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Virtuosity, Alienation, and New Music

by Eric Salzman

The nineteenth century did not invent the instrumental virtuoso, but it did elevate the musical acrobat to an unprecedented status of cultural heroism and pop celebrity. As the composer became more and more alienated from bourgeois society, the virtuoso singer or instrumentalist and later the conductor became that society's leading contribution to musical life. The great virtuosos changed that life and created what we now would call the star system.

Before the early nineteenth century, solo and chamber music were largely intended for personal enjoyment by the player or for salon performance before an audience of cognoscenti, aristocrats, and status seekers. The first modern public virtuosos were contemporaries of Beethoven's and purveyors of flashy variations on popular songs or arias, generally performed as part of marathon grab-bag concerts that might also include arias, concertos, and symphonies. Paganini took the virtuoso image further and created the image of a superhuman wizard in league with demonic forces. But it was the development of the modern piano—the instrument par excellence of the industrial revolution—and its “improvements” throughout the nineteenth century that challenged players to new feats of tone and fingerwork. (It is not so generally realized that the violin was restrung and substantially modified at this time to produce a bigger sound and that singing technique similarly underwent major modifications in order to fill increasingly large performance spaces.)

Later in the century a special form of public concert was invented for the virtuoso: the recital. This was clearly an outgrowth of salon music making, and to this day it often retains the social forms of the salon in decor and decorum—extremely formal rituals of dress, respects to the audience, and so forth. The recital has always had this quality of class awareness, but it has also been a meeting place for the serious musical amateur. Side by side with the frivolous virtuoso we find the more philosophical and deeply musical type, particularly in Germany and Austria. If Paganini and Liszt had demonic powers attributed to them, Busoni and Schnabel were in touch with higher powers of another sort and appealed to a cultivated audience.

This historical apparatus of European music making was imported wholesale into the United States and set up,

a supposedly ideal, ancient and foreign legacy of thoughts, images and frames of reference, knowledge of which was limited to a very restricted class of people. The logical consequence was a clear-cut break between one culture for the privileged classes, which they were then able to set before the people at large who had no part in its elaboration, and another culture of the masses.

This is Cesare Molinari talking in *Theatre Throughout the Ages* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975) about the importation of Greek theater into Rome, but the situation is prototypical and perfectly represents the importation of European musical life into America. The exalted image of the virtuoso suggests a pinnacle of achievement even among large numbers of people who have no interest in or knowledge of music. This is an extraordinary phenomenon, and it can only be adequately explained in social terms. The image of the poor boy bringing down the house at Carnegie Hall is the epitome of the American attitude toward class structure and social mobility. The opera singer and the instrumental virtuoso or conductor are ridiculed but also adored. To appreciate this kind of music making, to be in the know, is to raise yourself socially through education and appreciation—or at least the pretense of them.

In the early nineteenth century the virtuosos were also composers. Some were merely hack writers of their own material, but others were important creative figures. Later, such performers were more prominent as arrangers, and in this century composition has become very unimportant in their activity. This was part of a general trend throughout the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth toward specialization in industrial society. It is also classicism of the most deadly sort (there is real logic to the popular term “classical music”). The virtuoso became a performance specialist and interpretative expert in the classics. The composer, increasingly cut off and alienated, also became a specialist, and the performance of new music became increasingly relegated to special concerts organized for this purpose. The modern-music concert was not invented by Arnold Schoenberg in Vienna in 1920, but his Private Society for First Performances was an early and famous example. Despite their extremely limited appeal, concerts or recitals of modern music for the cognoscenti have survived remarkably well. This can only be because there is an extremely high social value placed on attendance at such events, a social value available to people who wish to express their commitment to education, knowledge, and culture.

The alienation of the creative artist is a process that extends from the Romantic period (which was also the period of the industrialization of society) to our own day. It is a theme that runs through all the arts and is strongly connected with the rise of connoisseurship and specialization as a way of escaping commercialization and the spread of mass media in industrial society. It is well represented in music because of the nature of the art—music is essentially a performance art (like theater or dance) but is capable of sustaining a variety of subcultural possibilities (like literature). Theater is a strongly collaborative art and tends to show things rather than express them; music tends to express things rather than show them. The European Romantic cult of personality produced the individualistic and alienated modern composer who, in content and form, “expresses himself.” This is the typical situation for Romantic and modern music: it is to be valued for its own sake and as the unique expression of an individual mind. The abandonment of a common language and the insistence on originality led inexorably to the idea of new music that expressed extremely private emotional or intellectual states, or on occasion both.

This historical evolution and these states of culture are particularly germane to European history, and their impact here was very delayed. New American music was a very minor part of the Europeanized concert scene, and it was perfectly logical that American composers should simply imitate the high-class examples being offered, thus producing a charming *arrière-garde* of Romantic music. With Charles Ives, and again in the twenties—a period of musical activism and of the first American new-music concerts—individualism flourished to an extraordinary degree. For good and

sufficient historical reasons, however, this individualism was of the rugged, optimistic American sort, quite different from the alienated European sensibility. Already in the work of Ives there is no attempt to isolate or eliminate the past or the common language; in fact, Classical and Romantic as well as folk and pop elements are more or less assimilated. This flows quite easily into the folk, ethnic, and populist American musics of the thirties and forties, which made a conscious and valiant effort to break down the barriers between the European concert form, new music, and popular musical languages.

Several things happened to change this picture. In the late thirties the ultimate alienation of European musical life actually took place when the European mainstream was literally diverted to the New World. The large numbers of major teachers, performers, and composers who came here had an overwhelming impact on American musical life and on the course of new music. Certainly there were difficulties, but the result was inevitable, since cultivated musical life in America was modeled on that of Europe: Old World culture continued to have enormous prestige even when the actual music was ignored or disliked.

