performing arts—but on the morally unassailable premise that the performing arts were "worth building audiences for"; moreover, the programs designed to generate recognition for performing arts in the schools were required to include 20th-century works on each program (of music)—but the constituents, "naturally", had to retain control over which works were to be played. What professional consultation, I asked, did the Center seek to guide its ultimate "educational" goals in each field involved? The roster of nonrepresented professions proved to be impressive: there is no composers' council, no conductors' council, no educators' council, no directors' or playwrights' or choreographers' or visual artists' councils—although the latter, explicitly excluded from institutional participation in Lincoln Center, are the only contemporary artists prominently represented there—perhaps because their works have tangible monetary value.

Yet Mr. Schubart appeared quite sincere when he insisted that the central direction is eager to make the contemporary artist—we were speaking mainly of composers—at home in Lincoln Center. He did not feel, however, that the composers' point of view was best represented verbally, or by participation on supervisory or advisory committees. "What the composer thinks is of no importance to the listener; after all, if Beethoven had had ideas about composing they wouldn't have been of any particular interest." On the other hand, direct representation of composers by commissions is limited to works commissioned for the constituents, and determined by them. Indeed, despite Mr. Schubart's obvious involvement in an effort to carve out a useful function for the central direction, its main purpose seemed to be as a clearing house to avoid conflicting dates and repertory, and to take responsibility for booking the halls when the constituents are away. The currently most conspicuous manifestation of this essentially sanitary function is the International Festival of the Performing Arts scheduled for June and July of 1967. Its intention appears to be to present the regular constituents in non-

subscription performances for the allegedly culture-hungry tourists who flock to New York in these months. The programs are expected to include new works, and distinguished groups from other parts of the United States and elsewhere will participate, all of which is calculated to lengthen the booking season in the hope of reducing the considerable vacancy rate already being suffered by Philharmonic Hall.

But the Metropolitan Opera has served notice that it will perform no new works on such a festival, and there is much pessimism about the play, ballet, and concert-going inclinations of the summer tourist in New York. One is only left to wonder whether they will be of sufficient strength and prevalence to fill yet again those thousands of gaping slots that, however publically essential, have become so increasingly unfillable. If so, then Lincoln Center will perhaps stave off—for yet another euphoric while—the stupendous cultural disaster that seems fundamentally embedded in every structural and ideological element of its whole thoughtless, hopeless, scandalous design.

3.29.65

A NEW GENERATION

SOME OF THE YOUNGER generation of American composers have already given striking evidence of their capacity and determination to carry on the most challenging and important work of their "middle-generation" elders. To a remarkable extent, they express a commitment to the principle that musical composition is, first and foremost, an act of thought, capable of making a significant contribution to that crucial area of 20th-century intellectual endeavor which Hermann Weyl described as "the rational subjugation of the unbounded". What this principle means, in musical terms, entails an equally sophisticated awareness of both the range of the musical literature and the nature of the musical process, in both its perceptual and constructional aspects; and the result of this conjunction of awarenesses is an extraordinary readiness to demand and assume complete responsibility for every relevant aspect of every musical act, for every note composed, for every verbal or symbolic formulation of a musical idea or practice. What is most important, of course, is that so many younger composers appear capable of musical thought of substance, and of inventing effectual new sonic frameworks within which their problematic and exploratory ideas can materialize.

Such qualities, moreover, are regarded by them as totally sufficient to justify their activity as composers; there is no sense of a need for qualifying apologies or non-cognitive euphemisms about "sensibility" or "aesthetics" or "communicative expression". The virtues of their work are precisely those qualities of intellectual depth, complexity, resourcefulness, and responsibility which are the most valued characteristics of the American philosophical tradition, and they are content to let the deficiencies of these attributes be their deficiencies as well. Consequently, they refuse to be led into metaphysical delusion by the pseudo-scientific mysticism practiced by some of their European (and some of their European-oriented) colleagues, or to be diverted into self-pity and disengagement by the insistent counsels of existential despair.

In the development of these attitudes, a significant role is played by American universities, where most "advanced" composers have formed musically and intellectually (as against, say, conservatories excusively devoted to public musical practices). And their older colleagues, too, are almost universally connected with university faculties: indeed, it is a fact of American musical life that its most problematic and "advanced" creative work is taking place in an "academic" environment—a respect in which American music is radically different not only from the other American art communities but also from the music community in other countries. For within the university community, young composers have begun to confront the professional situation as a matter for which composers themselves must assume principal responsibility: if the concert-giving world, on whom so many of their elders waited so long and fruitlessly for recognition and adequate representation, would not provide an appropriate cultural function or a tenable professional milieu for serious musical thought, composers had to create these according to their own needs and concepts, and manned, if necessary, entirely by themselves. The resultant performance activity, which has also engaged those few younger performers whose need for musical and performative and intellectual challenge was frustrated by the routines of recital-hall competitive sporting events, has achieved a sensational vitality and growth; and the stimulus which this self-contained situation has, in turn, given to far-reaching explorations of the possibilities of the electronic and computer mediums has transformed the horizons of the sound-worlds within which composers can work, and in which anyone else can, if interested, live.

The extent and diversity of these current activities are beyond the scope of any single discussion. Even the number of individual university communities involved is formidable; for although Princeton has—especially through the activity of Milton Babbitt as teacher there—been a center for the whole development, and Princeton alumni are conspicuous in many of the most active communities in question, there has been a salutary tendency of each university community—particularly in the Ivy League, a few large Midwestern universities, and the schools on the Pacific coast—to generate its own distinctive variants of common compositional atti-

tudes and its own social style in the configurations of activities. Columbia, Yale, the University of Pennsylvania, and the state university campuses at Stony Brook and Buffalo have all developed significant communities (Harvard is a curious exception to the current liveliness despite the presence of Leon Kirchner and Billy Jim Layton), while the Universities of Chicago, Illinois, Iowa, Berkeley, and San Diego have created substantial orbits of their own in the Midwest and West.

But precisely because the phenomenon has been taking on such proportions, and still remains largely unknown to the larger American musical community, it seems worthwhile to sketch a few of the special qualities of some of the most active centers, and mention some of the concerns emerging from the most adventurous work taking place therein. But—emphatically—it must be stated that this superficial sketching of a vast, deep, and complex set of phenomena is in no way an ultimate or even immediate evaluation of relative "importance", "promise", or even "success" within any of the areas of composing or performing it touches on.

Princeton: Princeton's seminal role as teacher, moral example, and generative force (a frequently overlooked aspect of which is the wide compositional diversity represented by a faculty which includes Roger Sessions, Milton Babbitt, Edward Cone, and Earl Kim) is reflected in its domestic musical activity as well: the younger composers who have stayed to form a permanent composers' community seem to be committed to the most uncompromisingly deep reconsiderations of the nature of musical thinking and perceiving; and their conclusions and methods tend to be correspondingly extreme. Thus the RCA Synthesizer at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Studio is primarily viewed as a resource through which to investigate the possibilities of maximally precise and minute relational differentiations; and the currently most far-reaching work in computer sound synthesis and analysis is taking place at the Princeton Computer Center. Given their fundamentalist approach to systematic coherence, it should not be particularly surprising that neither of the two furthest-out young Princeton composers, J.K. Randall and Godfrey Winham, composes nominally "twelve-tone" music, but rather that they both have developed completely independent approaches to musical syntax much more fundamentally rooted in the discoveries of Schoenberg and Babbitt than more overt derivatives. Randall's music (his ***somewhere i have never travelled*** was performed on Gunther Schuller's series this year) has a surface of transparent simplicity, spare and open in texture, "diatonic" in sonority, and centered on linear recurrences, through which the minutest inflections are sensitively projected as significant structural events. Winham's recent Composition for Orchestra is almost shocking in its conventional surfaces, featuring Schubertian rhythms and equally "square" textural and melodic contours; but these, radically, function as a rigorously stable reflective medium for the coherent projection of some complex and unprecedented ideas of musical time-shape and structure.

Columbia: Through their common electronic-music center, the communication between composers working at Columbia and Princeton has been particularly close; but if Princeton activities in electronic music tend to raise fundamental questions about performance and perception, the younger Columbia composers have effected a basic revaluation of the possibilities still inherent in live performance: the Group for Contemporary Music at Columbia has been the essential example out of which such groups have formed throughout the United States. Of the people involved, Peter Westergaard is the precociously mature, quiet catalyst whose teaching and compositional example have given an unusual breadth of theoretical, historical, and intellectual sophistication, and a rigorous kind of artistic responsibility to this community. Charles Wuorinen, co-director with Harvey Sollberger of the Group for Contemporary Music is a prodigious composer of legendary gifts and productivity whose music typically develops from a framework of massive sound and gesture which seems to subsume the whole range of contemporary musical resource into forcible conjunction; the energetic sense of a deep interpenetration of a basic compositional idea with the physical act of soundmaking in performance creates a powerful argument for the continuing vitality of live realizations of new music. Harvey Sollberger's music is similarly suggestive, but more from a point of view as "performer's music" in the sense of a thoughtful and intelligent synthesis of a wide range of "characteristic" new-music configurations and profiles. Mario Davidovsky, a classic master of the electronic medium, composes music whose sensitivity to

timbral associations (especially in the mixture of live and electronic sounds, as in his various *Synchronisms*) and to degrees of dynamic and spatial differentiation seem to open new levels of sound-perceptual possibility.

Yale: Following the twilight of its Hindemith era, Yale's development as a center for creative activity and instruction in composition and theory has perhaps been the most extensive anywhere: assembled there is a diverse and lively group of faculty composers, including such younger celebrities as Mel Powell, Gunther Schuller, and Yehudi Wyner; under Powell's direction, and with the collaboration of Bülent Arel, Yale has developed its own resource center for electronic music; in its small city it has maintained an ISCM activity more diverse and consistent than New York's; and it has provided the impetus for an ambitious orchestra commissioning series by the New Haven Symphony, discussed in an earlier column (December 7). Yale's younger composers include Donald Martino, whose recent Concerto for Wind Quintet (commissioned for last year's Tanglewood Festival) develops a polyphonic twelve-tone texture with phenomenal instrumental flair, particularly in the articulation of a multitude of "conventional" events juxtaposed at a super-rapid rate of succession to create a totally new ensemble sonority; and Lawrence Moss, a student of Leon Kirchner whose chamber opera *The Brute* (performed last season at the YMHA in New York) was one of the only contemporary American operas I've heard in which the sung lines had a significant relation both to the instrumental pitch-texture and to a music-dramatic continuity, rather than just being pitch-pegs on which hangs a shapeless modern-opera-type declamation.

Swarthmore: Activity here is chiefly notable for the compositions of Claudio Spies, whose refined and critical ear guides him through mazes of intellectual and sonic complexity to produce, in such a work as *Tempi* (played at Swarthmore last spring and scheduled for performance in New York this year) a subtle and perceptive exploration of recent-Stravinskyan sonority and rhythm.

Buffalo: Buffalo's massive Rockefeller-supported Center for New Music, for which a number of young composer-performers are given resident fellowships to devote themselves to composition and new-music performance, is (with the similar program at Chicago) the most elaborate repercussion of the Columbia-group idea. Thus far, the only young Buffalo composer whose music I've heard is Fredric Myrow, whose Songs from the Japanese are full of the almost traditional kind of dexterous music-making with the new musical materials of which Gunther Schuller is the classic master.

Chicago: The Rockefeller program here is conducted by Ralph Shapey, and has included performances of difficult works by an amazing number of major American composers in its initial season (some of which are being repeated in New York in late March). Moreover, two other composers on this faculty, Easley Blackwood and John Perkins, are accomplished (in the case of Blackwood, spectacularly accomplished) pianists. Blackwood, known for years as a prize-winning automaton out of Hindemith's sweatshop and the *Boulangerie,* has increasingly turned to challenging compositional problems; his recent music is involved in intricate thought and a deeply worked out pursuit of ideas which interacts absorbingly with the consummate technical facility of his earlier music. Perkins is a mature and resourceful student of Arthur Berger; his work has that quality of careful measurement of musical space and distance, and of the maximum deployment of available possibilities within a drastically limited articulative range, which I think of as quintessentially Berger-like.

University of Illinois: One hears of marvelous feats of performance by student and faculty musicians at the Illinois Festival of the Creative Arts, surely the most ambitious and extensive of its kind, which runs for six weekends in February and March and is devoted to assembling the most advanced current manifestations in each of the art-fields involved, extending in music from chamber music to full-scale opera. In past years, the festival has been somewhat limited by the necessity to reconcile all elements of an unimaginably vast and diverse music school faculty; but the latest festival appears to have been entirely in the hands of young radicals who programed only what they wanted to hear and prepared superior performances. Salvatore Martirano is familiar to New Yorkers—his Cocktail Music for piano, a brilliant lexicon of ways to articulate cascading handsful of even notes, has been played here, and a new piece called *Underworld* is going to be performed on a Fromm concert this spring. Kenneth Gaburo

used to compose rather strident, constricted, and frequently striking music—but I haven't heard anything recently, and I believe his whole relation to composing has undergone radical development. Ben Johnston, the festival's director, represents a completely different American experimental tradition, an older preoccupation with tunings, scales, and instruments deriving from Harry Partch and the "California primitives". And the Illinois electronic music studio, undoubtedly the most elaborately equipped after Columbia-Princeton, as well as its program of research into information-theoretical principles derivable from musical phenomena under Lejaren Hiller's direction, seems to offer the richest environment of resources and potential for the investigation of any compositional, theoretical, or performance idea among any of the communities discussed here. Indeed, when one considers just the enormous student-faculty population of the typical Midwestern school of music (not to mention that of the entire surrounding university), combined with the immediate availability of every human and mechanical means of sound production, as well as the possibility of total concentration in the absence of diversions other than those self-created, the supposed provincial isolation of the great musical midland seems less provincial or isolating than the activity-choked and uncontemplative musical life forcibly endured by the residents of this city. The midwestern model may turn out to be the most productive framework for the centers of creative activity and research that composers, and our musical culture, so desperately need.*

*The cruelty of space limitation has precluded further discussion, but it is essential to emphasize that the activity described is widespread, with a large and intensely active population, and that my own knowledge of its exent and content, though far greater than I am able to convey here, is essentially fractional.

7.19.65

NEW MUSIC, BIG MONEY

THE EMERGENCE of major foundation activity at the center of "advanced" musical life during the season just past is a development of the greatest moment for America's musical future which none of the New York journalists' seasonal wrap-ups has mentioned. Although this has not been principally a local phenomenon, its significance as a direct result of, as well as a potentially powerful influence on, the new-music performance activities that began here would seem to make it a matter of special interest and concern to members of the New York musical community. Attention should be the greater because, as in any unleashing of massive foundation resources upon an economically marginal profession, the destructive potential of the new situation is as unlimited as its potential for good.

Indeed, only someone who is aware of New York musical activity over the past few seasons is in a position to evaluate these new projects in the light of their backgrounds and origins. The major foundations have until recently taken the attitude that only music projects directly involving public performance are sufficiently "public" to warrant their participation. Such support as they have given in the domain of composition has reflected this preoccupation. Ford, for example, has never commissioned a composer directly; for its opera project, it permitted established companies to choose composers to write works for them, and in the Concert Soloists project individual performers designate the composers to be commissioned. The results, given the prevailing attitudes of opera companies and recitalists, have for the most part been predictably routine. And since no established performance activity was linked to "advanced" music, its complete neglect was guaranteed without even a deliberate policy decision.

But, as readers of this column know, the creation of such a link between "advanced" new music and performance has been one of the striking musical developments in recent years in New York. And not only has this link been unmistakably established but an administrative machinery has been thoroughly tested and validated within the universities, and the identification of certain halls with these activities has demonstrated a continuity of public support for "advanced" music. All of these are preconditions of paramount concern to foundation management.

The job has been done, moreover, outside the luxurious auspices of any large foundation project, and entirely by the efforts of a few dedicated composers who were determined to create a functioning musical environment on their own terms. In fact, the origin and execution of the new concepts and standards for contemporary music making has been accomplished almost exclusively by just two composer-directed series: Gunther Schuller's Twentieth Century Innovations at Carnegie Recital Hall, and the concerts of the Group for Contemporary Music at Columbia University, directed by Charles Wuorinen and Harvey Sollberger, at McMillin Theatre.

The excitement and attention which these two groups have generated by demonstrating the spectacular possibilities inherent in superior performances of contemporary music had predictable consequences. Series specializing in new music have proliferated to the saturation point in New York, most of them capitalizing on the enthusiasm evoked by the new virtuoso accuracy without attempting to reproduce it. Much more significantly, the principles established by the Schuller-Columbia activities were made the basis for an impressive series of quarter-million-dollar (more or less) grants by the Rockefeller Foundation to university music departments for composer-performer group-in-residence projects. These began with the Creative Associates at the University of Buffalo under Lukas Foss and Allen Sapp, and the New Music Ensemble at the University of Chicago directed by Ralph Shapey; more recently, the Committee for International Composers' Concerts has been established at Rutgers University under Arthur Weisberg. All of these ventures not only embrace the university orientation of the Columbia group but recruit players from among those involved in the Schuller and Columbia groups, and give concerts in Carnegie Recital Hall (last season the Buffalo group gave four, the Chicago group three; the Rutgers group is scheduled to give four next season). The Rockefellers' discovery of the central role now being played by universities in professional musical life also stimulated during the past season its "orchestra-in-residence" program, in which

professional small-city orchestras were made available to university music departments for a period of weeks to play new scores chosen by the departments themselves.

For its recognition on such an "official" level of the developing university leadership and the importance of "advanced" American music, this Rockefeller activity is of great importance. And the scale on which it is being done—creating, in effect, entire new-music performance departments within existing music departments, establishing a self-contained new-music activity on a campus, as well as groups of players with fully rehearsed repertories available for tours to other universities, all under subsidy (thus eliminating most expenses for any prospective sponsor)—seems an almost fantastic super-realization of the implication of the Columbia and Schuller projects.

But such "total benevolence" is, of course, the foundation way; and its realizations sometimes tend to be disappointing by comparison with the structure prepared for them. The first results of the Buffalo and Chicago projects that were displayed in their Carnegie Hall concerts last season were inconclusive. The performances were generally competent, if hardly spectacular (except in the case of Easley Blackwood's extraordinary piano recital in the Chicago series), and the programs were either duplicative (Chicago) or diffuse (Buffalo). Still, such a judgment hardly seems fair, because of the invidious comparison it implies with the polished, well-established New York groups. And the primary value of such campus groups is their ability to offer their own communities, at a high professional level, a range of musical experience that has been totally inaccessible and even largely unsuspected. Given the manifest sophistication of their current directors, they seem admirably equipped to make this contribution.

