

microtones are introduced and begin to give a descending character to the previously existing pitches by very gradually shifting the pitch structure downward—creating an intentionally blurred pitch relation.

"I restricted my sound colors and articulations only to those which would reflect the feeling of the dance. The *Mimiana II: Frieze* musical score was composed and realized at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center in 1969."

**Benjamin Boretz** (b Brooklyn, 1934) began piano playing and composing in his preschool years and was involved in writing and philosophy as well as music in high school and college. He studied composition as a graduate student at Brandeis with Irving Fine and Arthur Berger; at Aspen with Darius Milhaud; at UCLA with Lukas Foss; and at Princeton with Roger Sessions and Milton Babbitt. Boretz wrote articles for seven years as music critic for *The Nation* (1962-1969); founded and edited, first with Arthur Berger, then with Edward T. Cone, and most recently with Elaine Baskin, the semi-annual review called *Perspectives of New Music*. He also was a founder of the American Society of University Composers. He has taught music since 1954 and currently is (1974) teaching at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

While composing and teaching, he has also thought about music-theoretical, music-philosophical, and music-analytic matters, sometimes in literary form, and most conspicuously in a long essay entitled "Meta-Variations," which has been published serially in *Perspectives*, and for which *Group Variations*

was starting and focal point. Since completing the two versions of *Group Variations* (one for chamber orchestra, the other for computer), he has been working on a piece for chamber ensemble.

Mr. Boretz writes:

"The first (chamber orchestra) version of *Group Variations* was performed in 1967 and 1968 by the Group for Contemporary Music, under the direction of Charles Wuorinen. The computer version was begun in 1969, went through several intermediate versions, some of which were performed, and attained its present (presumably final) condition in 1973. During that time, the sound-synthesizing resources primarily used were those of Princeton University and Bell Telephone Laboratories; and the technical and auditory resources of Barry Vercoe, Hubert Howe, Richard L. Cann, Godfrey Winham, and J. K. Randall, among other musical habitués of the Princeton University Computer Center, were persistently exploited.

"For those whose auditory way into *Group Variations* might be improved by some extra-intuitive assistance, the following leads are offered: first, no matter what the prospect of computer-electronic performance tends to prepare you for, listen to *Group Variations* as polyphonic ensemble music, whose sonic surfaces are the fused images of networks of musical qualities, the sounds of such qualities rather than 'sounds' in some isolated, exotic, sense. A pervasive shaping focus for these images,

amounting to a conceit of the piece, is that every sizable passage of *Group Variations*—including the 'passage' consisting of the whole piece—begins as if suddenly tuning into the middle of something, and ends as if suddenly tuning out of something new that had just previously begun. And, as each image is registered in the form of a phrase—or tune-stretch, give particular notice to what it subsequently becomes, as it merges, as a component part, into a still larger, single, complex image.

"Here another conceit of *Group Variations*, the musical resonance of an idea of complex congruence, may emerge: images of progressively larger time dimensions always fuse, in increasingly elaborate senses, into the same quality-network shape, so that wholes constantly retrieve and reincarnate the shapes of their component parts, and are subsequently themselves so retrieved and reincarnated. If, for a start, you listened to the image-chunks consisting first of the first four-attack stretch, then, of the first two such stretches, then, of the first two distinct stretch-type passages, and so on, you might get the feel of the process by which each trajectory 'arrives' at the same 'place' relative to its predecessors. Moreover, if you happened to identify the two stretch-types mentioned as complementary landscapes, the first conspicuously including places where several sounds attack together, and the second, places where single sounds attack several times in succession, many of the characteristics of the passages that ensue may come into sharper focus.

"Those interested in further guidance toward the specific depths of these

particular surfaces (to paraphrase a phrase of Jim Randall's) are referred to the final chapter of 'Meta-Variations,' and the score."

**Jacques-Louis Monod** is widely respected as one of the finest conductors of today's music. He has conducted major orchestras in Europe and Britain and first recordings of important works by Berg, Webern, Carter, and Schnabel. His most recent recording for CRI, Seymour Shifrin's *Three Pieces for Orchestra*, won the Koussevitzky Recording Award.

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Produced by Carter Harman  
*Folia* and *Extensions* recorded by David Hancock

This is a composer-supervised recording.  
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(Original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)