With the exception of a few men who went to Broadway or Hollywood, most of the Europeans—and all of the uncompromising greats—went to the American university. In Europe, where traditional culture and its modern offshoots have evolved as part of the life of the community, culture is supported by the town and its great middle-class populations. In America, until recently, “cultivated culture” (largely not indigenous) was supported mainly by a very small elite, as it was in Europe until the early nineteenth century. The support of new and difficult work was always spotty, and even the conservatories, largely devoted to turning out polished virtuosos, offered a very limited and even hostile environment for new music. In this situation, the university took up the slack. The American university, although modeled on the European, developed a strong personality of its own as our principal means of subsidizing culture in all forms: education, research, and, finally, the creative arts. The university came late but enthusiastically to its new role of culture center, and it has maintained and developed that role even in the major cities. The university gave composers employment, subsidized public exposure, and provided a somewhat captive audience of intellectuals and young people; eventually, by bringing in performance and performers as part of the university system and by supporting advanced studies and research in techniques and equipment, it subsidized the evolution and dissemination of works and ideas.

These resources and the special isolation of the university composer provided a fertile breeding ground for far-out new music. This was the ultimate connoisseurship situation, divested, in great part, of the social-status problems of the traditional concert. It is not surprising that a university avant-garde developed, with its own characteristics. The earlier phase of this was strongly influenced by the European émigrés, notably Hindemith, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg. Eventually the Schoenbergians came to dominate, and through university-affiliated composer-teachers like Roger Sessions and Ross Lee Finney the sounds of atonal, expressionist, or Schoenbergian twelve-tone music entered the mainstream of American musical life. The next generation extended these ideas, particularly in the formal dimension. The spokesman for what is generally known as serialism in American music is undoubtedly Milton Babbitt. His most effective influence derives from his music, but he has made a tremendous impact as a teacher, theorist, and personality. He is also a strong proponent of the university as the major supporter of musical exploration and creation for its own sake. The university, the argument runs, supports advanced research in many fields without concern for practicality or popular appeal; it is equally reasonable and desirable that advanced music research be supported.

But the university avant-garde—and all the composers on this record are university products and more or less belong to the avant-garde—was not the only American avant-garde to flourish in the last quarter century. The other was what one might call the California/New York action avant-garde of John Cage and his followers. There are tremendous differences between these movements but also a few surprising parallels. Serialism formalized music—in every domain—through structural concepts; Cage and his followers deformed music by applying—in every domain—philosophical concepts. Serialism stretched the concert form to its breaking point by the difficulties it proposed to performers and listeners alike; the Cagean events both accepted and tore down the traditional format by commenting on the idea of the concert itself (music by chance, natural sounds, no sound, audience participation, and so on). And both movements became deeply involved in electronic music and came out of that experience with a new and deeper involvement with the live performer—the “new virtuosity.”

For the Cageans electronic and tape music meant the chance to break out of the concert format, to explore new ideas and sounds (every sound of the universe as raw material), and to work directly and spontaneously with the material, like a painter. For the serialists it meant new possibilities of precision and control—the right note in the right place in the right scheme. The live reaction to the threatened tyranny of the machine was quick and decisive. Everything could be recorded and stored on tape for instant replay except the act of performance itself. If electronics offered the composer a new palette—a new continuum of sound in every dimension—this notion of a continuum could carry over into live performance as well. A new generation of performers took up the challenges. The character of live performance and the performer’s contribution was rethought, even to the point of reintroducing variability, performer choice, and improvisation in a music that had gone to the opposite extremes of invariability, preplanning, and notational precision. Attention began to be paid to new and unusual instruments and to the new and unusual possibilities of old instruments; the particular personality and skills of the performer came into play. Composers and performers working closely together developed a tremendous array of new performance techniques and sound possibilities. The old virtuosity was often more or less extrinsic to the music and based on flashy and difficult performance effects designed to show off skill. The new virtuosity grew out of the inherent difficulties of the new music and was often a matter of making the difficult sound effortless. Nevertheless, as the problems and fears of new music were one by one conquered by a new generation of young performers, some of the old types of difficulty—the acrobatic gesture, the showy passagework—began to return in a new guise.

The progress of performer capability in these matters has been extraordinary. Rhythmic nuances, disjunct leaps, extremes of range, and unusual sounds and colors, all once regarded as technically beyond the pale, were incorporated into players’ repertoires in only a few years. Works that had been pronounced unplayable have turned into student recital pieces. A new generation of performers—notably singers, wind players, and pianists—virtually challenged composers to set difficulties to overcome. Composers began looking for ways not only to make their music sound difficult but also to exploit the outer edges of possibility. This phase of exploration—comparable to the explorations of extreme emotional-musical possibilities in expressionist music fifty or sixty years earlier—is associated with some of the outstanding performers of the period: Bethany Beardslee, Cathy Berberian, Jan De Gaetani, David Tudor, Paul Jacobs, Bertram Turetzky, Stuart Dempster, and the Juilliard, Composers, Lenox, and Concord quartets, as well as the artists represented here and many others.

The personalities of these performers have brought a new dimension to a music that was often highly abstract and conceptual. And it brought attention back to the act of performance as a communication system linking creative thought with the act of perception. Close collaboration between composers and new-music performers—sometimes they are the same people—is now the norm, and this has widened the scope and audience for new music of all kinds. The new virtuosity has become a fixed and major part of new musical life.