However, other serious questions seem quite generally to have been overlooked in the formulation of these projects. Of these, the most troubling involve the possible effects of such subsidized projects on nonsubsidized activities of the same nature, especially those already in existence. Thus the Rutgers project seems, in many ways, the grandest of all, especially in the quality of its personnel, its strategic location in the New York area and the enormous scope of its planned activities. But its players are, for the most part, to be drawn from the same pool on which the Columbia and Schuller series depend—and which, in fact, they developed. When one considers the superior financial capacities of the subsidized Rutgers project (which also offers performers faculty rank), as well as the extensive schedules it proposes (about twenty-five concerts per season), it is difficult to see how the older series can hope to continue on the minimum-scale basis which they must maintain in order to survive. Moreover, having virtually created the cachet of Carnegie Recital Hall as a center for contemporary music, Schuller must now share the premises with three other groups of quite similar appearance, all operating under the same auspices. On an equal footing, such competition would be welcome; but the expenses of all the visiting groups are guaranteed, while Schuller must continue to convince his sponsors that it is important to continue raising the money he needs for every rehearsal and piece of equipment.

Moreover, groups like Schuller's and Columbia's must be able to offer their players the incentive of repeat performances if the tremendous effort of preparation is to seem worth while. But again, when subsidized touring groups whose members are on yearly salary offer similar programs at considerably lower costs, the demonstrated professional superiority and commitment of the Schuller and Columbia groups are hardly likely to tip the competitive scale.

Surely the Rockefeller Foundation does not really fancy an image of itself as the sponsor of huge new-music supermarkets devoted to underselling dedicated, high-quality individual enterprises into bankruptcy.

Why, then, did it decide to project a totally new activity onto the New York scene when the two groups responsible for the development, now functioning at the peak of their professional vitality, had never received significant foundation support, and depended for survival on their own desperate fund-raising efforts? The Rutgers project deserved support and sponsorship, but it should have been given them *after* the remarkable contribution of two groups that are motivated by professional responsibility and concern had been adequately recognized, and their continuation assured.

11.15.65

AGAIN, THE FORD MILLENIUM

THE $85 MILLION program in support of American orchestras announced last month by the Ford Foundation is perhaps the most extreme instance of pure foundationism ever perpetrated on our aching national culture. For of all foundation programs in either the arts or the sciences of which I am aware, this one is most blatantly addressed to the maintenance of a certain level of activity without the least concern for the level of cultivation or responsibility on which it takes place. Given Ford's catastrophic experiences in some of its previous arts programs, notably in opera, where the various objectives, conditions and limitations that were enunciated resulted mainly in artistic fiasco, public embarrassment and undying professional resentment, one can understand the attractions of a program of neuter ideological and critical content, which would nevertheless permit the disgorgement of a huge chunk of tax money for an apparently rational purpose, and allow the sounding of monumental verbal fanfares about ". . . historically . . . the greatest act of philanthropy in the arts by a single national agency."

An adequate description of the entire program is shockingly easy: essentially, Ford has surveyed the condition of American symphony orchestras and found it excellent in all respects except financial. It therefore intends to release $21 million outright and $64 million on a matching basis to orchestras in two categories—"major" and "metropolitan", based entirely on budgetary measurement—for application toward expenses and endowments. In the long announcements released by the foundation, there is not a single mention of a projected responsibility or content for future orchestral activity, only of its desired proliferation and security. Indeed, the Ford directors have become so principle-shy that they carefully avoid even any assertion that the activity in any way actually justifies the support being offered, or that musical culture as a whole has any importance—ornamental or otherwise—in American national life, beyond such bold declarations as Mr. Henry T. Heald's that " . . . a wealthy nation cannot neglect the cultural pursuits that are a part of human fulfillment along with material well-being."

Much more significantly, the obvious problems that are in fact destroying the orchestra as a cultural resource in America are not only euphorically overlooked in the Ford literature, but in many areas actually belied. Thus, no consideration whatever is given to the scope or relevance of programing, to the desperate problem of the development and employment of young American conductors, or to the completely anachronistic relation of available orchestral resources and contexts to the contemporary development of the musical art. The entire affair, in fact, makes one wonder to whom, perhaps in their desperate desire to avoid still more friction, the Foundation's leaders turned for professional advice on the cultural role, responsibilities and needs of American orchestras.

Regardless of the identities of these advisers, however, the degree of unreality in the premises they provided for the Ford Foundation's salvation of American orchestral activity is quite extraordinary. Readers of this column, at least, may be genuinely surprised to learn that "American symphony orchestras . . . are usually the artistic leaders in their community" [sic]—when even our most complacent journalists have occasionally noted a certain implicit stagnation in the almost universal prevalence of the notorious fifty-piece orchestral repertory. But I found it even more surprising that "any player in a major symphony has had to spend at least as much time, money, and effort on his education as a teacher. Fortunately, most symphony musicians love music and love playing in an orchestra even though many endure penalties due to their meager salaries. As a genuine professional, the orchestra player is willing to do his best under less than ideal conditions of salary, rehearsal time, or acoustics, but he wants the opportunity to show himself and his orchestra at their best . . ."

No one who has attended even one orchestra rehearsal—especially of one of our "major" ensembles—where the nature of this "genuine professionalism" is most evident, could be unaware that among the most serious threats to contemporary orchestral survival are precisely the inadequacies in the musical and instrumental education, professional morale and general

cultivation of most orchestral musicians. And not only are they thus poorly equipped to fulfill any sort of responsible cultural role but (even if the widespread legend of their total hostility to all music is somewhat exaggerated) their resistance to any music or any approach that challenges the simplistic routines that define their jealously guarded "professional" domain certainly contributes to the absence of any significant production of new orchestral compositions in America. Apparently, the Ford Foundation sees no reason not to approve and reward such typically "professional" behavior as that of the members of the New York Philharmonic during last summer's French-American Festival in greeting one of our most serious and accomplished young composers whose new work they were rehearsing with a chorus of boos and hisses. And lest this be taken with complacency in satisfaction of anyone's anti-composer inclinations, it should be noted that the richest folklore among orchestral good fellows are the anti-intellectual conductor-hating anecdotes of the "You talk-a too much, Klemp'" variety. Naturally, there are players who practice their instruments despite long years of suffering while playing side by side with their incompetent colleagues, and who have remained aloof from and ashamed of the indifference surrounding them. But to them, especially, Ford's irresponsible endorsement of the *status quo* can seem only a final repudiation of whatever faint hope remained for restoration of musical dignity and value to their professional lives.

Similarly, the principles on which the Ford Foundation intends to evaluate the relative merits of orchestral institutions are surely unique in the history of cultural normatives. One reads that "The American symphony orchestra is surprisingly pre-eminent in terms of age, numbers of concerts, and ubiquity. . . . The Vienna Philharmonic gives twenty-three concerts in a year. The London Symphony performed sixty-six concerts in 1963-64. In the same year, the Boston Symphony gave 121 concerts; the Philadelphia 159; the New York Philharmonic 183 . . . Great ingenuity and energy are being shown by managers in developing new activities and audiences. The New York Philharmonic has not only added pops concerts but last summer free concerts in the city parks . . . The Carnegie Hall program of bringing American orchestras to New York has pleased New York critics by the quality of the performances. The reviews which orchestras from Minneapolis, Cincinnati, Houston, Dallas and Detroit have received have shown once again that these orchestras measure up to high professional criteria. The eligibility of each . . . orchestra and the amount each receives will reflect the level of its operations, its artistic and managerial stability, the breadth of its musical program, and its capacity to raise matching funds." Despite a first impulse to dismiss such utterances as self-ridiculing and therefore harmless, they acquire a frightening dimension when one considers that they have provided the entire ideational basis for "the greatest act of philanthropy in the arts, etc." For certainly the positive destructiveness of massive misspending is as real as its purely negative toll in crucial opportunities forever missed.

Thus one must regard with great seriousness the absence in the quoted passages or elsewhere in the release of any suggestion that orchestral growth might best be encouraged by explicitly liberating orchestras from their invariable crowd- and critic-pleasing responsibilities. Real damage is done, too, by Ford's evident failure to recognize and encourage the one hopeful sign of orchestral life in recent years: the willingness of a few smaller-city groups to extend their programs into the mid-20th century, to commission new works, and to explore the full range of the traditional literature as well. But this tendency forms no part of Ford's assessment of the vitality of the American orchestral scene; those orchestras mainly responsible for it (Buffalo, St. Louis, Kansas City) are not even mentioned among those capable of living up to "high professional criteria".

As far as the actual effects of the new project are concerned, I see no reason to suppose, as several of my journalistic colleagues already appear to have done, that the same administrators, artistic directors, players and critics who have generated and maintained the present orchestral miasma, should become adventurous, responsible and energetic merely because a great deal of money has suddenly been made unconditionally available to them. And why one should further suppose that any dedicated and educated young musician would be especially attracted to an institution whose imaginative poverty and irresponsibility have thus been officially enshrined and perpetuated is beyond my inferential capacities.

Here, presumably, is Ford's final solution to the culture problem: if an institution can support itself popularly, then both the value of

its methods and its cultural significance have thereby been definitively proved, and it therefore deserves additional support by the full resources and prestige of the Ford Foundation. Conversely, to support an aspect or a segment of artistic life manifestly in desperate need of it is apparently regarded as an act of gratuitous interference with natural forces, upsetting balances achieved—between, for example, such equally matched contenders for popular approval as the Boston Pops Orchestra and a twelve-tone composer—within the profession itself. Although the Ford Foundation has never entrusted any of its projects directly to composers at all—they have been involved only functionally in grants to "established" opera companies, to secondary schools, to concert artists and to orchestras—it has managed to grant about $3 million over the last ten years for projects involving new music, of which the cost of operatic productions, high-school residencies, and grants to concert artists accounted for $2,800,000. The relation between the pathetic remainder and the present orchestral grant seems sufficiently eloquent testimony to the Ford Foundation's exclusive regard for the maintenance of public musical appearances. But surely music in America deserves a worthier measure of its cultural value, a less trivial reason to survive.

11.29.65

VARESE

IN THE FEW DAYS that have passed since the death of Edgard Varèse, no thought about music could be far from the sharp awareness of what it has meant to us and to music that he lived and composed. One suddenly became conscious that an essential part of every sonic experience in our musical lives was in some way shaped for us by the encounter with Varèse, by what his music taught us and enabled us to hear. At the concert given by the Columbia Group for Contemporary Music two days after he died, Harvey Sollberger's gesture in playing the *Density 21.5* in Varèse's memory was almost superfluous; for his memory was alive in every aspect of the program that had been previously scheduled. The activity itself was a descendant of Varèse's pioneer efforts with the International Composers Guild at a harsh and lonely time for advanced music in America. The early music on the program recalled Varèse's own days as a choral conductor and his lifelong impatience with the limitations of modern "tempered" tuning. In the Boulez *Mallarmé Improvisation No. 2,* the isolated clusters of timbrally striking sound events recalled a quality first revealed as a fundamental articulative resource by Varèse. Milton Babbitt's live-electronic *Vision and Prayer* not only recalled that Varèse dreamed of electro-acoustic means of sound production and control long before anyone else had even conceived of their possibility, but also that even this pre-eminently pitch music of Babbitt, with its sonic restraint and continuous unfolding, is nonetheless steeped in the dimension of spatial articulation that was another of Varèse's great discoveries. The idea is so fundamentally embedded in the electronic medium with its characteristic multiple sound sources that it is astonishing to realize that Varèse first conceived and successfully projected it with conventional instruments. And finally, the sharp separation of sound levels in Charles Wuorinen's new Chamber Concerto for oboe and ten players was, despite the work's undeniable originality and compositional sophistication, obviously composed out of the powerful experience of Varèse's work.

But perhaps the most impressive evidence of Varèse's continuing vitality for our musical lives has been the remarkable impact and excitement that his own music still generates in performance. Despite the paucity of works (he destroyed some early pieces, and a fire destroyed many others; later, he abandoned composition for almost twenty years out of the bitter realization that under the then prevailing conditions his works could never be adequately played), and despite the fact that most of these works were more than thirty years old, and their composer was well over 80, the younger generation of composers, performers and listeners has found in them the same kind of contemporary immediacy that, more predictably, it found in the music of his middle generation successors. It was, indeed, Varèse's music that most obviously required the new virtuosity in contemporary music performance to rescue it from its previous neglect, and it is surely his work that has most stunningly rewarded it.

As a result, no Varèse memorial concerts will be needed to bring his music to our attention; his work has been standard repertory for all the new-music groups so abundantly formed in recent years. Only last season the University of Chicago's Contemporary Chamber Players presented an all-Varèse concert in Carnegie Hall. Gunther Schuller conducted *Intégrales* for the Columbia Group, and *Deserts* also appeared on Leonard Bernstein's 1964 *avant-garde* series. Last summer the MacDowell Colony honored Varèse in a remarkable convocation at which both Aaron Copland and Milton Babbitt discussed his work. This season, his *Equatorial* had already been scheduled by the recently formed Rutgers new-music ensemble, the Columbia Group had announced the in-progress *Nuit* and the Schuller Twentieth-Century Innovations series was awaiting another newly composed work. Long before his death, the advanced musical journals on the Continent and in England, as well as in America, were filled with talk about and concern for his music and its significance.

And even in a negative sense, the quality of Varèse's musical presence has constantly been returning to consciousness since his death. At the Pittsburgh Symphony's Schoenberg concert, for example, one could not help being struck by what an extraordinarily different sonic world Varèse inhabited and hence created for us from any in the work of even his most masterly con-

temporaries. Indeed, the famous Varèsian antipathy to Schoenberg's music that proved so irresistible to at least one grudging obituarist must have been almost a necessary condition for the realization of such a difficult and isolated vision as Varèse's. Whatever we eventually find to say about his work, the one observation that has come back again and again is that of all the really original 20th-century masters, it was Varèse who conceived and projected a sound that seemed to derive from no previous music.

But Varèse's place in our musical lives was far more personal as well. His interest in and involvement with the New York musical community was so unremitting that literally up to the very last moment his presence was an invariable and indispensable aspect of every important new-music concert. Moreover, there is hardly anyone who was ever a young "advanced" composer in New York during the past thirty years who cannot count among his treasured professional experiences the remarkable sympathy and interest with which Varèse looked at his scores and listened to their performances.

We interacted professionally with him, we encountered him constantly in the homes of musicians and in his own, and it is indeed true, as *The New York Times'* editorial obituary so patronizingly noted, that he was loved and revered as a father figure by all of New York's *avant-gardes,* just as he was a monumental presence to the international artistic community. This, assuredly, is a far truer measure of Varèse's historical position than that "ultimate place in history" invariably invoked to avoid acknowledging the existence of a real musical world of the present. The only history in which we can presume to judge or even be legitimately concerned with Varèse is our own—to what other could he possibly belong? And in that history, Varèse's magnificent place is secure.

RECORDS: BACH, BEETHOVEN

BACH: *Brandenburg Concertos.* Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; Herbert von Karajan, cond. (Nos. 1-6); with Suites Nos. 2 and 3. DGG 1(3)8 976/78.

Concentus Musicus, Vienna; Nikolaus Harnoncourt, cond. (Nos. 2, 5, 6) Telefunken (S)AWT 9460-A

Marlboro Festival Orchestra; Pablo Casals, cond. Columbia M2L 331/M2S 731.

BACH, EVIDENTLY, can be misinterpreted in an inexhaustible variety of ways, of which three are given definitive representation on these *Brandenburg Concerto* recordings. Von Karajan, at his usual loss when confronted with music whose structural issues cannot be dodged behind sheer sound or propulsion, takes his usual course of substituting broad "interpretive" conceits for any real consideration of the compositional ideas at hand—not really that complex in the *Brandenburg Concertos,* after all. Here the notion is to "characterize" each movement by imposing a single articulative approach on every event; thus every attack within a given movement is either completely detached or completely slurred. Whatever doubts remain are drowned in official symphony-orchestra sound. The latter, at least, provides some peripheral diversion: the booming re-entry of the overkill string tutti after the (competently played) tiny-voiced harpsichord cadenza in the first movement of No. 5 has a grotesque pathos; the slow movement of No. 1 seems to have been performed under the curious illusion that it was the *Tristan* Prelude; and the slowly unfolding sonorities of the first movement of No. 6 could, with a simple tonal transposition, be played at Bayreuth before the curtain to *Das Rheingold* without arousing any suspicions. The orchestra, soloists, and recording engineers add no further complications beyond the rather badly out-of-tune horn playing in some of the First Concerto, especially the third movement.

The performances by the Concentus Musicus of Vienna, on a quite different course, are models of misplaced historicity, careful in their use of all the "authentic" instruments and ensemble dimensions, with no equivalent concern for the resultant balances, or for any particular weighting of accents, dynamics, or phrases. Thus, although the performers all play within the same time spans, and with respectable accuracy, they don't seem to be playing together in any musically significant sense; the effect on Bach's tightly interlocking textures is largely comical. What emerges may indeed be "the sound Bach heard"—his public views on the probity of contemporary performers gives some substance to this claim—but it is certainly not the music he composed; the neutral Baroquery of the Collegium Musicum is no nearer to Bach than is von Karajan's Venusberg.

The Casals album is still another matter, for it represents far more a callous exploitation of the eccentricities of a famous person, whose name is prestigious and marketable, than any serious offering of an interpretive conception of the *Brandenburg Concertos.* The resultant exhibition is distressing; madly fast or erratically fluctuating tempos, screaming accents, sudden spurting out of inner-part fragments and equally sudden fade-in/fade-out volume changes, as if someone were randomly turning volume controls for each part independently as well as for the entire ensemble. In this context, Rudolf Serkin's sober (piano) playing of the harpsichord cadenzas in No. 5, and, in general, the exemplary precision with which all of Casals's instructions are carried out by the Marlboro performers, thus projecting every oddity with brilliant clarity, only make the experience all the weirder.

BEETHOVEN: Piano Sonatas: in B-flat, Op. 106 ("Hammerklavier"); in A-flat, Op. 110. Charles Rosen, piano. Epic LC 3900/BC 1300.

