

EVENINGS FOR NEW MUSIC

Program Notes

March 19 and 20, 1977

Albright-Knox Art Gallery

8:30 P.M.

March 19, 1977

PROGRAM NOTES

Works by Morton Subotnick

Some thoughts on UNTIL SPRING

Until Spring is the 4th work in my Butterfly series.

It represents a more subjective use of the metaphor than any of the first three....and while the earlier works relied on the metaphor to provide the structural as well as subject material, Until Spring deals with but a single point of time within the transformational process...this is the point or moment of emergence!

The 'emergent moment' itself is taken as a metaphor and acts as a spring-board for the entire work.

UNTIL SPRING deals with two gestures:

thrusting out....this is manifested by increases of  
everything...pitch, amplitude, timbre,  
rate...etc.

and

becoming.....toward pulsation

The title evokes:

Spring as the butterfly of the seasons

and

Spring!

4 Butterflies: This work is made from three BUTTERFLY fragments. Each fragment contains a symmetrical structure: wing, body, wing. The first wing is always more static than the second wing, but both wings have a more living quality than the second or 'body' fragment. The overall structure is modeled after the metamorphosis quality of the butterfly: larva, cocoon, butterfly. The butterfly (both its shape and its transformation) acts as a basic metaphor out of which all the materials of the score are generated. The visual scores

(both for the films and the lights) are made from the same score as the sound. That is, one score has generated the entire work. The light scores were 'realized' by myself and Mario Castillo. The film maker acts, in this case, as a performer of visual material.

2 Life Histories: Ghost Piece for clarinet, voice and electronics

The LIFE HISTORIES are the first in a series of ghost pieces. The ghost piece consists of an instrumental work (performed live) and a ghost score on tape. The tape contains unheard information which controls the electronics which in turn signals a potential acoustical composition in time and space. This ghost score describes when, where and how a sound would exist within the time of the composition and the space of the auditorium...but does not produce a sound of its own. When the live work is performed, the ghost score manifests itself in the auditorium so that we hear the performed work and the ghost score simultaneously.

I think of the manifestation of the ghost score as splashes of color and rhythm throughout the room 'reflecting' the sound from the stage.

This first is the life history of a butterfly... and is taken from various textbook descriptions of the butterfly.

The second is the life history of the 'soul', the butterfly having been (and still being) the metaphor for the spirit in many cultures. This text is a composite of passages from Bulfinch's Mythology and the Old Testament. -M.S.

Born in Los Angeles in 1933, MORTON SUBOTNICK studied music at the University of Denver and at Mills College with Darius Milhaud. After teaching at Mills College, Mr. Subotnick headed the Intermedia Program at the School of Arts at New York University and also directed the Electric Circus in Greenwich Village. In 1969, he was appointed associate dean and director of intermedia at the California Institute of the Arts at Los Angeles where he presently lives and works.

PAUL SCHMIDT is Professor of Slavic at the University of Texas at Austin, author of The Complete Works of Rimbaud in English, published by Harper and Row, and has performed as actor and reader, principally with Yvar Mikhashoff from coast to coast for the last five years.

March 20, 1977

PROGRAM NOTES

Doppelganger, Lightmusic for Oboes and Laser (1976) Paul Earls

Doppelganger, Lightmusic for Oboes and Laser, grew out of a collaborative project between Paul Earls and myself, supported as an exchange between the Center of the Creative and Performing Arts as well as the M.I.T. Center for Advanced Visual Studies. The use of the oboe and English Horn as sound generating sources for a laser proved to have fascinating possibilities, due to the vastly different overtone structure of the various double reed sonorities. For the performer, the most interesting aspect of the piece is, I think, the idea of working simultaneously with visual and aural material. Specific embouchure techniques had to be developed, for example, in order to alter the visual context - techniques which would be meaningless in a non-visual context. Finally, the task of finding what both looked good and sounded good created a rather unusual challenge for composer and performer. -Nora Post.

Oboist into oboe into two mikes into a wire into voltages into electro-magnetic field changes into mirror positions into laser beam scanning (one vertical, one horizontal) into Lissajous patterns onto a wall into a mirror into oboist's eyes/brain, mixed with sound; oboist sees/hears/feels - performs a total system including composer's directions, oboe, acoustical/optical electronics, columnated light, audience, self.