The Instrument in Your Mind

by Harvey Sollberger

Eric Salzman and others have written of the “new virtuosity,” that phenomenal leap forward in instrumental techniques and playing styles associated with music written since World War II. We have been discovering in recent years that our traditional Western instruments, far from having fixed “voices” and natures, are capable of technical-expressive extension far beyond what the standard repertoire enshrined in our concert halls and curricula would lead us to expect. To many this may come as a surprise, for just as our institutional musical culture is based on a standard body of “classic” works, so, too, is thinking about instruments all too often limited to the range of playing styles and techniques embodied in those works (thus have arisen such concepts as “violinistic” or “pianistic,” meaning how well-suited a passage or piece is thought to be to the “nature” of the instrument for which it is written). Yet much of the music composed during recent years leads us to a different conclusion: that each of our standard instruments has no true, basic nature, is indeed capable of speaking with a wide variety of voices in many different ways. It is this second conclusion that I will document here, with respect to its origins, nature, and significance.

To look at an instrument is to see it as a fixed, definite, unambiguous physical thing. Yet behind the physical instrument can be said to stand another instrument, a mental construct that, for existing in our imaginations, is no less real. The “instrument in our mind” consists of all we know of an instrument’s history, literature, and folklore, of all we have heard that instrument do, can imagine it doing. This imaginary instrument need not be fixed, as its physical counterpart tends to be. Thus the flute of Varèse’s *Density 21.5* (1936) or Berio’s *Sequenza* (1958) inhabits a totally different world conceptually, emotionally, and technically from that of Briccialdi’s *Il Vento* and other nineteenth-century virtuoso pieces. Physically it is the same instrument, the flute in use today being essentially identical to that introduced by Boehm in 1847; imaginatively it has been renovated, redesigned.

It has traditionally been the role of composers to fashion the extents and limits of instruments’ technical and expressive capabilities. In reinventing music, in bringing new musical thought into being, they, as much as or more than performers and instrument builders, have created the instruments we know, and through their reimaginings of them continue to create them. In earlier years this process was relatively simple, with composer and performer often the same person. By the early twentieth century, however, the two activities had split, with most innovative creative figures— Ives and Schoenberg come immediately to mind—standing in isolation from what was then believed to be the mainstream of musical life. Cut off from its roots in musical creation, performance came to be defined more and more by its limitations, not its possibilities. Only *these* fingerings, only *this* type of tone became the rule: music learned and practiced by a process of exclusion. For the ordinary musician, competence came to be associated (and to too great a degree still is) with the ability to perform a limited number of actions (scales, arpeggios, the production of one particular kind of tone or vibrato) as well as possible—getting better and better at doing less and less. Traditional virtuosos carried these tendencies to their extreme. Thus it is understandable that in current public musical

life, instruments have come to be seen as fixed and finite, fully known—and limited—in their possibilities.

Composers, meanwhile, have continued to create new worlds of musical thought and in the process to imaginatively reinvent the instruments of that thought's expression. The setting of this activity has become increasingly the American university campus, where a source of employment is joined with access to performers and audiences open and responsive to new music (it is no coincidence that the composers represented on this disc, as well as most of the performers, are university affiliated). By the early sixties American composers had come to realize that composing by itself was not enough to guarantee the life and dissemination of their works. With the abdication of traditional performance outlets grew the need to assume control of and take responsibility for the presentation of their music. The advent of electronic and computer-generated music, bypassing the performer entirely, is a reflection of this. More significant was the renewed interest of composers in performing and in the organization of concerts and ensembles for the presentation of their own and colleagues' works (through which we begin to see restored the close connection of composition and performance). The significance of this is seen in the fact that, from a handful of "new-music specialists" in the early sixties, the number of performers actively committed to the exploration and development of the resources of their instruments has steadily grown—as has the awareness of what such a concept means. Similarly centered in universities and colleges, such performers are active both in the new-music ensembles that have in many places become fixtures of campus life and as artist-teachers.

From this collaborative effort has emerged a new type of performer, one who, however steeped in traditional literature and techniques (and most are), is far removed in basic attitudes and capabilities from the traditional solo, chamber, or symphony player. From contact with the varied and evolving world of new music (and, on a broader scale, with world—that is, non-Western—music), this performer views his instrument and the whole range of musical possibility as open-ended. His musical life is one of constant learning, growth, and extension. Proficiency consists not in having learned in one's youth and then continuing to repeat throughout life the answers to a set number of problems posed by the "standard literature" but in one's abilities as a problem-solver (with the composer in the role of problem-poser), thinking through and in terms of his instrument to new definitions of it and of himself as its player. Performance viewed in this light becomes, like composition, an act of continual self-creation.

The range of new possibilities being explored is enormous. To briefly survey the field:

PITCH: Extension of the ranges of many instruments; extension of the ability to play and sing hitherto difficult melodic progressions (wide leaps) with ease; exploration of microtonal possibilities; developing abilities of many wind and brass players to articulate several pitches at once (multiphonics).

RHYTHM: Development of ability to read and perform complex rhythms.

DYNAMICS: Increased skill in controlling extreme dynamics; ability to project discrete dynamic levels as elements of structural articulation.

TIMBRE: Extension of instruments' timbral resources in every direction, either through structurally altering the instrument (prepared piano) or through the development of new playing techniques (clicking of keys, stopping and plucking of strings, singing into the instrument).

ARTICULATION: Refinement of control of types and degrees of vibrato, tonguing, bowing.

NOTATION: Ability to read a wide variety of types of scores (graphic, proportional) in addition to traditionally notated ones.

NEW ENSEMBLE SKILLS: Ensemble virtuosity as seen in players' abilities to execute complex ensemble rhythms (each fitting his part accurately into the total rhythm); to timbrally associate sounds produced on different instruments—for example, to associate low clarinet, timpani, and stopped piano sounds into a line.