IF CHARLES ROSEN is not just about the most remarkable living pianist, there must be other criteria for that distinction than the capacity to play the Hammerklavier Sonata at the tempo and with the sonority and control that one had always assumed was reserved for the "ideal piano" obviously conceived by Beethoven—to be heard only mentally during a reading of the score or by inference from the best possible necessarily imperfect performances. Rosen's capacity to project both the long-range pitch and rhythmic structures (especially the way

pitches in the same registers connect as linear and durational profiles even when separated by long time spans) is truly sensational. In the outer movements, this is accomplished by taking tempos fast enough to give unitary coherence to large-scale events; and within these astonishingly concentrated time spans, every detail is not only clearly articulated but sonically and accentually weighted so that its precise relational meaning is clear. In the slow movement, this same precision of weighting, particularly in sonority and volume, sustains the coherence of succession over remarkably long and slowly unfolding passages. And the transition between the tempos, textures, and sonorities of the Adagio and those of the Fugue, achieved as a wholly continuous succession, is the most intense moment of all. Throughout, one has the sense that Rosen is aware of all the events taking place in the length and breadth of the work's texture, not just those at the registral extremes or immediately adjacent to one another; it is this quality, above all, that seems to give his performance its wonderfully complex intelligibility.

3.7.66

RUGGLES

FOR ALL OUR self-conscious concern with the American past of contemporary American music, and with the heroism and originality of our lonely forerunners, our actual awareness of the musical identities of the composers and works that constitute this past was for a long time quite minimal. The central tradition of our own new music has been pre-eminently European; and Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Webern obviously have an immediate musical presence for us that Ives, Ruggles, Ornstein, Gruenberg, Weiss, Crawford, et al.—however nostalgically we invoke their names—simply do not. Traditionally, this phenomenon is explained as the inescapable result of the very environmental conditions that generated our prewar composers' loneliness, if not their originality; unquestionably, their total isolation within their own society and (for the most part) from other musical cultures was responsible for the almost complete absence of opportunities to encounter their works in performance. Yet their ideas had powerful consequences for postwar American music, and—perhaps even more important—their example and effort ultimately resulted in the radically transformed professional environment within which our composers can now live and function.

Thus it has remained a persistent American musical dream—especially among composers—to realize these early "advanced" works in performance, in the hope of discovering in them an interest and relevance as musical literature equivalent to their suggestive power as compositional approaches. And the new contemporary-music performance groups that composers have been establishing in American universities and elsewhere are beginning increasingly to address themselves to this literature. In fact, one result of this development has been the almost instantaneous re-recognition of Varèse as a major 20th-century master whose long unheard qualities had a remarkable revelatory force for music composed almost forty years ago. And Ives, whose "revival" had already been proceeding fitfully in the orchestral and recital domains, has suddenly emerged, against the contemporary background, as much less a solitary Paul Bunyan than a curiously ephemeral figure whose compositional and imaginative powers were simply overwhelmed by the complexities he had innocently unleashed with his transcendental whimsies; but who nevertheless did invent some remarkable local ingenuities of surface sound and rhythm. Ornstein, Gruenberg, Weiss and Crawford (except for her astonishingly prophetic string quartet) on the other hand are still generally unknown.

Of all these composers, however, the one whose name always had the greatest invocational cachet was undoubtedly Carl Ruggles. His appeal, sound unheard, to our contemporary consciousness was, from several points of view, irresistible: not only was his personal and professional obscurity most total of all, but his output was extremely limited, consisting of only a few works lasting a few minutes each, and each of which, moreover, had taken many years to compose. One could read in Charles Seeger's article on Ruggles in the old Henry Cowell collection of articles by American composers about their colleagues that: "At the present time [March, 1932] any critical study of Carl Ruggles and his work must proceed under this handicap—that the *Sun-Treader, magnum opus* of his mature period, which received its première in Paris on February 25, 1932, has not yet been performed in New York and cannot be considered except insofar as a pencil score, rather difficult to read, has been shown to friends." One realized incredulously that, aside from the publication of the score, exactly the same situation pertained thirty years later (and as far as a New York performance is concerned, pertains today).

Finally, a few years ago, a Ruggles record did appear, in Columbia's Modern American Music series; even this, however, was not free of its ironies: there is so little music on the record that (whether inadvertently or not) the last two bands contain the same piece (*Evocations*). Still, one could learn at last that Ruggles' reticence appeared to be related to a compositional responsibility and concern that compared attractively with Ives's careless prodigality; for instead of the wildly divergent masses of

disparate sounds and textures poured out in Ives's music, Ruggles' effort in the recorded works appeared to be entirely directed toward the creation of a unitary coherence of texture and continuity. Thus each piece has a single textural curve—almost invariably from a quiet, thin-textured, middle-register beginning to a midpoint of maximal density, volume and registral dispersion, and then back again—created wholly out of the contrapuntal interrelation of continuously flowing "voices". Within the texture, as well as from one point to another in the textural succession, the coherence of this curve is sustained by a complete equalization of elements: each voice traverses a similar "melodic" span that consists entirely of successive permutations of the same set of intervals, and the combinations of voices at every point produce an almost constant sonority of simultaneity—the achievement of which might alone have accounted for all the composition time involved.

This homogeneity extends to tone color as well: in the recorded works, all the "lines" are projected by maximally similar timbres; strings in *Lilacs* and *Portals,* and piano in the four *Evocations* (an earlier work, *Angels,* was scored in a version for muted brass, as well as one for strings). One had, throughout, the impression of an uncompromising concern for textural clarity; indeed, the "composing with intervals" becomes so manifest that there seems to be a one-to-one relation between the underlying structure and the presented surface, to the degree that "surface", in the sense of a multiplicity of perceptual levels, cannot be said to exist at all. Even the rhythmic profiles of the parts seem entirely determined for the clear acoustic projection of each attack. And in the *Evocations,* where the nonsustaining articulation of the piano generates a subtler, more "open" texture, the foreground pitch successions invariably seem only arpeggiations of the background sonority.

The very fact that this music demands observations of this nature suggests a degree of relation to our own music far beyond that of Ives. But further, one could hear in the *Evocations* of 1943 a subtle play of intervallic transformation that seemed to traverse—however belatedly—some of the concerns of Schoenberg's Op. 11 piano pieces; and not only did the expository "plainness" of the presentational surfaces evoke an "American" quality that links such disparate composers as Aaron Copland (of the 1930 Piano Variations) and Jim Randall (of the 1965 *Mudgett* for computer synthesis) but the relation in the concept of rhythm and line of the opening of *Portals* to the opening cello recitative of Elliott Carter's First String Quartet was strikingly evident.

Surely, then, one was confronted by an extraordinary artistic phenomenon. But, equally, the overconstraint through which Ruggles' qualities of coherence had been accomplished (by an obviously laborious empirical process) appeared to limit seriously the structural scope of his language to what amounted to a single relational event in each piece. In the end, all the pieces seemed fundamentally identical, and each in itself seemed equivalent only to a single event in a larger work. Neither Gunther Schuller's performance at Tanglewood last summer of *Men and Mountains* (which did add the timbral dimension of horns and strings, but again in such an invariant conjunction that the result was a single horn-string timbre throughout), nor most of the works performed on the Bowdoin College Ruggles Institute last January (including all those on the Columbia record plus *Angels* and the naive early song, *Toys*) significantly modified this view.

But the last concert of the Bowdoin festival, given in Portland, Maine, by the Boston Symphony, included the first American performance of the *Sun-Treader*, a few days after the release, probably not entirely fortuitous, by Columbia of its first recorded performance. And indeed, Ruggles' first effort to extend his language into a longer-range continuity generates a differentiated continuity of an interesting kind. For in this work, textural curves of the *Portals-Lilacs* kind actually do function as single events in the total succession, and the construction in terms of alternations (for the most part) of recurring invariant blocks of texture produces a continuity remarkably like Varèse's. But where Varèse's events are single impulses, or complexes sharply isolated in time or register, Ruggles' continuously expand in line and register, generating a curious counterpoint to the underlying stasis. The most impressive aspect of *Sun-Treader* is the structure of instrumentation, which begins with all choirs doubling the same lines, then paralleling the increasing density of texture with increasing independence, and finally breaking into side-by-side passages for the individual sections alone before the final recurrence of the opening sonorities. And again, the associations with later

American music are vivid: the measured tympani accelerando of the opening and the unison string writing that recall the Carter *Variations for Orchestra,* and the full-sonoritied opening followed by a "dissolve" into harp-wind chamber texture that remind one of Sessions—especially the Second Symphony—are particularly arresting.

In the end, however, the circumstances of this first performance were perhaps more interesting even than the work itself. *Sun-Treader* is hardly a fully realized work; in many respects, it seems the first important step toward a compositional integration that never took place. One wonders what the consequences might have been thirty years ago for Ruggles of the kind of university involvement in music that can now produce a Boston Symphony performance of a "new" work, engender the release of its recording, and make available regular performances of "advanced" contemporary music in places like Portland and Brunswick. The consequences of its absence, in all the uncomposed and incompletely achieved works by our principal musical progenitors, are all too abundantly clear.

Records

RUGGLES: *Evocations*. John Kirkpatrick, piano. *Lilacs; Portals*. Juilliard String Orchestra; Frederick Prausnitz, cond. Columbia ML 4986.

Sun-Treader (with Robert Helps: Symphony No. 1). Columbia Symphony Orchesta; Zoltan Rosznyai, cond. Columbia ML 6201/MS 6801.

4.11.66

ORCHESTRAL CULTURE IN MID-AMERICA

ONE HAS TO TRAVEL out of New York to realize fully the extent to which the orchestra dominates public musical life in America. Our musical tradition is, in fact, almost entirely orchestral; we have nothing comparable to the European complex of smaller-city opera houses, for example, and in Europe most of the functioning orchestras originated, and often have remained, primarily as opera-house ensembles. The musical life in New York is focussed on the unsurpassable elaborateness and glamour of big-time opera at one extreme, and at the other on a continuous and intensive recital and chamber music activity that ranges from stellar celebrities through various forms of historical and interpretive cliquism to serious and sophisticated performance of traditional and contemporary literature. In these surroundings, the Philharmonic Orchestra, despite Leonard Bernstein's enormous personal cachet, functions mainly as a kind of tourist-commuter activity. The configuration of emphases that results is totally unrepresentative of American music as a whole.

Because of this disparity of experience, the amount of chamber music activity in New York will never be reflected in a general availability of contemporary musical culture to the American listener. The scarcity of activity in other musical media may also explain some of the energy recently displayed by some of the smaller-city ensembles in attempting to salvage a vital musical function for the orchestra by extending the repertory, and preserving standards of ensemble performance no longer perceivable among our "big three" (New York, Boston, Philadelphia). New York itself has become almost completely dependent on the Carnegie Hall International Festival of Visiting Orchestras for significant 20th-century orchestral experience, and especially for any contact with recent "advanced" American composition in that domain.

At best, the "major" ensembles have been following several years behind the smaller ones: three or four years ago, groups like the Chicago and Minneapolis Orchestras were giving the first New York performances of the Schoenberg-Berg-Webern-Stravinsky literature since the Dimitri Mitropolous days, while recently we have had the Schoenberg Violin Concerto from the Boston Symphony (fresh from the first Boston performance ever!), and the Webern Symphony and other symphonic works from the Philharmonic. But in the meantime, the more important "provincial" orchestras have begun to explore the newer American repertory: Milton Babbitt's *Relata I* by the Cleveland and Minneapolis Orchestras, Gunther Schuller's Symphony by Houston, his *Gala Music* by Chicago, and his *American Triptych* by Cincinnati, and Elliott Carter's Variations by Minneapolis, as well as the regularly exploratory programming of such rather less prominent groups as the Buffalo, St. Louis, Louisville, New Haven, and New Jersey Symphonies.

From his insular vantage point, the New Yorker's initial reaction to these observations is likely to be a euphoric expectation of enriched musical experience, in New York and elsewhere. But when one approaches at first hand those areas where the orchestra is the only musical force in view, the real seriousness of the total orchestral situation becomes terrifyingly obvious, and is brought into glaring focus only by the desperation represented in these attempts to realize a viable contemporary function. Thus, when I went to Cleveland in February to hear an all-"contemporary" program conducted by Gunther Schuller, I suddenly saw in a newly ominous light such familiar facts as that the composers who most significantly represent recent American composition have been least productive in the orchestral domain; that Elliott Carter's first mature orchestral work was composed in his late 40s, and that Milton Babbitt's only orchestral work since the teen-age *Generatrix* was composed in his 50th year; that Arthur Berger, Andrew Imbrie, George Perle, Mel Powell, George Rochberg, Ralph Shapey, Seymour Shifrin, to name only an obvious few, have composed no more than one or two representative orchestral works each; and that, therefore, with the sole exceptions of perhaps Roger Sessions, Aaron Copand, Gunther Schuller, and Leon Kirchner, there was virtually no literature through which the American listener, dependent entirely on an orchestra for his musical awareness, could become familiar with the entire range of recent American composition, regardless of the degree of benevolence or responsibility manifested by his orchestra's direction.

Moreover, it became evident what was bound to happen when an orchestra capable of quite superior playing in the traditional repertory (up to Richard Strauss) was confronted by a formidable new score—in this case, Milton

Babbitt's *Relata I*—whose performance required, first of all, a total readjustment of musical hearing to a kind of orchestral articulation that is a new departure, even in Babbitt's language, and of which not a single previous instance had ever been encountered by a member of the orchestra. All of this, furthermore, was to be taught to the players by an outside conductor whose technique and approach were being met for the first time, over a total rehearsal time—more than usually generous—of five hours. This, by the way, was to be accomplished along with the study of four other 20th-century works: the Webern Symphony, Schuller's *Spectra,* Prokofiev's *Scythian Suite* and Messiaen's *Ascension.* All of these turned out to be unknown to the orchestra—but then, so was Debussy's *Jeux* when Pierre Boulez conducted it earlier this season. And equally evident, as well as most alarming, were the implications for the audience's present and perhaps permanent understanding of *all* the work and activity of the composer involved. For the inescapable misrepresentation and near chaos in a performance attempted under such conditions was the one contact they had ever had or were ever likely to have with any aspect of Babbitt's ideas or creative personality.

To say that *Relata I* "triumphed" even under these circumstances would not only be a silly exaggeration but would contradict the essential point that whatever triumphed or failed could hardly have been *Relata I* for the scoreless, contextless audience. For those of us present with both scores and contexts, it was difficult enough to correlate what was going on sonically with what one could read, even though Schuller's usual remarkable perception of long-range projection of sense and shape made many things evident that seemed barely to be played. And while I scarcely feel prepared to characterize *Relata I,* after such a brief and minimal encounter, I had the impression from its apparent realization of an extraordinary multiplicity of dimensional relations latent in the orchestral medium that a new orchestral language—until now missing from the orchestral works of even the composers of the most original chamber music—appears to have been, if not discovered, at least revealed as a possibility. What makes this all the more exciting from the point of view of future musical development is that all those things described by Schuller as "happening [here] for the first time in orchestral music" were so clearly derived by imaginative insights from suggestions in earlier music, chamber and electronic as well as orchestral, of Babbitt himself and of his colleagues from Stravinsky to Carter. Thus a striking idea that appears in both *Relata I* and the Carter Variations for Orchestra, in totally different articulative contexts, is the juxtaposition of a series of reiterated staccato trumpet attacks (significantly at regular time intervals in Carter, significantly at differentiated time intervals in Babbitt) over a sustained line (a multi-pitched texture in Carter, a single "reference" pitch in *Relata I.)*

It should be said, too, that the Cleveland audience seemed quite unusually courteous, and even rather proud that it had not only endured but survived an experience whose full complexity must undoubtedly remain inconceivable to an outsider; this at least leaves room for rather more optimism than the crashing ennui of Boston and New York audiences that used to envelop some of the less scintillating modern-music performances of one's youth. And lest this be misunderstood, the orchestra itself posed no untoward complications of its own beyond bewilderment and disbelief that life could be this different, all at once. A convincing demonstration of its basic professionalism in attitude and competence (if not virtuosity) was the superb performance of the Webern Symphony that Schuller evoked, in stunning contrast to the quite dismal one at the Philharmonic last fall.

But what such rare events as this conjunction of Babbitt, Schuller, and Cleveland ought primarily to demonstrate to the Ford or any other relevant foundation, is that an absolute requirement for the salvation of American orchestral activity is the establishment of a true virtuoso ensemble, a specialized "elite" orchestra, devoted exclusively to learning and performing new works. This must be accomplished under the regular guidance of a knowledgable and competent conductor such as Schuller, who would thus not have to waste time and effort becoming involved in the International Conductor circuitry and other professional marginalia in order to snatch a few meager chances to conduct performances of new pieces under inadequate and inappropriate conditions. Such an orchestra, by creating a cohesive repertory and touring nationally with it, would not only make available the real sound of new orchestral music for listeners but would also provide an essential model for any orchestra to follow in learning these and other new pieces on its own. The result, even at this frighteningly late date, might be the reversal of the contemporary orchestra's precipitate descent into musical oblivion.

RECORDS: MESSIAEN, KOECHLIN, BOULEZ, STRAVINSKY, BERG

MESSIAEN: *Chronochromie.* KOECHLIN: *Les Bandar-Log.* BOULEZ: *Le soleil des eaux.* B.B.C. Orchestra and Chorus; Antal Dorati (in the Messiaen and Koechlin) and Pierre Boulez (in Boulez), conds. Angel (S) 36295.

FOR ALL ITS REPUTATION as a work of great complexity and originality in texture and sonority, *Chronochromie* is notable mainly for the one-dimensionality of its events, the absence of any real sense of multiple simultaneity even in those sections where the apparent "polyphony" of highly differentiated parts is most extreme. Evidently, the parts entirely cancel out as individual entities, and simply project as a "block" of texture of a certain kind. And this, however initially novel (and it is so only minimally, in the exaggerated emphasis on high-register sonority in general and glockenspiel-xylophone-marimba conjunctions in particular), so becomes just another unitary, stationary element, sustained long past any point of perceptual function. Moreover, in the alternation of these sections with passages in which the attacks are all in thick monolithic blocks at every point, even in fast figurations (an idea no more "original" here than in Chausson or Honegger) the supposed "chronometric" invention seems like nothing so much as one of those pale imitations of the *Dance Sacrale* from the *Sacre du printemps* that proliferated in the late teens and early twenties.

Boulez, on the other hand, is instantly identifiable as a presence of considerably greater interest, with—at least—ideas for ways to approach all the immediate aspects of his piece: voice-word relations, phrasing, registration (especially), voice-instrumental alternation and conjunction. The quick flicks between extremes of duration, articulation and sonority—without "expressionist" intensity, but simply on-off—are particularly striking, and quite securely controlled despite the relative immaturity of the work in other respects. Thus the denser passages do not quite escape the Honeggerian "noise" that seems an invariant presence in French works of a certain pretentious monumentality. The performance is on a far higher level than those on the rest of the record.