Nora Post has been superbly patient, responsive, flexible, and vastly stimulating. -Paul Earls.

PAUL EARLS, a resident fellow at the Institute for Advanced Visual Studies at M.I.T. was born in Springfield, Missouri, in 1934. A composer/musicologist, he has been working with chamber music, electronic instruments, laser projections, film and theater music. Among his environmental sound works and participatory events is "City Ring," created for the Boston Bicentennial celebration. He has been the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship, Guggenheim Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Arts award.

Polyhyperchord (1977)

Victor Grauer

Any attempt to adequately describe the evolution leading to my latest work, POLYHYPERCHORD, would require an essay. Suffice it to say that the piece developed from two sources; firstly, my long-time involvement with long, continuously developing, weakly articulated pieces designed to penetrate through various levels of mental and perceptual awareness -- a kind of work that, I feel, is leading me toward an art of pure mind - what I have come to call "direct mode;" secondly, my more recent involvement with brief, highly articulated, precise, extremely reduced structures, answering to a growing need on my part for clarity, the result of a renewed study of Webern and Mondrian.

POLYHYPERCHORD is an attempt to mediate between these two areas. Like the first group of pieces it is relatively long (about 30 minutes), and concerns itself with levels of awareness revealed through subliminal effects, mental "conditioning" and (to a limited extent) sensory deprivation. Like the second group, it is precisely articulated and extremely austere -- all means of expression have been radically limited to the point of plainness.

The piece is based on a twelve tone row, one form of which is played by each instrument only once. The original form is shared by the flute (piccolo) and oboe (English Horn). The retrograde is played by the 'cello, the inversion by the percussion, and the retrograde inversion by the violin. Each form of the row is, moreover, presented as a "chord". That is, as with an arpeggiated chord, it begins with the first note low and each succeeding note higher. This was a very consciously worked out decision. I wanted to neutralize the "shapes" created when notes go up and down in order to more fully realize my desire for a pure articulation of a musical pitch-space that would be analogued to time-space. To put it another way, I wanted to limit pitch in such a way that, like time, it would go in one "direction" only, so that there would be a unity of pitch and time structure. (Range limitations of some of the instruments necessitated some compromise which careful listeners may notice). The control of light ambiance, which is also a part of the piece, is designed to work in an analagous way--lights are only turned out, never on.

Derivation of the term, "polyhyperchord":

Chord: a division of pitch "space"--points (notes)  
(music) precisely placed in pitch "space" to relate

to one another and to the "space" as a whole in a pure sense (without regard to any other parameter, such as time)

Chord: a special extension of the term, used  
(film) by me to describe certain films of mine -- a division of time - "space" in a manner analagous to the way pitch "space" is divided in a musical chord.

Hyperchord: a time "chord" in which each "point" is articulated by the successively rising (or falling) pitches of a musical chord.

Polyhyperchord: a group of hyperchords presented polyphonically (in this case, each form of the tone row is a single hyperchord) -Victor Grauer

VICTOR GRAUER holds an M.A. in ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University and a Ph.D. in music composition from SUNYAB where he studied with Henri Pousseur and Lejaren Hiller. He is the creator of numerous musical works, instrumental and vocal as well as electronic, and since 1965, has been active as a filmmaker. Since 1968, he has been involved with many attempts of various kinds at synthesis of two or more art forms. Performances and film screenings throughout the United States, including the New York Film Festival, Film Maker's Cinematique, the Millenium, The Kitchen, University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh and the Center of the Creative and Performing Arts, Buffalo. Formerly Assistant Professor of Music, University of Pittsburgh, Mr. Grauer is presently on the faculty of Pittsburgh Film Makers, Inc. and research fellow at the Center of the Creative and Performing Arts.

Not I (1973)

Samuel Beckett

ELIZABETH HILLER performed Not I in 1975 for the Buffalo Theater Workshop at Keenan Center, Lockport, N.Y. She directed Krapp's Last Tape and Ibsen's Little Eyolf for the Workshop and has appeared as Mrs. Alving in Ghosts and Mary Tyrone in Long Day's Journey into Night.