To view some of these possibilities in close-up, consider that flutists normally need no more than forty or fifty standard fingerings to carry them from the cradle to the grave; yet the flute, with fourteen holes that can be opened or closed in various combinations, possesses 2^{14} (16,384) possible fingerings. With these “unconventional” fingerings we can do such things as play chords (multiphonics), produce microtonally inflected pitches, and achieve a variety of timbral shadings far beyond what is normally associated with the instrument. How significant these possibilities are remains to be seen (current indications are that they are quite significant) and depends both on performers' researching them and making them available and composers' using them convincingly and excitingly.

The skillful employment and execution of many of these new resources are often perceived as a stunning display of virtuosity. Yet the new virtuosity differs from the old here in still one more respect: The traditional virtuoso display piece very often employs ideas of slight musical substance as a pretext for its true *raison d'être*, virtuoso display; the modern virtuoso more often asserts his skill indirectly in the course of making himself and his instrument the active mediums through which a work's ideas are projected. His is a virtuosity of many dimensions, mental and conceptual as well as physical. Ultimately his virtuosity lies in understanding and communicating the substance of the music he plays as well as (if at all) in performing acrobatics.

The new virtuosity is not to be fixed or defined once and for all; open, not bounded, it is an actively evolving concept growing out of the joint exploration of musical resources currently being undertaken by composers and performers. The traditional view of instruments, growing out of a fixed repertoire with certain common-language aspects (the triadic tonal system, set formal procedures, and so on), required that no more than a portion of their capabilities be taken into account. The current compositional scene, so varied in its range of concerns and expression, draws on and creates capabilities the limits of which we do not yet know. In pursuing these limits an ever increasing number of performers, together with their composer colleagues, constitute a vital alternative musical culture that, through setting new standards of performance (for both new and old music) and through its role in shaping the attitudes and skills of a new generation of performers, is transforming our entire musical life. Thoughts and instruments—new thoughts about instruments—as the tools (instruments) of change.

HARVEY SOLLBERGER

Sunflowers

Harvey Sollberger, flute; Claire Heldrich, vibraphone

Harvey Sollberger was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1938. He studied composition at the University of Iowa with Philip Bezanson and Eldon Obrecht and at Columbia University with Jack Beeson and Otto Luening. He has received commissions from the Fromm Music Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Koussevitzky Foundation in the Library of Congress, and the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation in conjunction with the New York State Council on the Arts. He has held two Guggenheim Fellowships and received an award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Special Citation from the American International Music Fund, and a grant from the Creative Artists Public Service Program. Sollberger studied conducting with James Dixon, and with Charles Wuorinen he organized and has led the country's first university-based contemporary-music ensemble, the Group for Contemporary Music.

Sollberger's music grows principally out of his background as a performer. While flute music constitutes far from the bulk of his output, he has put his knowledge of that instrument to work in a number of pieces. Some earlier works (since 1962) were twelve-tone, but in recent years he has extended his conception of that resource to encompass aspects of non-Western music (*Riding the Wind I-IV*) and principles of cyclic recurrence with elements nested within each other (*Flutes and Drums*). Between his twelve-tone and extended twelve-tone works are pieces that evolve out of quite informal systematic formulations (Impromptu for Piano; *Sunflowers*). He has composed only for solo instruments or chamber-music combinations, reflecting the current (1978) vitality and availability of such resources and the degree of his involvement with them.

He writes:

Sunflowers, composed in a short space of time in July 1976, might be called a summer bagatelle. I could see sunflowers growing outside my window and was giving some thought to Blake's solitary sunflower:

Ah, Sun-flower, weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun;
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller's journey is done:
Where the Youth pined away with desire,
And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow,
Arise from their graves, and aspire
Where my Sun-flower wishes to go.

Indeed, the sequence of two-note chords in the vibraphone with which the piece begins and ends (and that recurs several times during its course) might be thought to be a musical analogue for the eternity, the "sweet golden clime," for which Blake's sunflower yearns. (This thought was not present during the writing; it only occurs to me now.)

At any rate—retreating to the slightly safer higher ground of technical discourse—the piece is episodic, held together in its general sweep by the vibraphone's aforementioned dyads, by canons between flute and vibraphone in every other section, and by the idea of a wave of mounting

intensity (climaxing in the section with piccolo), which then subsides in a section of “endless melody” (alto flute) to the meditative solo musings of the vibraphone (performance indication: “Very slowly; carefully meditating, considering before each attack; no hurry”), all this succeeded by a coda leading back to a concluding statement of the vibraphone’s opening chords in reversed order. As gentle and innocent as a summer flower—or shower. No thunderstorm here.

Sunflowers is dedicated to Claire Heldrich, who first performed it with me on July 28, 1976, in Cooperstown, New York, the baseball capital of the world.

ROBERT MORRIS

Motet on Doo-dab

Harvey Sollberger, flute; Daniel Schulman, piano; Donald Palma, bass

Robert Morris was born in 1943 in Cheltenham, England. He came to the United States at an early age, and later studied at the Eastman School of Music and the University of Michigan, where his teachers included John La Montaine at Eastman and Leslie Bassett and Ross Lee Finney at Michigan. At Tanglewood, as a Crafts Fellow, he worked with Gunther Schuller. Morris has taught music theory, composition, and ethnomusicology at the University of Hawaii and Yale University. While at Yale he was chairman of the composition department of the School of Music and director of the Yale Electronic Music Studio. Morris is a prolific composer, and his works embrace and create connections between a wide range of stylistic and technical concerns (the twelve-tone system, early Western music, and Eastern music, among others).

Concerning his *Motet on Doo-dab* (1973), Morris has written:

From 1972 through 1976 I spent most of my creative energies exploring the concept of acculturation in music. This resulted in a trilogy of works, the first of which is an electronic composition, *Thunders of Spring over Distant Mountains*, based on seven pieces of Southeast Asian music. *In Different Voices*, an hour-long composition for five wind ensembles (premiered at Yale on February 28, 1976), forms the last work of the series.