It would be amusing to be able to assert that the overtly old-fashioned Koechlin *Bandar-Log* was no sillier than the pretentiously *avante-garde* Messiaen, but it is, considerably. Most of this piece is plain Hollywood spookery, and the rest is sheer incidental music, about as incidental as music can be. The score does possess a certain historical interest as an amazingly comprehensive compendium of the clichés of French academicism, from slippery chromatics to obligatory fugues, of which its inordinate length is an essential aspect as well.

STRAVINSKY: *Le sacre du printemps.* Four Etudes for Orchestra. Orchestre National de la Radio-Télévision Française; Pierre Boulez, cond. Nonesuch H-1093/H-71093.

THIS IS A VERY SPECIAL performance of the *Sacre,* a treasurable conjunction of the wonderful precision and delicacy of French wind ensemble and solo playing with a conductor who demonstrates a deep awareness of and control over every rhythmic articulation and sonorous balance in the score. The textural transparency that results, and the absolute clarity and accuracy in every detail projected through it is an unforgettable experience to one who has known the score for years but never really heard all of it. This quality far outweighs any residual objections to the absence of an equal concern for the projection of long-range continuity and structure that tends to characterize Boulez's conducting. In the Etudes, too, the orchestra's response is so much more precisely adjusted to Boulez's demands than was the B.B.C.'s in their Carnegie Hall performance under him last spring that the interpretative defi-

ciencies noted here at the time simply recede into insignificance beside the sheer virtuosity of the ensemble playing.

BERG: *Wozzeck.* Evelyn Lear, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Karl Christian Kolin, Helmut Melchert, Gerhard Stolze, Fritz Wunderlich, soloists. Chorus and Orchestra of the Deutschen Oper, Berlin; Karl Böhm, cond. DGG 991-92.

THE FORMIDABLE mechanical difficulties of performing *Wozzeck* are past history; but its very accessibility to the technical capacities of conventional performers now also subjects it to the conventionalization they impose on everything they perform, and thus creates a new interpretive crisis of even more formidable proportions. When Dimitri Mitropolous recorded *Wozzeck,* for example, it was still impossible (at least for the New York Philharmonic) really to *play* it, and much of the work had to be suggestively "faked" to give some indication of the qualities of the missing and distorted events. What emerged was surely not *Wozzeck,* but a rather powerful conceptual image of its musical-dramatic identity. Böhm's performance, on the other hand, is completely out of the Mitropolous class in its largely reliable—and hence valuable—documentation of the score for the first time on phonograph records. But its accomplishment of this through the subjugation of every unique configurational and successional quality of the work into a smooth, efficiently propelled "standard-repertory" featurelessness raises the awful possibility of a new performance "tradition" for 20th-century opera that may require another Mahler to restore it once again to the domain of significant musical experience.

10.24.66

RECORDS: MAHLER

MAHLER: Symphony No. 6. BERG: *Le Vin* (with Phyllis Curtin, soprano). Boston Symphony Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, conductor. RCA Victor LM/LSC 7044.

Symphony No. 9. Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Bruno Walter, conductor. *Das Lied von der Erde.* Mildred Miller, mezzo-soprano; Ernst Häfliger, tenor; New York Philharmonic, Bruno Walter, conductor. Columbia D3L 344/D3S 744.

Symphony No. 10. The Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, conductor. Columbia M2L 335/M2S 735.

ALTHOUGH THE SIXTH is evidently Mahler's most interesting symphony, the very individuality and complexity of its internal ideas tend to make even more extrusive the theatrical "strokes"—march rhythms, snare-drum rolls, and the whole gesture-typological repertory of "hymns", "Ländler", and "Liebeslieder" (or, more accurately, *Liebestodlieder)*—which Mahler superimposed on these ideas out of an apparent insecurity about inventing a projective medium uniquely expressive of them. Still, there are extraordinary passages throughout the Sixth Symphony, particularly the simultaneous unfoldings of heterogenous linear successions, in widely varying multiplicities and densities; transparent woodwind-, bell-, harp-, and string-tremolo sounds in the first movement; extreme sonority changes which emerge from texturally continuous passages in rapid succession with no break in the ongoing stream of continuity; and the still remarkably original-sounding opening of the last movement, with its single lines unfolding tenuously against an almost unrhythmized, bassless, tremolo backdrop that gradually defines out into a fully articulated multilinearity to fill the entire orchestral range.

But in performance these qualities are all too likely to disappear behind the surrounding blatant pseudo-banalities. The nervous locomotion of Erich Leinsdorf's performance—scarcely pausing to acknowledge a transitional point or to adjust the rate of unfolding or the manner of succession to the requirements of individual passages—combined with the almost uncontrollable crudity of some of the Boston Symphony's playing, particularly that of its brasses—just aren't adequate to this task.

The "performing version" of the sketches left by Mahler for his Tenth Symphony seems to have been conscientiously assembled by its resurrector, Deryck Cooke; but Mahler's kind of composition, in which the minute particulars of inflective details are far more significantly the loci of his significant ideas than are the broad section-to-section characteristics, defeats this attempt to learn much about what the Tenth's ideas would have been like. Instead, one is aware of the persistent absence of precisely those attributes which are apt to be most vividly particular in a Mahler piece: what I hear here are the dogged tracing and conjoining of linear and instrumental parts from beginning to bitter end at their most primitive literal-logic level; recurrences of configurations which are labelled for sure-fire recognition by identical orchestrations; textures which inexplicably drop away to be replaced by uninterpretable sequels; instrumental entrances and exits which seem to function purely as "color", forming no evident meaningful relational path. The "performing sketch" has perhaps its greatest value in making one vividly aware of what is, implicitly, absent—but I doubt that's a sufficient justification for this elaborate recording project. In the performance, the Philadelphia Orchestra flows unctiously over everything with its customary indiscriminate excellence.

Bruno Walter's Mahler performances contrast sharply with both Ormandy's and Leinsdorf's in the evident particularity of every attack, inflection, entrance, transition, cadence, textural or timbral transformation, and in the considered variation of duration for each pitch in a perceptual (and notational) "even" succession, as well as a similar variability, on larger scales, of the tempos of episodal unfolding. The combination of cleanliness and plasticity of attack in the new recording of the Ninth Symphony is gratifying, especially against the backdrop of the strenuous Boston assault; there are several much better Walter recordings of *Das Lied von der Erde,* though the vocalists here are exceptional.

11.21.66

RECORDS: STRAVINSKY

STRAVINSKY: *Pulcinella.* Irene Jordan, soprano; George Shirley, tenor; Donald Gramm, bass; Columbia Symphony Orchestra; Igor Stravinsky, conductor. Columbia ML 6281/MS 6881.

Le Baiser de la Fée. Columbia Symphony Orchestra; Igor Stravinsky, conductor. Columbia ML 6201/MS 6803.

Perséphone. Vera Zorina, speaker; Michele Molese, tenor; Ithaca College Concert Choir; Texas Boys' Choir; Gregg Smith Singers; Columbia Symphony Orchestra; Igor Stravinsky, conductor. Columbia ML 6319/MS 6919.

Agon. [with Gunther Schuller: *Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee*]. Boston Symphony Orchestra; Erich Leinsdorf, conductor. RCA Victor LM/LSC 2879.

IN *PULCINELLA*—the complete "ballet with song"—Stravinsky conducts an astounding investigation into the nature of musical time experience, discovering a whole new realm of magical musical qualities arising from the interactions of collaged integral local events in generating a unique large-scale consecution, whose effect is transcendently inexplicable as the sum, or the resonant residue, of the episodes which are, manifestly, its only components. Because of the historical-stylistic familiarity (and hence the essential compositional neutrality) of the Pergolesi fragments which furnish the material for *Pulcinella's* real structure of rhythm and sonority, one engages in its purest possible form Stravinsky's generation of a radically new continuity out of the juxtaposition of internally uniform events sharply divergent in qualities of motion and enunciation. In fact, the power of such divergence to function as a primary unit of relation largely depends on this very internal uniformity. It enables the creation of a macrocontext in which entire sections function as unitary "elements", ribbons of time-sound texture cut off at different lengths, and thus precisely measurable against one another in terms both of total time difference and the articulative differences with which they characterize a given span of music time.

The result is a remarkable "rhythm in the large", materializing between separated movements as well as—and most tellingly—within individual "scenes" where several Pergolesi movements are knitted to produce a single synthetic composite trajectory. This quality is still more deeply developed by the interspersion among these "composites" of extended "closed" passages each consisting of a *single* Pergolesi piece (as, the song in its first appearance; later, significantly, it reappears as a fragment of a composite); the trombone/double-bass's Laurel 'n' Hardy romp; and the deadpan woodwind Gavotte and Variations just before the final scene).

The macrorhythmic imagery is sharpened by prescient invention and placement of details (superimposed on or insinuated into the fabrics of Pergolesi's originals) which, similarly, extend the resonance of a single sonority over longer segments, thus composing still another rhythmic level—the time path of sonority change—in counterpoint with the smaller-scaled time paths within the subsuming piece-frames. And the way Stravinsky has thus addressed Pergolesi's conventional 18th-century harmonic limitations—not by using them as an open field for elaborative intricacy as Richard Strauss appropriated Couperin or as Schoenberg recomposed Handel, but by intensifying those very limitations so as to transform a collection of decorative musical trivia into the precisely particularized components of an incandescent total structure—is an awesome experience of the amazing aesthetic payoff on sheer craftiness which Stravinsky's music uniquely delivers.

Since almost none of what I value about *Pulcinella* is discernible in the Suite of extracted movements by which it is most familiarly represented—a Suite which reduces *Pulcinella* just to the set of attractive transcriptions which Diaghilev thought he was commissioning—my need for an adequate recorded performance of the whole ballet is obvious. Stravinsky's own earlier recording with the Cleveland Orchestra, instrumentally competent, was vocally catastrophic. His new recording, however, rectifies much more than this vocal deficiency: the freelance "Columbia Symphony", precisely because it lacks any predetermined ensemble sound of its own, produces for Stravinsky a

sharpness of accentuated inflection, a "close" articulation of rhythmic contour, and a fibrous separation of timbral levels which were simply unavailable to the pre-integrated, overconditioned Cleveland players. The advantage, unhappily, is somewhat dissipated by ensemble imperfections, notably a frequent nonsimultaneity of attack, which are evidence of hasty recording practice particularly inexcusable with a project of this documentary and musical urgency.

Tchaikowsky's music is rather too directly ancestral to Stravinsky for him to have produced, in *Le Baiser de la Fée,* a nineteenth-century-music version of *Pulcinella.* There are, after all, places in Tchaikowsky's music that are (in the rare adequate performance) astonishingly "Stravinskyan" in texture, sonority, or even rhythmic profile (listen, for evidence, to Otto Klemperer's recording of the Fifth Symphony). Consequently, the individual pieces in *Le Baiser* are rather too reverently addressed, never getting two-fistedly coerced into the special cogency and precise proportionality of their *Pulcinella* analogues. Generally, the separate "numbers" seem, in this context, overextended as presented; several sub-pieces are sustained over such long spans that they "close" formally within themselves, never creating a piece-to-piece successional quality which transcends their serial succession.

But *Le Baiser de la Fée* is interesting, if thus on a lesser level, for what Stravinsky hears in Tchaikowsky's orchestrations and textures, in his accentuations, and, especially, in his harmony. In particular, interesting ideas of phrase accent result from Stravinsky's special instrumental partitioning of linear conjunctions—an especially nice touch, since so much of Tchaikowsky's own characteristic phraseology derived from *his* special way with these issues. And there are, predictably, quantities of wonderful new ideas of instrumental sonority—uncharacteristic invocations of low flutes, tremolo strings, plucked basses, among many—but primarily one is aware of that magnificent Stravinskyan absence of sonorous redundancy, of a constant accretion and discovery of new combinations that are not simply "different" or "varied" but "developmental". For example, in the last section a locally "beautiful" conjunction of woodwinds, harp, and horn is transformed into a relation of bowed and plucked strings, and then expanded into a full-orchestral sonority—a succession whose revelations about timbre-relational possibility should transform the auditory awareness of any active listener.

Perséphone is, in contrast, a rare instance in Stravinsky's music in which hybrid elements remain intractably unreconciled, where the presentational manner imposes requirements of contrast, transition, and proportion that don't appear to merge with, or emerge from, a strong unitary compositional center. The result is a constant sensation of time-filling for theatrical purposes, of a pervasive event-emptiness, and even at some points a purely gestural appropriateness which nearly negates the liveliness of all the imaginative strokes which seem to lie in ambush within the music at almost every turn. The alertness of Stravinsky's recorded performance (clean and sharp except for a pitch-uncertain tenor) exaggerates the fundamental soft-headedness of the piece. And the Boston Symphony's recorded performance of *Agon* should be noted only to warn that its articulative ponderousness and sonorous homogeneity do not believably represent the qualities of some of the most intricately lucid music I know.

1.23.67

SCHOENBERG'S *MOSES AND ARON* IN BOSTON

SCHOENBERG'S *Moses and Aron,* given what was, incredibly, its first American performance by the Boston Opera Company this season, represents the ultimate development of the concepts of dramatic-verbal-musical structure that were crucial for Schoenberg throughout his compositional life—from his earliest songs to the first works in which his full radical originality appeared (*The Book of the Hanging Gardens*, say) to the furthest-extended explorations of unique structural ideas (*Erwartung, Der Jacobsleiter, Die Glückliche Hand, A Survivor From Warsaw*, etc.). And this ultimacy obviously precludes any attempt at even minimal exegesis here, beyond pointing out a few of the senses in which, as might be expected, this composition is "operatic" in the deepest of senses—that it is, in fact, generated out of a total reconsideration and reconstruction of what constitutes an "operatic" continuity. And all the extraordinary diversity of resources and media which it employs—and all the sense-perceptual contents associated with each of them—are mobilized to contribute to a unitary dramatic unfolding, not in trivial synchronicity but in a fantastically complex counterpoint of rates and qualities of unfolding in all participating domains.

In a direct sense, *Moses and Aron* is also the ultimate realization of the potential of German Expressionist theater, a musical and dramatic purification of its resources that reconceives its characteristic "devices" as the generators and projectors of a unitary structural continuity. The constant interplay of two dramatic "levels"—the verbal, intimate and "abstract" dialogues between Moses and Aron, at one extreme, and the externalized pure action of the massed crowds, at the other—is realized through an extraordinary development of a single set of presentational qualities—orchestral, vocal, and visual—within each scene. The "expressionist" idea of the unseen murmuring chorus whose location (the spatial sense of the source of sound) constantly shifts to represent the "burning bush" image—a great stroke of musical theater in itself—is immediately juxtaposed with the chamber-music, recitative quality of the Moses-Aron dialogue. The continuity of ideas thus created, each sharply characterized by "profiles", relates *Moses* to the heart of the operatic tradition from the upper-lower world juxtaposition of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* to the outdoor-indoor, natural-supernatural musical correlates in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, to the merging and interdevelopment of a multitude of such identities in Wagner's music dramas.

Beyond the miracle of the mere fact of its occurrence, the Boston company's performance was distinguished by the ingenuity and discipline of many aspects of its production. The phenomenal accuracy of the chorus, which is virtually a collective soloist—and frequently an ensemble of highly differentiated collective soloists—perhaps contributed more than any other single factor to the vivid projection of the special sonic-articulative qualities of the work. Above all, however, the settings and the stage direction by Sarah Caldwell—under the most inadequate conceivable of physical conditions in an old movie theater—registered as the really unique and original aspects of the production, always brilliantly "effective" yet always deriving evidently from awareness of what, musically and dramatically, was crucially going on. Her transformation of a ridiculously shallow stage by vertical, lateral, and even circular extensions (the orchestral players were entirely surrounded by stage aprons), and her sense of relations of space, volume, and (visual) speed and shape of events were strokes of relevant creative invention which should have embarrassed our financially affluent but conceptually impoverished New York companies. Sarah Caldwell should immediately be given an adequate orchestra, an authoritative conductor, and all the funds, stage resources, electronic equipment, and mechanical devices she requires. At the very least, the old Metropolitan Opera House ought to be rebuilt to her specifications and turned over to her for use at will. For her work in Boston (beginning more than ten years ago with what was then, and is still, the only American performance of Paul Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*, and continuing with Alban Berg's *Lulu*, which has yet to appear at either the Metropolitan or the New York City Opera, and Luigi Nono's *Intolleranza* of last year) has been the

only sign of intelligent life that American operatic activity has evinced (outside of individual productions in Santa Fe and Washington). Even if all the compositional activity in America is worth only 50,000 matching-grant dollars to the National Endowment for the Arts, it still seems possible that someone might find that our prevailing national disaster of operatic incompetence deserves the rectification uniquely available through the support of activities like Sarah Caldwell's.

2.13.67

RECORDS: NEW MUSIC FOR PIANO

NEW MUSIC FOR PIANO. Works by Dahl, Berger, Kennan, Adler, Overton, Babbitt, Gideon, Berkowitz, Weber, Kraft, Pisk, Powell, Gould, Fine, Hovhaness, Perle, Cazden, Prostakoff, Glanville-Hicks, Bacon, Helps, Brunswick, Kim, Alexander. Robert Helps, piano. RCA Victor LM/LSC 7042.

THIS ALBUM is as valuable for its representation of important aspects of American musical development that are rarely encountered in recent new-music activities as for the superior performances it contains of important works by more frequently heard composers. Thus Mark Brunswick, Miriam Gideon and Vivian Fine were members of a group of serious and accomplished composers who centered around Roger Sessions in the 1930s, and whose work was quite regularly performed in prewar contemporary music circles, along with that of such important younger composers as Edward Cone, whose omission from the present album is especially regrettable.

In general, these composers were influenced by Sessions' concern for the unfolding of structure through an unbroken "long-line" continuity in which differentiations evolve out of the inflecting lines of a continuous, densely interwoven counterpoint, rather than as explicitly articulated "contrasts". The manifestations of this idea in the work of the postwar generation of Sessions-oriented composers are represented in the album by the work of Earl Kim (whose recent compositional reawakening, notable especially in the performances of his *Dead Calm* given at Marlboro and at Tanglewood last summer, has been one of the gratifying developments of the past year) and of Robert Helps himself. And Ben Weber's kind of 12-tone music, with its strongly traditional-associative, soft-textured surface, seems also to derive from their approach. (Whereas, for example, the 12-tone music of Paul Pisk stems directly from the Viennese source.)

The two aspects of "neoclassicism" that were perhaps the most powerful presences on the prewar American musical scene were associated with the work of Stravinsky and Hindemith. Of the composers in this album, Ingolf Dahl was once widely known and performed as a principal exponent of Stravinskyan thought, but in the powerful backwash of Stravinsky's own reorientation he has paid the price of obscurity for his continued faithfulness to Stravinsky's earlier approach. In this connection, the absence of music by Louise Talma and Alexei Haieff who, with Dahl, Harold Shapero and Irving Fine, were the real virtuosos among the "classic-surface" Stravinskyans, is really unfortunate, given the sense that its inclusion would have provided of the range, nature and prevalence of these qualities in American music up to the very recent past.

