

# While Mother jingles sadly

Even allowing for some personal bias, since I know the composer pretty well, it seems quite safe to say that Jim Burton's "Six Solos in the Form of a Pair," which I heard at the Kitchen on October 17, is the most substantial piece Burton has done, that it is an extremely effective blend of musical ideas and theatrical ideas, and that it is one of the few chamber works around which holds up as a program by itself.

The "Six Solos" are tied together by "Mother's Piano Solo," which runs throughout the hour-and-20-minute program. This began as

ventional types of clarinet sound, although it is never very fast or virtuosic, the way contemporary clarinet solos usually are. I had trouble getting into his section and found my attention shifting across the room to "Mother's Piano Solo."

But the flute solo, "Festoons," played by Rhys Chatham, had me hooked from start to finish. Here, a little phrase containing only two notes repeats itself into a phrase of three, four, and five notes. It continues to grow and shift until the end, when it is 10 or 12 notes long and has evolved through several different tonalities.

For "Potpourri," Mike Levenson came on in a chef's outfit and unveiled a large rack of pots and pans. He set a kitchen timer, poured a little water and rice in the pans, and then proceeded to do some very impressive drum-

ming on the pots and pans, which turned out to have very attractive sounds. When the bell on the timer went off, he served a few bowls of the uncooked rice to members of the audience and exited.

For the final solo, "Simple Cymbal Piece," the composer came on in a lion tamer's outfit, carrying a suitcase labeled "Burton's Trained Cymbal Act." He rolled a number of cymbals down a little ramp, slashing some of them with his whip. He tried to make one of his cymbals jump through a hoop, but it refused to do so, even when enticed with a carrot.

By the end of the program, most of the vibrators on the piano strings had run down, and the piano was softer. Gillespie was still playing variations of the same

*Continued on next page*

## music

*Continued from preceding page*  
chord sequence at the keyboard, but the music had taken on a mournful quality and felt very different than it had at the beginning of the evening. He finally stopped playing and exited, accompanied only by a rather sad jingling created by the few vibrators that were still going.



"Six Solos in the Form of a Pair" at the Kitchen.  
"New Sounds and Cosmic Music" at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine (Johnson)  
Three concerts by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra: the Metropolitan Opera Company in "Don Giovanni" and "Un Ballo in Maschera"; the New York City Opera Company in "Lucia," "Boheme," and "Rigoletto"; the Aeolian Chamber Players (Kerner)

pianist Don Gillespie attached six or eight vibrating mechanisms to the piano so that they would vibrate lightly on the piano strings, making an odd, rippling piano noise. He then sat down at the keyboard and played a sequence of white-note chords. While the vibrators jingled on, he repeated this same basic sequence over and over, ingeniously exploring every possible variation of rhythm and phrasing, so that it never came out quite the same way. While "Mother's Piano Solo" was in progress, the other five performers came out, one by one, for their solos.

Soprano Judy Sherman sang "Free Offer Inside," which utilizes match book phrases for its text and rather dramatic atonal lines for its music. It is nothing special musically, but it sustains itself well, thanks to its unlikely text.

Clarinetist Jan Coward played "Solo Melancholia." This is also atonal, and utilizes many uncon-