The centerpiece is a collection of five diverse compositions, each dealing with the interaction of clearly defined but culturally different musical styles. *Motet on Doo-dab* is a member of this portion of the trilogy and combines at least four different style components. The composition is an isorhythmic motet in the manner of certain French compositions of the fourteenth century. Its *cantus firmus* is Stephen Foster’s “Camptown Races.” Because of the nature of the tune, it was possible to develop a quasi-twelve-tone structure for the piece. The resulting polyphonic web is embellished to provide direct reference to that body of Korean court music known as *Ab-Ak* (“refined music”). To get at the sound of the Korean court ensemble, with its flutes, bells, stone slabs, and drums, it was necessary to use many of the new instrumental techniques that are being developed by many Western composers and performers. Listening to the long sustained tones in the alto flute, one can hear “Camptown Races” ornamented and stretched out over the whole piece. The other instruments also play phrases of the tune or its mirror inversion.

To some listeners, the combination of these elements may appear to refer to some less-than-sanguine cultural interactions. From a more positive point of view, however, the piece celebrates the reality of our pluralistic age; specifically, the breakdown of ethnocentricity and the discovery of certain universals that transcend yet inform various cultures and periods.

As with many new works involving the extension of traditional playing techniques, this composition was created for specific performers, flutist Marjorie Shansky and bassist Salvatore Macchia, both colleagues of mine at Yale. The range of new techniques is considerable. The flutist is required to produce glissandos and microtonal intervals, modulate vibrato within defined limits, sing while playing, and flutter-tongue. The bassist as well is called on to produce a variety of vibrato types, glissandos, and microtonal intervals. Extensions of the piano, a more limited machine with regard to possibilities for pitch modification, occur mainly in the timbral domain, the player being required to stop, damp, and pluck strings in addition to playing on the keyboard. He, too, at times sings.

ROBERT HALL LEWIS

Inflections I

Bertram Turetzky, bass

Robert Hall Lewis was born in Portland, Oregon, in 1926. After a period of travel and study from the mid-forties to the mid-fifties, he settled in 1957 in Baltimore and became a mainstay of that city's musical life through his work as a composer, teacher, and organizer of concerts (he also had experience as a pianist, trumpeter, and conductor). He graduated with distinction from the Eastman School of Music and shortly after, in 1951, won the first Kosciuszko Foundation Award in Composition. Subsequent awards included a two-year Fulbright Scholarship in Vienna, the LADO prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Walter Hinrichsen Award for Composers, an award from the American Academy–National Institute of Arts and Letters, a commission from the National Endowment for the Arts, and a commission from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation. Besides his Eastman degrees Lewis held diplomas from the Vienna Academy and the Paris Conservatory and a Brevet de Langue Française from the French Institute of the United Kingdom in London. His works have been performed by the Baltimore, Boston, Denver, New Orleans, and Kol Israel orchestras, the Royal Philharmonic and the London Symphony, the Gregg Smith Singers, and the Juilliard and Die Reihe ensembles among others, and he received commissions from the Chamber Music Society of Baltimore, the McKim Fund of the Library of Congress, the Hans Kindler Foundation, and the Baltimore Symphony. He died in 1996.

Lewis saw his music as falling into two periods: the first, from 1957 to the mid-sixties, stressed thematic concerns in a context of “formal symmetry, contrapuntal elaboration of basic material, and economy of means”; the second, from the mid-sixties to 1977, is exemplified by works that “are generally less thematic and more exploratory in harmony, texture, and instrumental treatment.” He stated that “the series of compositions titled *Combinazioni* and *Osservazioni* further illustrate this development through the integration of melodic material with novel sound elements, two or more tempos in simultaneous progression, and the inclusion of more subtle dynamic and textural gradations.”

Lewis's *Inflections I* was composed in 1969 for bassist Bertram Turetzky. The composer writes:

I was reluctant at first to attempt a composition for an instrument I had considered rather limited in timbral and expressive potential. I felt that the double bass had little affinity with my style generally and would lack the color, variety, and contrast I try to achieve in my work. When I received a tape from Bert, however, on which he demonstrated more technical possibilities and resources than I had known existed, my imagination was awakened and I began to hear many novel sounds and musical ideas. I finally evolved a one-movement form in four sections with the tempo sequence Drammatico ♩ = 72–76, Allegro Moderato, Drammatico ♩ = 72–76, Allegro Moderato. The first and third sections are free in the manner of a cadenza, while the remaining two are more strict rhythmically.

The musical process is essentially one of strong thematic statement with subsequent variation and juxtaposition of subtly contrasting rhythmic and timbral elements. Technical resources include various types of pizzicato: glissando, tremolo, guitar-style, left-hand, and harmonics. Different vibrato speeds and glissando *col legno* over the entire length of the fingerboard are also used, not as purely independent effects but as variants and elaborations of basic materials. While realizing the virtuoso, specialized character of *Inflections I* and knowing that few performers would find it accessible, I feel that the work was an important step in my stylistic development, leading to my Symphony No. 2, *Nuances II*, and the series of compositions *Combinazioni* and *Osservazioni*.

RALPH SHAPEY

Configurations

Sophie Sollberger, flute; Robert Black, piano

Ralph Shapey was born in Philadelphia in 1921. He began to study the violin at the age of seven and later studied violin with Emmanuel Zetlin and composition with Stefan Wolpe. During the fifties and early sixties Shapey was active in New York City as a composer and conductor. My contact with him dates from the latter part of this period; I well remember the excitement generated by each new work of his as well as the intensity of his performances of his own and others' music. In 1964 Shapey accepted a position with the University of Chicago, where he is currently (1977) professor of music and music director of the Contemporary Chamber Players of the University of Chicago. He made this ensemble one of the finest in the country and, through his work with it (aided by the Chicago-based Fromm Music Foundation), has brought an awareness of twentieth-century music to Chicagoans as never before.