The Hindemith orientation, with its emphasis on maximally unambiguous connections in sonority, line and contour in every dimension, and maximal clarity of event-demarcation and a kind of orderly succession of events that seems almost independent of their interior content, is still occasionally evident in the Mel Powell piece included as well as in the music of Leo Kraft and Norman Cazden. The *Six Preludes* of George Perle are characteristically idiosyncratic in their completely personal exploration of highly original ideas—here, particularly of rhythmic succession and harmonic structure—and characteristically impressive in the degree to which they project both coherence and contextual identity against what often appear to be formidable obstacles of constraint and speculative extension.

Arthur Berger's *Two Episodes* (1933), surely among the first American attempts at 12-tone composition, are remarkably mature in technique and invention, with a "harmonic", "phraseological" control of the 12-tone unfolding that is astonishingly sophisticated for such an early attempt by a 21-year-old composer in a direction whose ostensible further pursuit in his own work was deferred for a twenty-year "neoclassic" interim. This aspect of the *Episodes* also anticipates, indeed illuminates, some of the special qualities of continuity and sonority that made Berger's music the most "internally" generated, as well as the most externally original, of the Stravinsky school—those characteristics that led to Berger's being described as a "diatonic Webern". And Milton Babbitt's *Partitions* (composed for Helps) is perhaps the best possible introduction to his work: it realizes within a minute time scale a

completely developed and extraordinarily ramified structure and projects, in two or three minutes, at least as many suggestions and articulations of ideas about the compositional possibilities of piano sound, registration and technique as can be found in all the rest of the album.

Partitions, too, is above all the piece for Helps's pianism, with its combination of a Lisztian mechanical command and an effortless fluency that conjoins a remarkable combination of articulative "coolness" and inflective sensitivity under the most strenuous technical conditions. But Helps's capacities also result in wonderfully intelligent and considerate performances of all the works; perhaps the beautiful penetration to the somewhat oblique qualities of the Berger and Perle pieces are the real musicianly tours de force, if not the most spectacular *coups de doigts,* in the entire collection.

In thus satisfying a serious need for representation—in adequate performance—of serious music otherwise unavailable, Victor (subsidized here by the Abby Whiteside Foundation) has performed a substantial service. But given the care and distinction of Helps's playing, and its invariable association, whenever I have heard him in live performance, with an extraordinarily delicate and lucid piano sound, the wash-tub sonority produced by whatever combination of instrument and engineering that emerges from these records is—in the one area for which the record company itself was wholly responsible—symptomatically lamentable.

3.13.67

RECORDS: SCHOENBERG

THE MUSIC OF ARNOLD SCHOENBERG: Volume 4. Complete music for Solo Piano. Songs for Voice and Piano. Donald Gramm, Ellen Faull, Helen Vanni, vocalists; Glenn Gould, piano. Columbia M2L 336/M2S 736.

THE PRINCIPAL interest of this album is its representation of early Schoenberg vocal music previously unavailable on recordings. For even the Op. 1 songs exhibit astonishing compositional maturity and the superabundant effusion of inventions and insights which identified Schoenberg's creative personality throughout his life. Actually, for many listeners the songs of Opp. 1 and 2 may turn out to be the most profitable first experience of the special intensity of Schoenberg's highly compressed and complex musical thought processes. For in the absence of the neogrammatical problems posed by later pieces, in a relatively traditional stylistic and formal context, one finds Schoenberg attempting to realize in tonal terms many of the constructional preoccupations for which he later developed a self-determined, radically new musical language. But his early efforts to expand the language of traditional tonality to the point where it could project his radically extended relational ideas are in themselves extraordinary, productive of extraordinary music, and—in a sense that ought to be more prevalent—creatively heroic. The realizations, within Opp. 1 and 2, of the kinds of relation, from smallest to largest in scale, that can be articulated by configurations and successions of pitches within the resources and limits of a tonal reference, are surely maximal, if not ultimate. And the increasing interest of Schoenberg and his students in the ramifications of these relations beyond the referential limits of tonal structure can be perceived, even by a relatively inexperienced listener, as a direct outgrowth of the preoccupations one finds in these songs, as they began to generate a new musical language of their own from "inside" the traditional vocabularies. Such a development is, in fact, even evident in the evolution between the two early song sets; the far greater complexity in texture and polyphony in Op. 2 is an amazing one-opus leap. By the time of the Op. 15 *Book of the Hanging Gardens*, a new world of musical coherence has already formed: tonal reference is now only the redolence of a sonority whose extrapolations, remotely extended and densely interpenetrated, have become the heart of structure and the surface of image.

But unhappily, the music on this album is deprived of its authentic voice by the aggressively idiosyncratic performances it undergoes under the hands of Glenn Gould. I am particularly unappreciative of the subjection of Schoenberg's hardheaded musical thoughts, tonal, atonal, and twelve-tonal, to the grotesque exaggerations of articulation with which Glenn Gould virtually dissolves their coherent continuities. A whole range of textual details precisely composed into the notation are "personalized" out of recognition—presumably demonstrating that Schoenberg is entitled to inclusion among the great masters on whom such interpretive outrages are regularly perpetrated. (There are, however, other available recordings of the solo piano music in which they are performed not only adequately but with frequently impressive insight, most notably by Charles Rosen and the late Edouard Steuermann.) And the singers chosen to accompany Glenn Gould in the piano-vocal music create a strong case against the notion that "standard-repertory" performers should feel obliged to perform 20th-century music too.

4.3.67

ELLIOTT CARTER'S PIANO CONCERTO

THE ONLY HISTORICAL issue that seems pertinent in contemplating Elliott Carter's new Piano Concerto is about what great good luck it is to live at a musical time, in a musical culture, in which music of such profound interest is being composed. None of those other issues of tendencies in "style" or "technique" which are being journalistically raised, once again, in connection with Carter's piece, has the least relevance to the "issues" which are relevant musically: the nature and quality of the musical events the Concerto embodies, and, beyond these, the avenues of perception and thought it powerfully and uniquely reveals. The contentious multichotomies of the journalist's historical dialectic are simply unrecognizable as a relevant picture of the compositional world to those who inhabit it, absorbed as they are in the unique and fascinating particularities of actual musical phenomena.

So the main function of a public discussion of a work of the obvious scope and complexity of thought and surface of the Carter Concerto is to make its existence and character known to anyone possibly interested, and—for their benefit and our own—to promote the possibilities of its further audition. Beyond that, such discussion might offer some useful advance idea of the kinds of events, qualities, and continuities it unfolds—especially since opportunities for multiple listening are unlikely, and score study is not universally accessible. The project of fulfilling that assignment is, I confess, daunting; serious musicians know how long and ardent our study will have to be before music like Carter's concerto is adequately absorbed. Yet on the other hand we also know that its valuable expressive content is available—to varying degrees—to any even "technically" unequipped or relatively inexperienced listeners, given the right combination of awareness and focus.

In this context, it is hard to see what abstract (and mostly inaccurate) discussions of "serialism" as a compositional "doctrine" can possibly signify to a listener who isn't being told what any of the music being discussed sounds or acts like, in cognitive and imaginable terms. Terms, that is, which would not equally describe any music whatever (such as the "definition" of "serial" music as that which "manipulates various materials", to be found in the *New York Times* report on the Carter Concerto); terms which would not create false and experientially confusing perceptual normatives (such as, in the same report, the use of "dissonance" as though it meant a universally indentifiable kind of sound rather than a tonal function absent from the music under discussion); terms which do not include the use of prejudicial adjectives as if they were observational nouns ("music of this kind seldom has charm"); terms which do not misuse traditional musical concepts in confusing ways which have no reference to actual existing musical compositions (as, in a letter by the *Times* critic responding to a complainant: "whether or not [it] is a row it *sounds* like a row, with its disjunct leaps, etc."—whereas a row in no sense defines a way of *articulating* anything presented but only constitutes the structural *basis* for what is presented). For the poor listener in the dark, even a simple forbearance from the abuse of technical jargon and adjectival nouns in journalistic discourse would be a monumental step toward enlightenment, if only in that the vacuity of such discourse might become transparent.

And in the space thus disencumbered, perhaps it could be observed without fear of misinterpretation that Elliott Carter's Piano Concerto does represent a rather extraordinary culmination of ideas inherent in his earlier music, and that it does constitute the most definitively developed instance thus far of a compositional *gestalt* which is one of the significant polarities of contemporary American musical thought. In this context, comparisons with Milton Babbitt's *Relata I,* at the other pole of "advanced" American music, are continually suggestive as illuminations of the special qualities of the Carter concerto—just as many aspects of *Relata I* profited from comparisons with the Carter Orchestral Variations and Double Concerto. Thus, as to "serialism", Carter's Concerto, like the "serial" music of early-period Schoenberg and recent Stravinsky, is pre-eminently "harmonic"; that is, it involves delimited pitch constellations which, from the opening of the piece, in the solo piano alone, are presented as

the multiply unfolded sonority of a given event—whereas in *Relata I* the unfolding is continuous, and the *successional* ordering of sounds is critical. The "harmonic" idea, moreover, is one of the principal respects in which the new Concerto develops earlier Carter qualities; for whereas the "multidimensional" Carter works from the First String Quartet through the Orchestral Variations, the Second String Quartet, and the Double Concerto develop the ideas of juxtaposed, highly differentiated sonic strata on the one hand, and a filmically intercut tempo-relational continuity on the other, the Piano Concerto powerfully combines these complementary actions.

Thus: in the first movement, a sharply demarcated alternation of tempo-events is articulated by the association, with each "tempo", of a particular "harmony" (defined by three-note constellations) whose "non-blending" with adjacent harmonies creates a constant sense of event change without obvious jolts in the surface texture. And this strong "pitch-content" orientation of the interiors of these sections—which recalls the pitch-matching ideas of the 1954 Sonata for flute, oboe, cello, and harpsichord—creates a framework within which a prodigious multiplicity of long, wide-arched "legato" lines is clearly perceptible within a texture of frequently maximal density and dispersion. Yet the strikingly different senses in which a "long line" is projected by piano, percussion, woodwinds, and strings is an extremely subtle aspect of the Concerto's development; the piano's presence is almost continuous, but the articulative identities of—especially—the bass clarinet, flute, and oboe are sustained with extraordinary delicacy even in the most massive surroundings.

In the second movement this idea of multiplicity is further extended into the juxtaposition of multiple articulations simultaneously, each again retaining its identity. There are short, sharp, isolated attacks counterpointed with long arching lines, compressed articulative bursts, and dense sustained chordal masses (a simplistic "effect" in the music of the younger Polish primitives which here is functionalized as a single *element* of a multifaceted texture). The extreme of this "dramatized" situation is in the movement's "cadenza", where the piano's pitch-dense figuration is gradually "absorbed" by a swelling string-sonority wave which ultimately overflows the entire sound-field, stripping the piano first down to a two-pitch figure which directly resonates a conspicuous passage near the beginning of the first movement, then down to a single pitch reiterated at registral dead center.

Here as elsewhere a highly individual aspect of Carter's compositional personality—and the quality which perhaps principally defines the polarity of his work against Babbitt's—is the evident "gestural" sense which these interactions create. In Carter's music, all the layers upon layers of differentiated, highly individuated utterance-articulations contribute invariably to a single residual quality, a unitary perceptual contour, a narrative theater; whereas in Babbitt's music, *Relata I* as elsewhere, the inflections which extend along and within a highly unitary surface, texture, and articulative continuity, create an ever-widening and maximally dense multiplicity of functionally interrelated contours, simultaneously and successively, more like a world than like a story. Where Carter takes "patches" of traditionally associative kinds of continuity ("long-lined" melodic successions, "cadenza" figurations, et al) and creates by the "pressure" of their individual manner of succession and conjunction a wholly new species of time (continuity) experience, Babbitt "reconstructs" traditional continuity by fragmenting its components into individually quite "untraditional" articulations whose conjunction creates a new, multifaceted, dimensionally expanded, coherence.

This focus, too, makes it clearest how Carter's "gestural" language counterpoises Babbitt's nonchalant, radically anti-gestural surface. For the unitary perceptual "curve" which arises from all the complexities in Carter's Piano Concerto is like a phraseological rhetoric which accompanies, surrounds, "coats" and insinuates into the relational substance of the work; while in Babbitt's music it is the very "closeness" of the surface configurations to the shapes of the underlying relational interior which gives it its special sonority as well. The presence of a gestural stratum in Carter's work, too, creates a perceptual "signal" to sustain a listener, giving him a path to follow which is far more tractable than the densely multifurcated interior from which it emanates, giving him also perhaps an auditory foothold enabling the retention and cumulation of cognitive coherence between expanding and clarifying encounters with the significant insights being discovered and explored within. And my impression, after hearing what seemed to be an unusually plausible first performance by the Boston Symphony and Jacob Lateiner, conducted by Erich Leinsdorf, is that—especially in its first movement—this concerto has discovered new paths of perception, new possi-

bilities of coherent articulation under conditions of unprecedented complexity, pressure, and temperature, through a structural "dramatization" of music-relational situations, a fund of ideas which will be a treasured source of deep musical experience for a large part of the music history still to come.

5.8.67

RECORDS: HANDEL, TCHAIKOWSKY, RACHMANINOFF, MONTEVERDI, MOZART

HANDEL: Organ Concertos (complete). Edward Müller, organ; Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, August Wenzinger, conductor. Archiv SKL 917/21. Twelve Concerti Grossi, op. 6. Chamber Orchestra, Alexander Schneider, conductor. Columbia.

TCHAIKOWSKY: Four Suites for Orchestra. New Philharmonia Orchestra, Antal Dorati, conductor. Mercury S3 9018.

RACHMANINOFF: Twenty-Four Preludes for piano (complete). Constance Keene, piano. Philips PHC 2-006.

HANDEL, Tchaikowsky, Rachmaninoff: a less than immediately intuitive chain of historical association, perhaps, but all three were major compositional inventors whose work is interesting less for the great profundity or originality of compositional discovery than for the sheer élan of compositional virtuosity, a quality analogous to the performative virtuosity and control of players like Vladimir Horowitz, Jascha Heifetz, or, indeed, Sergei Rachmaninoff himself. In Handel's music, particularly, there is an extraordinary immediacy of transmission through a presentational surface which is always precisely configured to create maximum transparency for a constant flow of brilliant local ideas of contour, sonority, and continuity without the intervention of irrelevant complexities. Handel's mastery in this regard is perhaps most impressively evident in purely instrumental works, where the sense of an "idea" must be generated entirely from musical components, unreinforced by verbal-referential imagery. Of this literature, the Op. 6 Concerti Grossi for strings are the most inventive, especially in their creation of striking rhythmic and pitch profiles with an almost stark economy of surface activity. The present recording, unfortunately, is too disfigured by "interpretive" eccentricity and "personality" mannerisms to serve as a coherent access to the pieces; of other recordings, Hermann Scherchen's on Westminster is the most perceptive I know. The organ concertos, taken as a whole, are rather less inexhaustible in their variety and ingenuity; but potent individual moments, movements, and whole concertos are infiltrated throughout the admirable and probably definitive performances on the Archiv set.

The Tchaikowsky orchestral Suites also appear as their composer's purest exploration of sheer compositionality, free of imputatons of symphonic profundity, choreographic pictorialism, or operatic extroversion. The resultant variety of orchestral finesses—especially in the direction of rhythmic-accentual subtleties and sonorous particularities—were probably predictable from Tchaikowsky's other music; but the wide-ranging exploration of ideas of texture and continuity is unique in his output, from the "fugal" movement in the First Suite, whose elaborate "contrapuntal" texture is followed immediately by an extended one-line passage for solo clarinet, to the remarkably experimental "*jeu de sons*" which opens the Second Suite, to the "neoclassicism" of the Mozart paraphrases and arrangements which form the Fourth Suite. Though nothing in the Suites rises to the intensity of articulative or sonorous or rhythmic particularity which color the late Tchaikowsky symphonies and ballets, nevertheless they sustain such a high level of musical interest throughout that it seems incredible—though characteristic—that this is their first complete recording. Antal Dorati's performance is literal but accurate; the New Philharmonia plays as well as the old.

In works like the twenty-four piano preludes (rather than in the sometimes inflationary symphonies and choral music) Rachmaninoff comes across as the traditionalist counterpart to Stravinsky somewhat in the same sense that Richard Strauss's music might be regarded as a traditional (tonal) analogue to Schoenberg's.

The brilliance of rhythm and accent in some of these preludes, carried out against a sonorous and articulational background only slightly extended from those of the late 19th century, rather than with Stravinky's kind of radical reshaping and refocusing of the whole sounding musical surface, nevertheless arrives at qualities close to the brittle potency of Stravinsky's piano music. (Listen to the prelude in E minor, Op. 32, No. 4, for something surprising and interesting from this point of view.) The complete recording of the preludes in the present Philips album is a good event, since Constance Keene sustains a high-class level of brilliance and coherence throughout.

MONTEVERDI: *Vespro della Beata Vergine* (1610). Soloists, Monteverdi-Chorus of Hamburg. Concentus Musicus, Vienna; Jürgen Jürgens, conductor. Telefunken SAWT 9501-02-A.

THE VESPERS OF 1610 was sacred music of unprecedented richness, in the direct aftermath of the spectacular sonority and continuity inventions of *Orfeo* of 1607. Specifically, the Vespers is full of vocal-instrumental *concertato* ingenuities which explore the fundamental, revolutionary discovery made by the music of Giovanni Gabrieli and Monteverdi: that—in contradistinction to the strictly one-to-one relation of presentational surface (such as melodic contours) and interior structure to which earlier music was confined—it was possible to compose a far more elastically expressive music by having several different parts with intersecting, overlapping structural functions, and creating single parts which—expressively—incorporate multiple functions in determining the configurational sense of each event. In the Vespers, this elasticity is combined with a fluency and inventiveness in the old choral style which makes this style a meaningful dimension of a varied texture-succession rather than, as in earlier music, the invariant textural language of an entire piece—and, for that matter, of all known music.

The performance on these records, which includes the Gregorian antiphons appropriate to the service, is far superior to the old Oiseau-Lyre recording of the "modernized" Leo Schrade edition, or the grimly out of tune playing of old instruments on the "authentic" Archiv recording of the *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria.* Here, original instruments are played, and original dimensions are preserved, but they are controlled with a competence approximating performances on "modern" instruments. Interpretively, the neutral straightforwardness is a better medium of access to the music than the labored "expressivity" of most Monteverdi performances.