Shapey's composing has been recognized with numerous awards, including the Frank Huntington Beebe Award, three MacDowell Colony Fellowships, the Brandeis University Creative Arts Award, the Copley Foundation Award, the Stern Family Fund Award, an award from the American Academy-National Institute of Arts and Letters, the Walter W. Naumburg Recording Award, and the Norlin Foundation Award. Commissions have come from Dimitri Mitropoulos, Alma Morgenthau, the Aeolian Chamber Players, the American Brass Quintet, the Koussevitzky Foundation, the Fromm Foundation, and the Kindler Foundation, among others.

In conferring the American Academy–National Institute of Arts and Letters award, George F. Kennan described Shapey's music as "exciting and dynamic. . . full of rugged power and high originality, developed over a number of years in response to an intensely personal vision, uninfluenced by changing fashion." It is music of dramatic confrontation, setting into motion sharply profiled and contrasting block-like units of material that do not so much evolve as generate

energy and tension out of their renewed overlappings and juxtapositions. In this tactile, rough-grained music, units of thought seem to take on such physical-spatial characteristics as mass and density as they interact on the separate levels and planes of the textures they generate. In this respect Shapey's musical world is akin to that of Varèse.

Configuration, for flute and piano, was commissioned by flutist Sue Ann Kahn and was composed during the summer of 1964. It is in three movements. The first, marked “with intense gesture,” sends the instruments to extremes of register. Three cadenza-like sections for solo flute are framed with music in which the instruments pursue independent but coordinated courses. Throughout the movement certain fixed pitches—for example the flute's low D flat, the piano's low A—function as points of reference that anchor the arching and ecstatic lines. The second movement, by contrast, is soft and slow (“with meditation”). The third movement begins with a brief but clear reference to the opening measures of the first, then plunges into its main body (“with joyous abandon [*sempre forte*]”). Once again slow music from the opening of the first movement recurs and again is superseded by a (now shortened) “with joyous abandon” section. This leads to a condensed version of the third flute cadenza from the first movement, ending with the first movement's stable low D flat. As this note fades, the piano reenters, concluding the work with a literal restatement of the second movement's closing measure (itself rhythmically identical to the second movement's opening measure).

ANDREW IMBRIE

Three Sketches

Stuart Dempster, trombone; Kevin Aanerud, piano

Andrew Imbrie was born in New York City in 1921. He studied the piano seriously as a youth, and among his teachers were Ann Abajian and Pauline and Leo Ornstein (the last was one of the more notorious “modernist” composers of the twenties). By the time Imbrie reached his teens his interests had swung to composition, and in 1937 he began a ten-year apprenticeship with Roger Sessions—interrupted by four years in the Signal Corps during World War II—first at Princeton and then at the University of California at Berkeley. After two years (1947–49) as a fellow at the American Academy in Rome (to which he returned in 1968–69 as composer-in-residence), Imbrie returned to teach in Berkeley.

Imbrie is often called an academic composer—certainly his position and credentials are well in order—who does not write academic music. Critics and annotators feel that his music, in its gestures and rhetoric, is grounded in something beyond what is assumed to be run-of-the-mill professorial abstraction (whatever that is). Indeed, Imbrie is a composer of music that succeeds in being rigorous while maintaining intuitive and contextual spontaneity. Each piece can be compared to an organism, living and growing according to its own rules of generation and morphology in the service of a unified and yet richly varied and manifold total utterance. It is in reference to what Sessions calls the “long line” or “large gesture” that the more specific aspects of Imbrie's craft are put to use: a nontonal (though sensitive to pitch repetition and articulation) pitch language unfolding through a fundamentally linear and contrapuntal framework.

About the *Three Sketches* the composer writes:

The *Three Sketches* were commissioned by Stuart Dempster and completed on April 28, 1967, in Berkeley. Stuart had demonstrated to me his astonishing repertory of special effects on the trombone. If I had tried to use them all, or even a large number, I would have had to write a huge

piece—and even then there would have been little chance to exploit the lyricism and fire of which he is capable, using the ordinary resources of the instrument. So I chose only those few devices that seemed most immediately suggestive, musically and dramatically.

The first *Sketch* is really an introduction, yet it contains within its brief span a strong contrast between two textures: the first restless with explosive energies that are quickly suppressed, the second reflective.

The second *Sketch* provides for the release of the subterranean energies already suggested: it moves at a furious pace and allows the soloist to demonstrate the trombone as a virtuoso instrument. It also features the trill in a number of forms, including the trill-like effect of the beats created when the trombonist sings and simultaneously plays a note very close to the one he is singing. After this point of highest intensity, the final collapse of energy leaves the trombone producing another (slow) trill-like sound as he plays the same high A while changing from one slide position to another. The strings of the piano echo this with a blur of sound, which dies out slowly as the last *Sketch* begins.

The trombone now begins to play a melody, using a slight slide vibrato, in the Tommy Dorsey manner. As this melody develops, the accompaniment becomes increasingly active, and eventually the old restlessness returns. But the two moods, restless and contemplative, now seem merged into a new cooperative unity. After a culmination, the tension is slowly resolved, and the work comes to a peaceful close, with chords in which the trombonist again sings and plays simultaneously. This time, however, he sings notes that reinforce the notes he plays, so as to enrich the euphony.

ROBERT ERICKSON

General Speech

Stuart Dempster, trombone

Robert Erickson was born in 1917 in Marquette, Michigan, where as a youth he played violin, piano, and flute. Drawn to composition in his teens, he found his principal teacher in Ernst Krenek, whom he met in Chicago in 1936. He followed Krenek to Hamline University in Minneapolis and worked with him until 1947, when he received his M.A. degree. Since then Erickson has taught at St. Catherine College (St. Paul), the San Francisco Conservatory, and the University of California at San Diego. Among his credits are several Yaddo Fellowships, a Guggenheim Fellowship, election as a Fellow of the Institute for Creative Arts of the University of California, and a commission from the National Endowment for the Arts for a work for violin and orchestra.

Erickson has composed prolifically for a wide variety of instrumental and vocal combinations. In recent years he has worked in electronic music (usually employing *musique-concrète* procedures) as well. He was one of the first American composers to explore the resources of the twelve-tone system, and by 1943 his music had evolved to a less systematic type of atonal writing rooted in the rigors of imitative contrapuntal procedures. On writing his book *The Structure of Music: A Listener's Guide to Melody and Counterpoint* he found himself “purged . . . of the contrapuntal obsession,” and since then (1952) his music has been more intuitive, in which “craft, thought, and intuition are so merged that it is all one thing.” In this period his concerns included expanded notions of instrumental and vocal timbre (of which *General Speech* is one example), increasingly flexible means of rhythmic articulation, and improvisation within controlled limits.

General Speech was composed in 1969 for Stuart Dempster, who commissioned it. Based not merely on a text of General Douglas MacArthur's but as much on his persona or, one might say, the myth he consciously lived and exemplified, the piece uses speech as a bridge between music and theater. The trombonist is required to merge his playing of precisely notated (and often difficult) musical events with the verbal articulation into the instrument of a phoneticized version of MacArthur's retirement speech at West Point. Thus the opening, "Duty, honor, country" (which functions as a refrain throughout the piece) is articulated as "Do-teeŋ yonorŋ cunt'treeeeee," etc. Erickson instructs the performer to

as best as possible . . . perform the vowels and consonants as seen in the word abstractions. . . . This means shaping the mouth, tongue, and throat in all different manners in order to achieve the desired effect, and it will no doubt be found that a comprehensive analysis of each sound will have to be made.

Several pages of the score are given to a discussion of such matters as dress and lighting (both the work of the composer's wife, Lenore Erik-Alt) and manner of performance—including a "fade-away" at the end. Erickson instructs the performer to listen to a recording of MacArthur's speeches and to consult the general's autobiography for pictures, speech texts, and other helpful information.

The composer has supplied the following program note:

The sounds of one language are often difficult to describe in terms of the categories used for describing another; and the more one looks at the languages of the world, the more one seems to have to increase the number of phonetic categories required for making adequate descriptions. Whether this is so or not depends in part on what one means by making an adequate phonetic description. . . . We may now consider the general form of the kind of phonetic description that is being proposed here. It must, like other parts of the description of a language, be capable of being expressed completely in a set of explicit statements or rules, so that we can be sure that no intuitive (possibly fallacious) concepts are required for its interpretation. Ultimately it would be convenient if the rules produced a set of signals which could control a speech synthesizer. Then we could be certain that the entire account of a language was contained in the rules and the theory (which would have to include a specification of the speech synthesizer). Such a description could, in a very literal sense, be part of a generative grammar; and the grammar would be very powerful in that it would contain rules which were not merely possible (specifying correct but not necessarily all the phonetic correlates) but necessary and sufficient (containing all and only the information required to generate speech).*

Duty! Honor! Country! [*suddenly raise body to full height*] Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be. [*hard stare; survey audience*] They are your rallying point to build courage when courage seems to fail. [*immobile, pleading look*] To regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith, [*immobile*] to create hope when hope becomes forlorn. [*drink from half-filled water glass*] You now face a new world, a world of change. [*immobile*] The thrust into outer space of the satellites, spheres, and missiles marked a beginning of another epoch in the long story of mankind. [*leaning forward slightly*] Your guidepost stands out like a tenfold beacon in the night. [*immobile*] Duty! Honor! Country! You are the leaven which binds together the entire fabric of our national system of defense. [*intense stare*] From your ranks come the great captains who hold the

nation's destiny in their hands the moment the war tocsin sounds. [*survey audience*] The long gray line has never failed us. Were you to do so, a million ghosts in olive drab, in brown khaki, in blue and gray would rise from their white crosses, thundering those magic words (ahem). Duty! Honor! Country! (ahem) [belch] [*drink, fill glass, drink, pose, etc., prepare for solemnity and self-pity*] Today marks my final roll call with you. [*raise up, lean forward, reach out*] But I want you to know that when I cross the river, my last conscious thoughts will be of the corps, and the corps, and the corps. I bid you farewell!

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* Peter Ladefoged, "Linguistic Phonetics: Preliminary Version for Comment and Criticism," *Working Papers in Phonetics*, VI (June 1967). Phonetics Laboratory, University of California, Los Angeles. Typographical errors corrected and minor changes made September 1967.