MOZART: *Cosi fan Tutte.* Teresa Stich-Randall, Graziella Sciutti, Ira Malaniuk, Waldemar Kmentt, Walter Berry, Dezsö Ernster, other vocal soloists. Vienna State Opera Chorus, Vienna Symphony; Rudolf Moralt, conductor. Philips PHC 3-005 (stereo version "Electronically Reprocessed").

Don Giovanni. Nicolai Ghiaurov, Claire Watson, Nicolai Gedda, Christa Ludwig, Walter Berry, Mirella Freni, other vocal soloists. New Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus; Otto Klemperer, conductor. Angel (S) DL 3700.

Cosi fan Tutte manifests a degree and kind of sophistication which had never existed in music—and probably not anywhere else—before. It builds its formidable trajectory through an utterly self-created medium, a music-dramatic analogue of cool, Oscar Wilde-like, verbal and associational wittiness far beyond the bounds of its own verbal text, a medium in which every flick of an inflection becomes a dramatically elaborating event. *Cosi* is, certainly, the extreme manifestation in Mozart's work of a drama of pure music-theatrical craft, the purest construction of a distinct dramatic-experiential trajectory solely in sonic-musical terms, one whose "characters" are exclusively sonorities (expressed mostly as the sounds of distinct vocal ensembles) and rhythmic qualities (expressed primarily as patterns of unfolding in solo and ensemble passages). The refinement of this medium gives rise to such amazing ideas as the modulating of a timbral inflection—without any pitch changes—as the sole content of a substantial event (an idea which Wagner again discovered for the Prelude to *Das Rheingold).* And the adjustment of all this is so precise that, while *Cosi* responds spectacularly to a really excellent performance, its contextuality seems to function almost more effectively with no overt interpretive overlay—though an even mildly inappropriate one is instantly and irretrievably fatal. So much, at least, seems evident in the present performance, which, resurrected from an out-of-print release, proceeds considerately but without much noticeable distinction, and yet produces a sense of *Cosi's* peculiar qualities that is astonishingly superior to the far more obviously "performed" Angel recording conducted by

Karl Böhm. Individually, Teresa Stich-Randall's early singing is a fine piece of chamber music, but Walter Berry puts out a Bert Lahr kind of buffoonery which is smashingly inappropriate. Rudolf Moralt stays out of the score's way, which suffices marvellously.

Don Giovanni, of all operas, was given a virtually paradigmatic performance, under maximally adverse conditions, by the late Hans Rosbaud (released in a Vox Box), a conductor whose sense of the music-theatric rhythm of sound and sense is a paradigm for opera performance altogether. This recording by Otto Klemperer will provide no such model; it contains a performance of a very special nature, illuminating a special aspect of the work which, however unsuitable to actual theatrical performances of this or any other opera, is a remarkable experience indigenous to the recorded-musical medium. Specifically, Klemperer explores an extraordinary "Wagnerian" idea about continuity, developing an auditory analogue to the flow of chronological time against which the very different time-flows of the music-dramatic texts are counterpointed. He realizes this by maximizing *Don Giovanni*'s continuousness, taking his text from the enormously extended continuous finales of both acts: here are elided all the customary rhythmic abruptions which normally "push" the momentum of utterance, so that aria-recitative boundaries are melted, and accentual bumps are transformed into exquisitely subtle differences in time length. (Listen, if to nothing else, to Donna Elvira's cross-accented entrance in *"Ah, chi mi dice mai",* in Act I.) The perceptual result is a sense of continuity as a frictionless medium through which the music-dramatic structure unfolds with its own, totally internally generated, articulation. What accomplishes this is an extraordinary resourcefulness in orchestral and ensemble technique; instrumental and vocal attacks are breathtakingly subtle, transitions and contrasts are made precisely and in unison without a single unmodulated accentuation, and the blending and projecting of orchestral and vocal sonorities as vividly individual qualities is resourceful beyond even the scope of Rosbaud's performance. Moreover, despite local journalistic complaint, the tempos are not actually slower than is customary; the impression that they are results undoubtedly from the absolutely unpushed unreeling of forward motion. The vocalists make no individually remarkable impressions, but that is precisely appropriate to this most curious and fascinating production.

5.22.67

RECORDS: WILLIAM BYRD, ELECTRONIC MUSIC FROM ILLINOIS, NEW MUSIC FROM BRITAIN, BEETHOVEN

BYRD: Mass in Three Parts. Mass in Four Parts. Argo ZRG 5362. Mass for five voices. Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis from The Great Service. Ave Verum Corpus. Argo ZRG 5226. All with the Choir of King's College Chapel, Cambridge; David Willcocks, conductor.

WITHIN THE (from our *a posteriori* point of view) severe limitations of 15th- and 16th-century music-structural resources—particularly the minimal number of functional dimensions and the homogeneous invariance of the presentational surface—the achievement by a few composers of a strong sense of individual event-contour, and of expansive articulative range, within a multisectional work seems truly miraculous. Among composers of sacred vocal music, Guillaume Dufay, Johannes Ockeghem, Heinrich Isaac, Josquin Des Prez, Orlando di Lasso, and William Byrd evinced awesome capacities in this domain; and Byrd's special quality, evident in all the present works but especially in the five-voice mass and the motet Ave Verum Corpus, is the astonishing range of continuity- and articulation-images, all of which project sharply individual identities out of drastically simple and minimally embellished materials. Listeners unaccustomed to the earlier minuscule distinction-scale might find Byrd's simple and compact profiles and textures more immediately vivid than the subtler surfaces of other music of these times; and this accessibility might also help such a listener eventually to learn to discern the more elliptical imagery in—progressively—the musics of Josquin, Lasso, Isaac, and Ockeghem. The performance is transparent, well-tuned and coordinated, if perhaps too uniformly "sensitive" in the face of Byrd's frequently broad-stroked gestures.

ELECTRONIC MUSIC FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS. Herbert Brün: *Futility* for speaker and tape. Kenneth Gaburo: *Lemon Drops*; *For Harry*; for tape alone. Charles Hamm: *Canto* for soprano, speaker, and chamber ensemble. Lejaren Hiller: *Machine Music*, for piano, percussion, and tape. Salvatore Martirano: *Underworld*. Ensemble from the University of Illinois; Jack McKenzie and David Gilbert, conductors. Heliodor HS 25047.

A VALUABLE ALBUM for its representation of music composed at one of the most interesting American university centers of new-music activity, far too rarely available otherwise either in recordings or local live performances. This particular collection is especially engaging for the sense it projects of the real diversity of approach and result within the small population of "advanced" composers, and within a common involvement with the electronic-music medium. The Illinois compositions all evince a fundamentally theatrical impulse, compared with the more structure-displaying tendencies of Easterners, even where highly gestural-theatrical surfaces are engaged, as in the music of Elliott Carter, Stefan Wolpe, or Charles Wuorinen. Of the Illinois composers, Salvatore Martirano's work has, from the start, manifested an intense interest in the supercharged heightening of verbal sound and meaning qualities, superimposed on a basically traditional twelve-tone—specifically Bergian—foundation. The furthest previous extension of this was in his instrumental-choral *O O O O That Shakespeherian Rag*, performed in New York several years ago, and recorded on CRI. *Underworld* carries the pure theatrical-verbal-gestural enterprise much further, to the point where it essentially becomes the governing structure, no longer articulating or being articulated by the pitch-durational-timbral-textural substructures, but exploding them into elements of an autonomous theatrical-ex-

pressive unfolding. Lejaren Hiller has long been one of the conspicuous technological innovators in the development of electronic and computer-musical resources, which he has used not only in the usual way as performance media but also for different kinds of mechanical simulations of compositional processes, through which most of his recent works have been generated. Kenneth Gaburo's music has always presented a rather strenuously gestural surface, with a particular predilection for internally immobile sonority blocks at instrumental and vocal extremes, a Varèsian quality which translates with particular felicity into the tape-studio medium. Herbert Brün's work is more directly Darmstadtian, political, iconoclastic, and aggressively anti-experiential. Charles Hamm's music is the authentic expressive output of a musical polymath and cultural epicure, whose compositional interests are correspondingly, and remarkably, diverse.

NEW MUSIC FROM BRITAIN: Peter Maxwell Davies: *Leopardi Fragments*. Alexander Goehr: Two Choruses. Richard Rodney Bennett: *Calendar*. Malcolm Williamson: Symphony for Voices. Melos Ensemble; John Carewe, conductor. Angel (S) 36387.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC: Don Banks: Trio for horn, violin, and piano. Richard Rodney Bennett: Trio for flute, clarinet, and oboe. Phyllis Tate: Sonata for clarinet and cello. Iain Hamilton: *Sonata Notturna* for horn and piano. Members of the Melos Ensemble. Argo ZRG 5475.

The pieces by Davies, Goehr, and Hamilton on these records repay serious attention; among transatlantic composers they manifest an uncharacteristic insistence on the primary significance of a clear and cognitive pitch-durational relational structuring as the compositional center out of which surface qualities arise, rather than just using these components to create generalized images of gestural activity. The result in their work is a depth of musical identity notably missing from the more obviously spectacular artifacts of the contemporary European avant-garde. Davies especially emanates deep originality in the invention and integration of sonorities and continuities within such constrained contexts of coherence. Goehr's music has the kind of polish and solidity normally associated with mature masters; the Two Choruses develop intense ideas about choral sonority, exploring varied groupings of voices and discovering an amazing range of accentual possibilities within the restrictions of a purely vocal-ensemble context. Hamilton's Sonata projects a particular sound quality and successional sense for each internal episode, involving vivid ideas about time-speed changes in the course of an ongoing phraseological unit which develops further some of the most advanced ideas of Elliott Carter. The ingenuity of the exchanges and interrelations between horn and piano is pretty special, too. The Melos Ensemble may be the most accomplished English new-music chamber ensemble (their earlier recording of Schoenberg's Suite Op. 29 certainly suggested that it was) and—although in the absence of scores this is somewhat indeterminable—their playing here seems exemplary.

BEETHOVEN: Violin Concerto. Yehudi Menuhin, violin; The New Philharmonia Orchestra; Otto Klemperer, conductor. Angel (S) 36369.

THIS PERFORMANCE UNFOLDS with that almost beatless continuity which characterizes Wilhelm Furtwängler's conducting. It is, perforce, the most Furtwängler-like performance by Klemperer I've heard; the semblance appears to arise out of an idea about creating a full-orchestral articulative analogue to the solo violin's super-*legato,* to counterpoise the super-demarcation of the opening drumbeats which become a succession of fourfold, one-note reiterations through the first movement. Menuhin, too, is still possessed of unusual interpretive capacities, such that he is quite capable of a genuine conceptual collaboration in the realization of this rather special image of the concerto; the total *legato* produced throughout the unfolding of the slow movement is the transcendent devolution point of the performance.

12.4.67

RECORDS: MORE OF THE COMPLETE SCHOENBERG

SCHOENBERG: The Music of Arnold Schoenberg, Volume 5: Six Songs for soprano and orchestra, Op. 8. Irene Jordan, soprano. Columbia Symphony Orchestra. Suite for String Orchestra, 1934. Columbia Symphony Strings. Brahms Piano Quintet in G minor, orchestrated by Schoenberg. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra. *Friede auf Erden,* Op. 13. Ithaca College Concert Choir. All conducted by Robert Craft. Columbia M2L 352/M2S 752.

The Music of Arnold Schoenberg, Volume 6: Serenade, Op. 24. Columbia Chamber Ensemble. Donald Gramm, bass. Wind Quintet, Op. 26. Westwood Wind Quintet. Four Pieces for Mixed Choir, Op. 27. Three Satires, Op. 28. Gregg Smith Singers. Septet; Op. 29. Columbia Chamber Ensemble. Columbia M2L 362/M2S 762.

Wind Quintet, Op. 26. Danzi Quintet. Philips PHC 9068.

NECESSARILY, each volume of the Columbia Schoenberg series constitutes the most significant new addition to the available recorded repertory at the time of its appearance, the articulation in auditory experience of our own most central musical tradition. For Schoenberg, more than any other composer, is the source of the *present* of music in its deepest aspects, however much others may appear to be so in surface. But the fact that this series is filling such an essential need in the recorded literature makes the inconsistencies in its realization and the insecurities of its continuance matters of serious concern. The brutal "exigencies" of commercial recording require that even difficult, barely rehearsed music be taped in single recording sessions, after which bits of various "takes" are spliced together to produce "definitive" performances of monuments of the musical literature—even if, occasionally, a few notes or even passages disappear irretrievably with bits of lost tape. In this way, we have become inured even to having Stravinsky's own recorded performances of his own works emerge in a rough approximation that is a particularly vicious violation of his characteristic precision and cleanliness; and all the Schoenberg performances have been similarly rough, especially those involving orchestral ensembles. Yet in both cases, we would not otherwise have available the indispensable auditory experience of these works; and in the Schoenberg series, Robert Craft and the ensembles involved have managed to produce some remarkably reasonable representations of the music (I except the execrable Volume 4 directed by Glenn Gould). But one's despair over the manifest insufficiency of the commercial recording world to serve essential music-cultural functions is only confirmed by these gestures toward "responsibility"; and the half-heartedness with which they are undertaken is exposed rather painfully in the progressive austerity of presentation in the Schoenberg series from the copious and authoritative annotation-booklets of the first volumes to the pasted-in texts and data with no commentary at all that one finds in Volume 6. If this attrition has sinister implications for the future continuance of the series, Columbia will have used the important trust it has usurped with serious irresponsibility indeed.

One's anxieties are all the more intense because of the unique musical revelations that result from hearing this extraordinary music that one has known (if at all) only in scores. Thus for the relatively inexperienced listener I cannot imagine any more valuable encounter with Schoenberg's compositional capacities and dispositions than his remarkable orchestration of the Brahms Op. 25 Piano Quintet—more revealing perhaps because of its closeness to Brahms's own qualities and the minimalness of their extensions into original sounds and articulations than for any radicalism projected. Generally, his significant "extensions" of Brahms are in the greatly increased use of the brass and wind choir, and the use of doubling and highly colored timbral articulation for a sharper outlining and separation of simultaneous "parts" than would ever have been Brahms's practice. There is also a figurational virtuosity in the brass writing unknown in Brahms's time, or indeed in most of the music of Schoenberg's time except for scores of Richard Strauss, Stravinsky and Schoenberg himself. The presence of passages for solo and pizzicato strings meaningfully increases Brahms's articulative range as well;

and the sense of how Schoenberg's own compositional discoveries are similarly extended from immediate tradition is most evident in the last movement, where he develops remarkable rhythmic ingenuities from the instrumental characteristics alone. And the sheer gorgeousness of the sound produced by the Chicago Symphony should induce listeners to wonder about the real source of some of the peculiar noises they are accustomed to hear emerging from Schoenberg performances.

The Op. 8 songs also provide a vivid demonstration of Schoenberg's intimacy with his tradition, but in this instance more with that of Wagner than that of Brahms. The first song, *Natur,* seems in fact to stem more directly from Wagner than, say, through Mahler, in its straightforward (Brahmsian!) articulation of obliquities without Mahler's hugely complicated, constantly overlapping turns of resolution. And in *Nie ward Ich* and *Voll jener Süsser* one is almost able to witness Schoenberg's exhaustion of tonal possibility and his development into new realms, in the constant "rehearing" of the function of every pitch, creating a "restlessness" that however never loses directional or auditory clarity. Again, for the listener in search of clues to the late Schoenberg, this should be impressive evidence of his mastery of the "twelve-tone" pitch medium in tonal terms; and the sonic beauty of the instrumentation and the instrumental-vocal combinations should be irresistible. Vocally, this is perhaps the easiest Schoenberg around, and the performance (aside from a few German-dictional problems) seems adequate.

The 1934 *Suite* is a real musical curiosity: Schoenberg's attempt to respond to a suggestion by the then conductor of the New York University student orchestra, Martin Bernstein, that he write a didactic "tonal" piece for non-professional performance. The result, in its most characteristic passages, is a work revealing (and often requiring) astonishing ensemble virtuosity and ingenuity in creating a multiple-referenced tonal harmony. Here, Schoenberg's "neo-classicism" extends horizontally into the furthest reaches of extended tonal relation, where Stravinsky's, for example, contracts, crystallizing all pitches into the most constricted range of reference. And another aspect of Schoenberg's compositional language that can be more readily perceived in the relative simplicity and familiarity of the *Suite's* surface for transference to the more problematic music, is his use of simple "characteristic" melodic and rhythmic contours as means through which to articulate widely and complexly varying and interrelating developments. In all, the *Suite* is a strange, and rather unevenly realized, Schoenbergian view of tonal classicism that should reveal, almost as a musical-biographical insight, the fascinating internal worlds composers create as modes of *hearing* traditional music, and how this is, really, the most fundamental process of compositional "originality" and "creativity".

To complete this "traditionalist" aspect of Volume 5, even *Friede auf Erden* is Brahmsian in the choral writing, with its counterpoint of variable pitch-band lines in which pairs of voices moving in parallel (at intervals of thirds and sixths in Schoenberg as in Brahms) are the most characteristic "single-line" elements. The disappearance of "modernity" from the sounds of *Friede auf Erden* through its competent performance here is particularly welcome because of the real individuality that remains.

The principal value of Volume 6 is its gathering of the works from the crucial period that encompasses the just pre- and just post-twelve-tone music. It should have the inestimable virtue for the listener of revealing the primacy and unity of the compositional intelligence in creating particular coherences and sonorous profiles, whatever the syntactical "as if"; I suggest as an exercise listening through this album and attempting to distinguish the twelve-tone from the non-twelve-tone works; the difficulty experienced will not either invalidate or demonstrate the coherence properties of the system, but should indicate that it developed in Schoenberg's work as a resource for maximizing the extension and relational complexity of his fundamental compositional ideas, within and among compositions, rather than as a way of "getting" certain kinds of surface "effects" or events.

Otherwise, the instrumental works have been previously available in relatively adequate recordings, and although the Serenade and Septet are notable for their cleanliness of detail in the small, all the performances suffer from a rather flat-out accentual approach, a certain lack of ensemble integration and a somewhat undistinguished ensemble sonority. Together, these flaws prevent the projection of a sense of overall sound and shape that is particularly essential as a guide to the sense of music that will still be unfamiliar to most of its listeners. The Danzi Quintet recording of the Wind Quintet is perhaps a good alternative in just this respect,

although it tends to smooth and blend some of the work's special extremities of linear and timbral separation. The interesting but relatively less significant choral works of Op. 27 and 28 are, however, made uniquely and valuably available in Columbia's Volume 6.