WILLIAM O. SMITH

Fancies for Clarinet Alone

William O. Smith, clarinet

William Overton Smith—better known as Bill Smith and not to be confused with the conductor—is a performer-composer who has been equally active in jazz and concert music. He was born in Sacramento, California, in 1926 and began to study clarinet at the age of ten. Within two years he had organized a school dance band, and by the age of sixteen he had studied harmony and orchestration and composed a woodwind quintet. After World War II he studied briefly at Juilliard, played clarinet in the Dean Dixon Symphony, and performed at Kelley's Stables on West Fifty-Second Street in New York. In 1946 he returned to California, where he studied at Mills College with Darius Milhaud and then at the University of California with Roger Sessions. Smith helped Dave Brubeck, a fellow student with Milhaud, found the Brubeck Octet, with which he played from 1947 to the early fifties. In 1951 Smith received a Prix de Paris, studied at the Conservatoire, and completed his First String Quartet, which he dedicated to Milhaud. Other works of this time include the *Capriccio* for violin and piano and the Suite for violin and clarinet (dedicated to Benny Goodman). From 1953 to 1960 Smith taught at the University of California, Berkeley, the San Francisco Conservatory, and the University of Southern California; during the summers of 1957 and 1959 he was a member of the Fromm Players at the Berkshire Music Center (Tanglewood) in Massachusetts. His stay at USC was interrupted by a Prix de Rome in 1957; in 1960, on a Guggenheim Fellowship, Smith returned to Rome, where he remained for six years. During this period he teamed up with pianist-composer Johnny Eaton on a number of new-music and performance projects, including the American Jazz Ensemble, the Microtonal Performance Ensemble, and the establishment of an electronic-music lab at the American Academy in Rome. In 1966 he was appointed associate professor of music at the University of Washington, Seattle, helping to make that school and area a center for new-music performance. In 1972 Smith received an award from the National Academy of Arts and Letters and as part of this award Composers Recordings issued a disc of his works; three years later a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts resulted in *Theona* for orchestra (1975).

Smith's activities have bridged the gap between composer and performer as well as between jazz and avant-garde music. He has been more widely active as a performer than the other composers on this

record. As one of the crossover musicians working in what Gunther Schuller called the “third stream,” he has not only carried over performance and compositional techniques from one area to another but has pioneered the development of new performance techniques, most notably on his original instrument, the clarinet. These techniques, now extended to most of the winds, involve the production of more than one sound at a time on the instrument through fingering, embouchure, and even use of the voice; the result is more than just double stops or triple stops but new tone colors as well. Smith has written several works expressly designed to show off these techniques, the best known of which is *Variants* (1961) for solo clarinet. *Fancies* (1969) is a similar series of multiple-sound studies for clarinet alone. These multiple sounds, or “multiphonics,” are produced in a variety of ways, all of which draw on the acoustic properties of the clarinet. Multiple sounds are present as harmonics in any note on any instrument; in other words, a vibrating material or air column never vibrates as a single unit but in parts. If these multiple vibrations are confused, we hear noise; if they occur in mathematical ratios, they merge into a tone with a particular color. The technique of multiphonics is to isolate the strands of these multivibrations in that they become audible in their own right—not an easy technique. The studies of *Fancies* are best described in sequence:

- I. A restricted legato melodic line against short accented notes, always an octave and a fifth below.
 - II. Short legato phrases (similar to I but an octave higher and faster) against continuous two-note trills.
 - III. Melodic phrases in the lowest octave against a hummed note (the lowest note of the clarinet, which when sung simultaneously with played notes produces various effects).
 - IV. A low note is held and an upper double stop trilled (also producing a vibrato effect on the low note).
 - V. Double and triple stops alternating with single notes in flutter-tongue.
 - VI. Triple stops in a soft dynamic. In three places the upper two notes move against a held lower note.
 - VII. Melodic fragments with the effect of upper parts moving against a bass; somewhat rough sonorities.
 - VIII. Triple stops alternating with normal playing.
 - IX. Glissando upper part against bass notes with a flutter-tongue-like effect.
 - X. Trills with a moving upper part against a bass that moves between E and E flat.
- Eric Salzman*

LESLIE BASSETT

Music for Saxophone and Piano

Donald Sinta, saxophone; Ellen Weckler, piano

Leslie Bassett was born in 1923 on a ranch in Hanford, California. He was raised in Fresno and Madera and studied at Fresno State College before and after a World War II stint as trombonist with the Thirteenth Armored Division Band in California, Texas, France, and Germany. After the war he studied composition at Fresno and, with Homer Keller and Ross Lee Finney, at the University of Michigan. In 1950 and 1951 he studied in Paris at the Ecole Normale de Musique with Arthur Honegger and privately with Nadia Boulanger. In 1960 he studied with Roberto Gerhard, a pupil of Schoenberg’s and in 1964 worked on electronic music with Mario Davidovsky. He taught at the University of Michigan for many years. Bassett’s awards include the Concours International pour Quatuor a Cordes in Belgium, the Prix de Rome (1961–1962), the National Institute of Arts and

Letters, the UNESCO International Rostrum of Composers, and the Pulitzer Prize (1966, for his *Variations for Orchestra*).

Music for Saxophone and Piano (1968) is not a twelve-tone or serially organized work but rather a free chromatic piece employing some of the same principles for coherence and expressivity. The style is closer to that which in painting would be called Abstract Expressionism. The alto sax is used in a very fluid manner, with a wide tonal and dynamic range. The writing often recalls, in manner if not in style, the improvisatory qualities of jazz performance; the material, however, is all written out precisely. A number of unusual performance techniques are employed in the piano part, including stopping or damping notes on the strings with the fingers of the left hand as they are struck normally by the right hand (for instance, the opening sound of the piece), pizzicato, and a tone cluster or two.

The work is in four musically related movements. The first, fast, alternates quick and static motion, subsiding twice from fortissimo high points. The second, slow, picks up in intensity, speed, and dynamic to a single high point from which it subsides. The third movement, moderato, is scherzo-like and metrically free (it is not written out in measures; instead the beats are given and the notes written out in a rough, unmeasured relationship to the beat). The fast and intense last movement culminates in a recap of the opening of the piece and a cadenza of exceptional intensity (the composer's direction at one point is "violent"). This cadenza includes runs, trills, and register extremes. The work ends with a brief presto and a distinct effect of C major. —*Eric Salzman*

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7 *Fancies for Clarinet Alone* (publ. MJQ Music, Inc.) 7:07
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8 *Music for Saxophone and Piano* (publ. C. F. Peters Corp.) 9:00
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