1.29.68

RECORDS: DVORAK

DVORAK: Symphonies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 with overtures: *Hussite, Amid Nature, My Home, Carnival, Othello*. London Symphony Orchestra: Istvan Kertesz, cond. London CS 6523, CS 6524, CS 6525, CS 6526, CS 6511, CS 6495, CS 6527.

THIS COLLECTION is of far more than historical or repertorially novel interest and value. The abundant compositional intelligence and imagination revealed from the very first of Dvorak's symphonies, and their progressive development toward individuality and mastery in terms of essentially traditional resources, exude a true musical professionalism that projects a remarkable kind of musical experience, a kind that is also a special dimension in the work of Tchaikowsky, Ravel, Debussy and even Stravinsky. And at a time when amateurism and vacuity are being intensively cultivated in the consumer culture of contemporary art, the purity with which music like Dvorak's generates the sense that musical "content" arises uniquely from the shaping of individual musical events into significant musical relations has particular instructive force.

Thus one finds in Dvorak's very first symphony a strong association with Beethoven via Mendelssohn, through which nevertheless is revealed some surprisingly original ideas and a remarkable awareness of the critical compositional dimensions. In fact, surface "radicalism" is perhaps more evident in that symphony than in any of the later works, from the special ensemble continuities of the second movement (particularly the way sounds of quite different sonorous appearance emerge from within one another), the rather far-reaching contrasts articulated out of continuous unfolding in the third movement, and the strikingly dissonant abrasions of cross-reference, of an almost *Verklaerte Nacht*-like quality, near the very end. And despite evident trouble in controlling transitions and in producing development without overrepetition and overelaboration, the Second Symphony is even more impressive for its handling of a highly "advanced" vocabulary with consummate security and for its boldness in creating continuity. Here, the second movement is particularly interesting for the originality of the sonorities that emerge in the course of elaboration, most notably the writing for solo piccolo and the transparent wind-ensemble passages.

The Third and Fourth Symphonies demonstrate a new awareness of the expanded possibilities for cogency and internal complexity within an externally more limited framework; and the Fifth and Sixth arrive at a mature realization of the possibilities of tonal structure on a total, intermovemental scale, along with a virtuosity in the invention and intercombination of sonority and texture that approach Dvorak's probably most completely realized work, the Eighth Symphony.

Throughout, the London Symphony's execution is exemplary, often quite brilliant; and Kertesz's preparation and understanding seem consistently competent. For the Ninth Symphony, Klemperer's performance is rather more special in its sonorous and connective aspects; and here, too, Kertesz's tempo relations are not as precise as elsewhere.

Of the overtures, the *Othello* is a much more deeply developed work than the others, but their multiple inclusion is a worthwhile adjunct to an altogether superior addition to the recorded 19th-century literature.

2.26.68

JOURNALISM

MUSIC JOURNALISM survives through the continuous propagation of compositional "movements", endlessly contending in mutual exclusion and hostility for some ultimate "supremacy", the achievement of which creates, for a brief Hegelian moment, a new Establishment that is, in its turn, opposed and overthrown. In this our journalists are the victims of their own dedication to hyperbole and generality; for they are frequently left unable to describe a musical work except as a type, a pawn in an ideological conflict whose "outcome" is the only evident substantive issue. And when works are so regarded, they are described only in terms of their most immediate "typical" characteristics, whose significance seems to lie only in their contrast with some other, contending "school". Perhaps this tendency results also from the considerably greater ease of describing a composition in terms of what it is not than in terms of what it is as a unique realization of particular musical ideas.

But those aware of musical development at the level of the musical work itself are unable to acknowledge the meaningfulness or grant the possible implications in such a "political" view of their field. It seems, in particular, a confusion of the significance of a composition within the musical literature with its relation to the personal career of its composer. For it is otherwise impossible to imagine what it would mean for a work, as a work, to "oppose" some other work, to "replace" some previously composed music, to "rebel" against something in another body of music, or to "deny" the validity of some previously formulated concept of musical coherence. Of course, composers may—verbally—do those things, but all a composition can do is assert some musical data which taken together produce some particular relations of "events" and, ultimately, a particular musical entity. That the existence of some work in the literature invalidates some previous work in the literature is absurd on the face of it; what effect could a new composition have at all on something already composed? It could be supposed that the historical function of a new composition might be to extend, diversify and enrich the scope of the existing musical literature—which then "changes" only in its deepening of perspective and experience; but this sort of idea seems to have vastly less appeal to a music journalist than does the image of a perennially one-dimensional world of gladiatorial triumphs and humiliations, such as they interminably create in their discourse.

The problems this poses for the non-musician seriously interested in becoming musically informed and enlightened are particularly vicious, since the nature of the information conveyed to him by his local newspaper and national magazine—usually his only sources of musical awareness—not only tends to omit all the salient aspects of the matter but tends actually to construct contexts for musical perception that are in effect permanent barriers to the infiltration of significant concepts.

To begin with, an immediate consequence of the journalistic failure to distinguish beyond the dichotomies of typicality and novelty is the bifurcation of almost all serious composition (which rarely manifests its uniqueness blatantly) into either supine "imitation" of one of the current roster of going "schools" (which come in every shade of *garde*) or mere incomprehensibility. In this context, originality emerges as a pure matter of presentation: a "new sound", an unprecedented mixture of musical contexts, familiar and/or unfamiliar, a program-note style, an unusual disposition of performers vis-à-vis one another or the audience, or some announced far-out means by which otherwise nondistinctive musical events have been selected by either composer or performers. Fundamentally, this situation seems to arise because journalists have not become versed in the musical language and concepts of their time, so that their actual discriminative abilities may largely depend on such extra-contextual clues. But in any case, the curious result is that music that has some verbally describable distinctiveness, or a "characteristic" idea of presentation that can be immediately perceived on a single hearing even without benefit of a score, becomes the immediate compositional foreground of the journalist's world, even where the musical differences observable among such pieces are negligible. And—by the same token—the image projected of the relative signifi-

cance and influence of contemporary composers is often ludicrously at variance with the perceptions of that issue which are universal among practitioners.

It is precisely here, too, that the unsuspecting reader is most seriously victimized, most inexorably deprived of any hope of developing a reasonable awareness of his own. For the journalist's judgments and opinions, however in conflict with professional consensus, are customarily presented as facts in themselves; and since the grounds for their formulation—or even the notion that there are, can, or ought to be grounds—are never presented, the reader-listener can never grow beyond simple dependence on his expert's next set of opinions. Moreover, the journalists seem not to regard it as in any way part of their responsibility to offer their views in the perspective of current professional opinion, or indeed to provide any informational link between their readers and the music profession. Whether or not they would, in their present state of musical literacy, be able to provide such a link is a moot point; but the simple solicitation of guidance from the large pool of proximate composing and performing professionals (particularly in such a city as New York) would at least obviate the factual *gaffes* that have become the most noteworthy characteristics, for musicians, of journalistic music criticism.

But an intense belief in the virtues of amateurism has always characterized, in particular, the music policies of *The New York Times* (the *Tribune,* on the other hand, from the days of Gilman, Thomson and Berger, to those of Rich and Salzman, was exceptional in its tradition of employing literate practitioners as critics). The recent results, in simple categorical and factual errors of musical description appearing regularly in the *Times,* have been mind-expanding. As a particular example, the applications of the words "total organization" and "serialism" (especially "post-Webern serialism") have consistently lacked any connection with whatever minimal reality musicians can ascribe to such general concepts. Thus we have been told that Elliott Carter's recent piano concerto was a typically twelve-tone work in the Schoenberg line (it is actually "serial" in a special sense, but not in the least "twelve-tone"), that Peter Westergaard's *Mr. and Mrs. Discobbollos* was typical post-Webern serialism (even though its surface most resembles diatonic Stravinsky), that both Richard Rodney Bennett's new Symphony No. 2 (commissioned and played by the Philharmonic) and his opera *The Mines of Sulphur* were equally typical of the same "school" (even though the Symphony was most notable for its movie-music "Amerikanisch" surface, with big "twelve-tone tunes" much more characteristic of, say, Wallingford Riegger than of Webern, while the opera was obviously in some mode of Berg via Britten, with the *Wozzeck* and *Turn of the Screw* associations almost uncomfortably literal). Going even further in the direction of fact creation, Harold Schonberg declared in a recent Sunday column that "Nobody really cares much for totally organized serial music," which must stand more as an exertion of Schonberg's definition of somebodiness than as a cognitive observation about the world, since it defines as "not somebodies" a rather large group of manifestly living and even compositionally reputable musicians.

Even more curious is the use here of the phrase "total organization" as though it were some absolute specialty of recent music; in fact, composed Classical music has, at least since the seventeenth century, always been "totally organized" in that every pitch, dynamic, timbre and contour has had an intentionally meaningful function; recent music has basically multiplied the independence and dimensionality of such function. In Mr. Schonberg's terms, one would have to assume that dynamics and instrumentation in, say, Mozart are less than minutely organized, that they are perhaps whimsically improvised; or it might even be inferred that coherence and rationality are musical evils. And finally, in a review by one of Schonberg's colleagues, it was said that a "post-Webern serial" work (Henry Weinberg's Second String Quartet, as post-Schoenbergian and Carterian as music can get) was composed in a way that was frequent "half a dozen years ago". Here, the pure misrepresentation of musical fact (made evident by the most casual observation of contemporary compositional output) pales before the extraordinary implication of the antiquity of "style" involved: imagine Beethoven being criticized for writing the Ninth Symphony in the old tonal system that not only he had used six years earlier, in the Seventh, but that was essentially the same as that used by Bach as much as a hundred years earlier.

Yet it would have been almost trivially simple for these writers to have learned from the professional literature that the concept of "serialism" in no way predisposes music to any particular surface characteristic that can be perceived on first, or any casual, hearing; and that in its most fundamental (and relevant) sense it

is as meaningfully applicable to Stravinsky's *Petroushka* as to his *Requiem,* to Scriabin and even Debussy as to Babbitt. But again, the professional literature offers no insights to these critics; characteristically, they read it *ad hominem,* as manifestations of attitude rather than as sources of cognitive insight and information. And the actual views of composers themselves are similarly represented only as trivial, contentious (and equivalently "valid") oppositions: Babbitt is never mentioned or quoted without being balanced by Cage, as the two sides of a slightly ridiculous conflict, and there is no concept of what either of them represents in himself except as the *contrafactum* of the other.

Under these conditions, it was perhaps inescapable that the journalists, having created a musical world-image to suit themselves, would begin to place themselves in it as protagonists, to take it upon themselves to legislate its future under the guise of reporting its development. The subtlest turn has come about in connection with some of the examples quoted above: first, the removal of cognitive content from "serialism" establishes it as an epithet; then, in an extraordinary metamorphosis of critical function, its demise as a compositional resource is predicted (particularly extraordinary for a predictor who never knew what it was in the first place); then, it is applied indiscriminately as a pejorative to anything disapproved of; and finally, its end is proclaimed in a burst of counterfactual triumph ("the way a lot of music was composed half a dozen years ago." . . . "Nobody really cares much for [it]").

But the most brazen manifestation of the attempt at musical thought control, even from a purely journalistic point of view, has been the record of the *Times's* music department with regard to the coverage of new-music performance events in New York. For since the death of the *Tribune* (which was notably conscientious in this regard), musical events in New York have been defined, publicly, by what is reported in the *Times.* And in the absence of the possibly embarrassing corrective of the *Tribune,* the attrition has been astonishing. During a recent week, for example, while several minor recitals and the revival of an insignificant Verdi opera were covered, the third New York performance ever—and perhaps the best—of Elliott Carter's Double Concerto, a work not only of major significance but of notably wide global interest as among recent American music (given at Juilliard by the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble), was simply unmentioned. And during the current season, there have been no notices of such major new-music series as the Columbia Group for Contemporary Music, the Composers' Showcase, or the venerable Composers' Forum. That the events omitted seem so often to contain works that would be labeled "serial" or "avant-garde" by the *Times* staff makes it seem almost as though what was predicted by Mr. Schonberg—non-interest in serialism—is being made to appear to come true in the form of the disappearance of news of such activity from the paper.

Whatever the *Times's* purpose, its principal victims are its misinformed and uninformed readers; compositional activity, unlike conventional concert activity, has never derived either much benefit or sustained much damage from newspaper discourse. And the few music-informational functions still served by the *Times* are being replaced by several independent publications sponsored by the musical community itself, notably the Newsletter of the American Society of University Composers and the Contemporary Music Newsletter being published by three metropolitan university music departments (Columbia, N.Y.U., Princeton). What remains to be provided is the awareness of what constitutes true musical news: new compositions and new performances embodying unique and original imaginative ideas. Any further concerns over the camps in which they arise I leave to my speculative-philosophical newspaper colleagues; my next column will be devoted strictly to news.

4.15.68

MUSIC AS THEATER

THERE WAS a function of popular public entertainment which even the most artistically serious music used, perhaps incidentally to its principal purposes, to fulfill; but progressively over the last fifty years or so, that function has been effectively eliminated by the increasingly forbidding complexities of the "new music"—and by the correspondingly "inside" preoccupations of its composers. Contemporary music which has addressed the issue of popular entertainment has done so largely by re-evoking and re-traversing the qualities, styles, and forms of the familiar masterpieces of the traditional concert literature. The uses of musical "modernity" as entertainment seem to have been limited to a few adventurous Hollywood soundtracks, usually of films involving severe psychiatric or sociopathic issues, or episodes of involuntary commerce with intergalactic aliens. But now a number of composers have emerged who seem to be aware of current "advanced" music, and who seem to be interested in investigating its potential for generating striking musical and theatrical effects, without feeling any obligation to the "unpopular" activity of exploring the deeper compositional issues implied by such "effects". These composers—quite cogently given their purposes—juxtapose uninhibitedly all "kinds" of events, associations, or projective media, evincing less concern with what makes a given succession of phenomena "a piece", than with the simple enjoyment of obvious variety, and of qualities which can be immediately perceived as "characteristic" or "different", apart from the simpler stimuli of outrageousness or incongruity. That this kind of work should eventually become the public's "modern music" seems wholly imaginable: first-performance availability, "romantic" theatrical posture, perpetual variety of media and texture, and the absence of overt conceptual and perceptual complexity are properties eminently conducive to popular favor.

Nor are the "entertainments" which result by any means necessarily unsophisticated or overtly "anti-intellectual" on their surfaces; these often evoke sympathetic associations with all kinds of "advanced" and "serious" literary or pre-existent musical contexts. Luciano Berio, for example, has composed with texts by e.e. cummings and James Joyce, and comparably elevated literature has been invoked elsewhere, with referential impact at least equivalent to the textual substance. Similarly, the vocabulary of musical materials is a rich array of referentially unmistakable "sounds" drawn from the whole range of contemporary musical phenomena, from literal "pop" and "rock" to avant-garde jazz and even the emanations of "difficult" music. (I haven't been going into enumerations and descriptions of relevant artifacts here—yet—because my preoccupation is, initially, with some general thoughts which do not necessarily implicate any particular pieces or activities in any specific way.)

The point of interest about such musical and literary materials is that they appear to be present for recognition in general rather than to function in some specific way germane to the development in detail of some meaningful "point" being made. In our entertainments, the "point" of a quality seems to be its identity, not its content, so that nothing problematic or not immediately processible gets generated out of it. And in consequence, no special effort of discernment is required beyond noticing the fact of presence; this recognition (akin to the effect of "classical" references in the music of Benjamin Britten and other tradition-oriented populists) confers a flattering sense of cultural sophistication on its listener—a key objective of the "entertainment" principle.

Of course, no really new musical contexts can be created this way, since it is precisely the familiarity of the presented materials which is crucial to their utility in this medium. The distinction between a musical image where the *identity* of the reference is the whole point, and one where the reference is an integrated aspect of the compositional surface which articulates some special structural characteristic, is evidenced in a comparison of, say, Charles Ives's literal quotations of marching-band music laid on aggressively out of context with the surrounding music, with the totally unliteral, ambiguously internal/external marching-band sound in Alban Berg's *Wozzeck,* or the skewed internality of the "classical" references in any number of Stravinsky pieces, or the obscurely jazz-emanating serial surfaces of Milton Babbitt's *All Set.*

Still, the presence of such identifiable surface characteristics in all these musics undoubtedly explains how they have been more usable as entertainment than have other works by the same composers in which these sorts of features do not appear. And thus the quick and happy acceptance of the New Entertainment as the contemporary "thing" by journalists and—more curiously—by those "conservative" composers whose previous music had nostalgically identified itself with the magical greatness of old masterpieces, is not only comprehensible, but probably socially healthy too, if it gratifies a legitimate public desire which has been frustrated by the public-resistant new music of the last two generations.

From my point of view, the potential benefits of this development in the social liberation of strenuous new-music composition are even more hopeful. For the esoteric researches of frontier composers into the deepest issues of musical structure and expression have encountered some extremely difficult socio-cultural going because of the schizoid-making demand that they also fulfill the popular function so desperately desired even by some of their enthusiasts—and even by some of the composers themselves. If the music of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms, and Wagner could fill these two roles simultaneously because the surfaces they generated in the conjoining of functional events could have all kinds of popularly interesting properties attributed to them, this—by no apparent design or change of composers' attitudes—no longer seemed to true of music since, say, Schoenberg and Webern. Therefore, if the current subdivision of high-art composition into the interested public's music, on one branch, and the committed practitioner's music on the other, relieves the public's musical frustration, it might also reduce public resentment at the refusal of the "other" composers to produce a consumable musical commodity. And a composer of that sort should be relieved of any guilt he may have felt for failing to compose in a public-spirited way. And furthermore, by acknowledging frankly his enterprise as an earnest researcher into the possibilities of musical thought, as a seeker after intellectual discovery in company with workers in other creative disciplines, he might now direct his appeals for moral support more realistically to fellow-thinkers, in his own and related practices, and—for material support—to the kind of public agency committed to the support of intellectual activity for its intellectual value independent of its immediate, or even ultimate, public "application".

I find positive evidence in support of this position in the fact that the extraordinary success achieved by university-based new-music performing groups (notably the Group For Contemporary Music at Columbia) in generating and sustaining their own, numerically substantial, constituencies for "difficult" contemporary music has proved to be largely not transferable to the provinces of "regular" music activity. Those who have attempted such a transfer have, it would appear, mistaken the conditions which the success in question has signalled. One effect of this misapprehension has been the inordinate proliferation of new-music performance activity which, although it has produced a few excellent performances of new and "classic" 20th-century works (notably by the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble directed by Arthur Weisberg, based at Rutgers University), has also exposed the greatly limited availability of qualified performers and responsive listeners outside of the small, involved new-music community itself; and the depressing resultant events have threatened to fragment, discredit, and demoralize a vigorous, self-sustaining activity. In contrast, the attempt to—yet again—revive the old International Society for Contemporary Music (this time largely through the initiative of the composer Henry Weinberg), which has traditionally been the composers' own new-music performance and listening forum, seems obviously to have generated a high level of morale and interest within the terms of its undertaking.

But the depth of the pervasive confusion between entertainment-oriented and practice-oriented musical activity is vividly experienceable in the output of a new performance series, "The New Image of Sound", given at Hunter College under the significant directorship of Eric Salzman. Salzman's series has made the most sustained, strenuous, and sophisticated effort I know of to expand the audience for "difficult" music by presenting it in conjunction with New-Entertainment artifacts, as multiple facets of a huge, joyous expressive diversity. The main effect, as I perceive it, has been that each whole "difficult" composition has assumed the generalized type-identity role in the context of an entertainment-oriented concert program that "advanced"-sounding fragments have in the context of a single "entertainment"-oriented piece. Something like a musical Gresham's Law seems to be operating, whereby the qualities of

all the works presented are reduced to the terms of the least problematic and demanding.

The difficulty I perceive here is therefore not just a simple one of public approval but rather a fundamental falsification of the basis on which such approval is being solicited. For the diversity of current serious-compositional approaches, of which I have written here often and gratefully, must not be taken to signify a parallel identification of "serious" with "popular"—as it evidently has been understood, in the most generous of spirits, by the Hunter series. Milton Babbitt suggests that a criterion which distinguishes "serious" from "popular" music is their relative degree of "determinacy"; that is, the degree to which the precise characteristics of every detail of a musical text is essential to its very identity as a musical text. "Popular" music, under this reading, retains its salient identity even through the widest variation in the largest number of aspects. Perhaps this may seem circular, as merely restating what the speaker meant by "serious" in the first place; but whatever one calls it, the distinction of musical ***kinds*** not cotenable in a single frame of perceptual or conceptual reference seems to me undeniable.

Thus the earnest, imaginative efforts made in "The New Image of Sound" and elsewhere to bridge this gap by surrounding hard things with fun things, with the idea of giving each the benefit of the other, gives the hard things about the same chance for relevant reception as would a late Beethoven quartet performed as half-time entertainment at the Super Bowl. Even Stravinsky was not quite equal to his encounters with the Ringling Brothers and Billy Rose; and whether composers serve themselves or are served well by the introjection of their work into these exhibitive mixtures is a question which they, their sincere supporters, and the serious-musical world need to consider carefully.

In discussing "The New Image of Sound" as an exemplar of a difficult problem, I don't at all wish to overlook its really interesting individual accomplishments. So, although I am not altogether clear on what kind of performance acuity creates it, some uniquely effective kinds of theatricality were generated by Eric Salzman's *Verses and Cantos* (composed of a montage of diverse musical—instrumental and vocal—verbal, and visual texts into a kind of perceptual *quodlibet* in a correspondingly expansive time frame); and by Luciano Berio's *Laborintus II* (a compendium of emotive theatrical gestures in the abstract, where the absence of any referential context, musical or dramatic, underlines the mechanics of sheer "effect" in a hilarious, but also revealing, way). And the performers—notably the soprano Barbara Smith Conrad and the ensemble of Juilliard students—seemed potent additions to local new-music performing resources.

Milton Babbitt's subtle, complex, intricate—difficult but also "theatrical"—*Philomel* was scheduled but had to be postponed. So the full impact of the mixed-category strategy was first tested by the second concert, which alternated performances by the Composers' String Quartet, a pioneer ensemble in the contemporary redefinition of performing musicianship and virtuosity, and the Contemporary Chamber Players of the University of Illinois, a grass-roots ensemble of great vitality and quality. The great idea of this event was to open with the most refractory music of the evening: Henry Weinberg's String Quartet. This quartet is virtually a model of the kind of work whose potent qualities as music and thought are available only to the most attentive close study and audition. In fact, it is music of a kind most difficult to talk about (let alone epitheticalize in a journalistic way), beyond describing it grossly as the exemplar of some particular compositional approach; the particulars of its individual development within that approach, however inherently original, manifest themselves in largely internal ways, and verbal description may merely recapitulate the more or less common traits of the whole compositional species. Weinberg's Quartet, beneath a surface deceptively simple but lucent and subtly varied in sonority and articulation throughout its considerable length, presents some strenuous provocative and original ideas of significant interest, most especially in the relating of events carrying variant senses of "equivalence" (correspondence by virtue of a line of some particular articulative variable), which it does by a network of variant time-span unfoldings identified with the variant "equivalences". One might say that the time-span and its particularized subdivisions become articulate, foreground elements of the musical discourse. This (and Weinberg's more recent *Cantus Commemorabilis)* is substantial and mature musical thinking.

Another quartet on the concert, Ben Johnston's Second (Microtonal) String Quartet, was also a serious attempt to construct an indigenous sense of continuity and development, one of whose principal means of discrimination is

pitch variation by intervals smaller than the minimum unit which is conventional in Western music. The quartet achieves a remarkable sense of continuousness in its unfolding, and an intense cohesion of ensemble; but the tendency of a Western-conditioned hearing to reintegrate pitch sounds to the tempered scale—except where microtonally distinct pitches are either directly adjacent or actually superimposed—in a performance medium and musical idiom which otherwise emanates powerfully traditional associative characteristics—creates a formidable block to the lucid perception of the music's content on the kind of minimal acquaintance a single concert performance affords.

But the piece that most directly suffered from the companionship of entertainment music was *Antiphony IV* by Kenneth Gaburo—because its sonorous and aesthetic context was so immediately assimilable to entertainment theater that its quite serious effort to create a "compositional theater" could easily go undiscerned. Its means were a media mix of instruments, taped voice, and pure electronics, out of which it seemed to make a genuine attempt to generate complex ensemble music by creating a polyphonic interaction of synthesized and "performed" (instrumental, recorded-vocal) characters, all projected electronically (by miking, in the case of the "live" elements). The performance struggled successfully with devastating electronic-technical problems: dense, volatile concentrations of intriguingly original details constantly materialized out of the surface of *Antiphony IV;* there is substantial music here, which one is impelled to explore more deeply.

The dubious companionship referred to above was provided by Salvatore Martirano's *Ballad,* whose distorted pop-song surface put together a rather one-dimensional, though always clever and hilariously diverting, "post-Webern" mosaic of pop-tune qualities—in the tradition, maybe, of *L'Histoire du Soldat*—but concentrated too literally, squarely, broadly, and directly on gags and caricature vocal effects to arrive at any compositional identity at the level of Martirano's previous music. What was missing was the toughness of mind and imagination that were so spectacular about his *O O O O That Shakespeherian Rag,* particularly the tight steering of event-succession that make the constant verbal gagging of that piece into an integral compositional resource.

Whereas the broad-scaled comedy of *Ballad* tended to obliterate the subtleties of other pieces, the all-the-way-out, go-for-broke, hugely sustained and perfectly executed musical nonsense vaudeville that ended the concert—Lejaren Hiller's Suite for 2 pianos and tape—simply and terminally trivialized everything else with its irreverent demonstration of consummate skill in the manipulation of musical and electronic materials for uninhibited popular amusement.

6.17.68

GRASS ROOTS UNDER SIEGE

FOR THE PAST FIVE or so years I've taken note in this column of the development in New York of an energetic activity of exemplary performances of contemporary music emerging from an unprecedented collaboration between serious composers and performers, a development which at times has seemed to prefigure a significantly new, viable, possible way of musical life. Now it appears that this activity is under threat of imminent disintegration, largely because its own vitality within a highly concentrated context—a community of interested musicians, students, artistic and nonartistic intellectuals—had an immediate and striking impact on a far wider musical circle and thus suggested, to some people with quite different musical commitments, the possibility of emulation and transference onto a far larger numerical and financial stage. Some strong efforts have recently been made whose effect has been to weaken the internal evolution of new-music activity as a significant musical force by diverting its energies toward popularization, in one direction, and, in another direction, toward diffusion—in terms of the indiscriminate proliferation of activity and a consequent dilution of resources.

I discussed the characteristics and difficulties I have with what I called the "populist" public-musical strategy in my previous column, with specific reference to the new Hunter College series, The New Image of Sound. But the history of the tendency to proliferate dates most significantly to the moment, about three years ago, when the interest of the Rockefeller Foundation was attracted on precisely such grounds. For, peculiarly, their conception of the means by which to broaden and deepen the base of support and the range of dissemination of new-music output did not include the strengthening of groups which had already demonstrated strong internal motivation, support, and continuity independent of any outside intervention, and at the cost of great personal dedication. Rather, such groups (specifically, the Group for Contemporary Music at Columbia and the Twentieth Century Innovations group directed by Gunther Schuller) were largely bypassed in favor of a policy of establishing new groups in places where no previous activity of this kind had developed indigenously, under the direction of people who were, for the most part, "career" performers not notably involved before with contemporary issues (with the conspicuous exception of Ralph Shapey at the University of Chicago).

As I noted in a *Nation* column at the time, not only did the influx of huge amounts of endowment money pose a drastic survival problem for the original, unsubsidized groups in terms of competition for players from the extremely restricted pool of qualified people (which had been created by their efforts to begin with), it also inflated the "normal" financial scale of such enterprises to a level which could never be maintained independently should foundation support be withdrawn. All this seemed calculated to fatten, rather than strengthen, the activity of new-music performance, to diffuse to an alarming thinness the components of a bright new interaction whose intensity seemed at least partly to derive from the very pressure of the hermetically concentrated conditions under which it had formed.

Some of those fears were almost immediately realized: the Twentieth Century Innovations series, which had established Carnegie Recital Hall as a focal location for access to new music, with the support of the Carnegie Hall Corporation, now found itself competing with three Rockefeller-subsidized groups (from Buffalo, Chicago, and Rutgers) who were able to book their own series into the hall and, of course, to pay their own expenses. Carnegie Hall naturally lost interest in Schuller's expensive series, private support became unavailable, and—since no Rockefeller help was forthcoming either—the series, with its highly individual musical profile and pioneering enthusiasm, simply disappeared. The Columbia group was spared a similar termination by the availability of strong university support, and, ultimately, by a small "emergency" Rockefeller grant to help meet the huge pay-scale increases resulting from the unlimited-money competition of the neighboring Rockefeller group at Rutgers. On a slightly more subtle level, one can observe the increasing frustration lately involved in the attempt to develop adequately prepared programs, given the multiple demands on the schedules, loyalties, and en-

thusiasm of the almost fully overlapping populations of the New York-area groups. The result is, naturally, that the greatest amount of player-time is available to the highest bidder willing to settle for the least preparation. And any attempt by the Columbia group to expand its program into larger-ensemble domains, or simply enlarge its activity, has been defeated as much by this simple attrition of player availability as by purely financial restrictions.

Assessing the impact of the Rockefeller programs over their first three years, one ought also to consider the degree to which some of their stated aims have been realized. At the beginning there was much talk of "encouraging the development of other sources of support" for new music; in fact, the only change in that area appears to have been negative. Schuller's experience is a case in point, as is the collapse of Max Pollikoff's Music In Our Time, and as is the very peculiar recent behavior of the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund, which was once among the most active institutional new-music patrons, but now appears to have largely withdrawn from such support after having sponsored a single (and, in fact, rather exceptional) concert in Charles Schwartz's Composers' Showcase series at Cooper Union last fall. Otherwise there have mostly been such traditionally reliable sources as the Fromm Foundation (which sponsored the all-Stefan Wolpe concert given by the—already Rockefeller-supported—Chicago group this year), the Koussevitzky Foundation (which is backing a new-music series at Lincoln Center this summer), the venerable Ditson Fund at Columbia (which has enabled the Group to survive, and initiated small spearhead projects in publication and recording whose eventual effect may overshadow that of all the elephantine big-money ventures), and the cluster of small foundations which has enabled such enterprises as the brave little series at the Greenwich House Music School (directed by the composers Joan Tower and Raoul Pleskow) to introduce new music by young or otherwise neglected composers. But there is no evidence that any known sources of support—these or others—were "encouraged" by the Rockefeller example.

Another stated purpose of the Rockefeller program was to cultivate public access to long-time distinguished performers of contemporary music previously underexposed, and to develop new groups of accomplished younger players. But—for whatever it does signify—the most noticeably active players, whatever their present affiliations, all seem to have come out of either the original Columbia or Schuller groups. Thus, among group-affiliated pianists, both Robert Miller (who, along with Robert Helps, is probably the most valuable ensemble and chamber-music pianist now active), and Charles Wuorinen (who, along with Easley Blackwood at Chicago, has developed what is virtually a new set of modes of pianistic articulation), are members of the Columbia group (Wuorinen as co-founder and co-director). Harvey Sollberger, the other Columbia co-director, is still the incomparable flutist of our time. Among violinists, Paul Zukofsky (also a true solo virtuoso in all the rarest musical senses), who is now part of the Rutgers group, was virtually discovered by Schuller and the Columbia group in his musical infancy; and the clarinetist Arthur Bloom, the percussionists Raymond Des Roches and Richard Fitz, the violist Jacob Glick, the bassoonist Donald MacCourt, all now with Rutgers, are all members of the original New York configuration. And the still unsubsidized Composers' String Quartet, overwhelmingly superior in their sphere, is perhaps the most interesting surviving outgrowth of the Schuller group. And the most interesting newly emergent players seem still to be associated with Columbia even despite the extreme financial disadvantage of that affiliation: the flutist Sophie Sollberger (who gave a memorable recital with Robert Miller at Carnegie Recital Hall), the violinist Jeanne Benjamin, the cellist Fred Sherry, the brass players Ronald Anderson and James Biddlecome, the bass players Kenneth Fricker and Jesse Miller have contributed impressively in recent performances. (On the other side, the ferociously dexterous young Japanese pianist Yuji Takahashi has been given his American outlet by the Buffalo group.)

In individual concert programs, the Rockefeller project has resulted in some valuable occasions (although it must be mentioned that the explicit intention was to de-emphasize the exclusive production of concerts except as the outgrowth of whole-scale creative-performative *activities).* In this respect, the exceptional performance of the Chicago group was discussed in my last column; and as for the Buffalo players, their programming has seemed so whimsically marginal that despite some unquestionably worthwhile single events, their New York concerts haven't left much of a distinct artistic impression. But the Rutgers group, under Arthur Weisberg, has consistently been offering con-

certs which substantially enlarge the scope of available new-music experience, often in performances of spectacular ensemble quality. Specifically, the Rutgers concerts have included music for large ensembles (almost never feasible for new-music groups) such as Stravinsky's Concerto for Piano and Winds, Elliott Carter's Double Concerto, Ralph Shapey's Chamber Symphony, and Milton Babbitt's *All Set,* as well as significant works by composers not often represented on New York concerts, as, Seymour Shifrin, Jacob Druckman, Robert Moevs, and Donald Martino.

But it is precisely in the case of the Rutgers group, where the accomplishment has been so considerable, and the intrinsic interest of the programming so high, that the real defects of the premises upon which the Rockefeller program is founded become evident. In establishing an activity of this nature where no previous impetus toward it had been internally generated, the foundation expected to provide the missing impetus, to stimulate involvement by students, and in the academic and civil communities, conceiving this as its main purpose, and thus justifying its neglect of places "where such things go on anyway". Yet every concert so far witnessed at Rutgers given by its own group (each was later repeated in New York) was pitiably unwitnessed by even the local supposedly "musical" population. Obviously, the essential "support" required for such projects can really only arise from the kind of crucial creative necessity which has engendered such phenomena in the first place. And now, finally, at the critical point when the original Rockefeller grant has run out, and the several universities involved are supposed to assert their own commitment, both Rutgers and Buffalo apparently intend to discontinue their programs summarily—even in spite of the foundation's willingness to continue support on a reduced scale.

This, then, is the moment of extreme danger for the entire new-music performance complex which seemed so baleful three years ago; for should the Rockefeller Foundation now decide that its failures at Buffalo and Rutgers demonstrate the unsoundness of the entire university-based approach to the propagation of new music, and thus amount to a reason to abandon that approach, that decision would be entirely self-fulfilling in the wholesale destruction of that activity which would probably ensue. If on the other hand the foundation would recognize that those of its ensembles which have been successful—the ones at Iowa and Chicago for instance—were established under precisely the conditions of indigenous need and relevance which motivated the formations of the original New York groups, then perhaps it might also recognize its own culpability in contributing to the serious fragmentation of New York musical activity, and the serious disruptions which its summary abandonment of the Rutgers and Buffalo projects now threatens. One might hope in that case for the foundation to assume its appropriate responsibility for the essential re-consolidation and restoration of a major cultural resource which its miscalculated generosity is threatening to destroy.

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Benjamin Boretz

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...of No. 4, last mov... ...ce this is the one most clear... ...ablished element and thus tends be heard at the expense of the other voices in any case. Dynamic problems are especially severe, since perceptible crescendos and decrescendos would utterly destroy the structure of fixed volumes on which all the sense of the

...perienc... to hear th... harpsicho... in the ... memora... tenance of the s... the long stretches as well as the im... of the flute sound chord in preparation — this is done by a it is so controlled th... a change in registrati... The soloists are uni... but one notes especia... baum's high trumpet and Hugh Bean's art... note in the whirlwin... No. 4. The ensemb... cially in the wind beauty of instrum... by the Philharm... has been no... seems, if an... in these ... differe... ed

...except ...ected by ...espair over ...of the com... ...to serve essential ...is only ... music-cultural functions ... gestures toward "... firmed by these gestures toward "... ...ility"; and the half-heartedn... ...they are undertaken ... ...painfully ... colorful anti-war buttons ... different ... from: Student Peace Union, ... Street, New York City 10036

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...bership in a ...Society. ...mation, write ...OCIATION ...Buren St. ...605

...uan... used ... with s... One's ... tense becaus... ...that result from heari... ...lations that ... extraordinary music that one h... at all) only in scores. ... tury composers. Those ... tivated it have been, ... relatively minor fi... fluence on the ... contemporary ... But having s... Mr. Bernstein ... to exclude such ... do in fact represe... about the contempora... of s... me... gr...

...n of the new ... Progress, beyond ... work is one of ... ever ...ic-dramatic maste... much ...ed; that listeners will ... they pay ...ble to discover this if they pay ...ention to the skin of neo-Classic ...er-form and the irregular text... ...g, and follow instead the progress ... the first two notes sung by Ann ...rough the work (especially to ...ir return as the first two notes ... Lullaby)

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INDEX

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