

sus begins to question anxiously the lack of any independent response...is he being mocked? He gets more and more agitated and finally in a fury rushes headlong into the water to grapple with the figure. The waves surge up and Narcissus is drowned. There is a distant shimmering vision of Narcissus and his reflection. Then in the setting sun, the vision disappears, the forest is empty and the pool lies undisturbed."

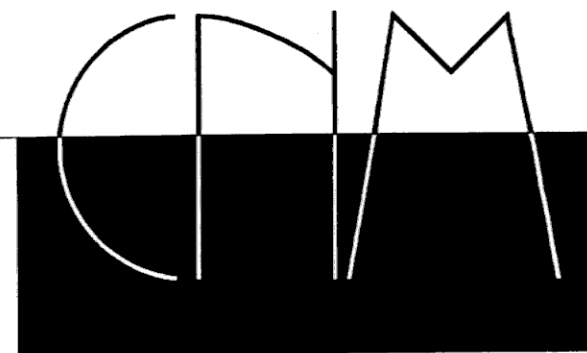
Eight Lines (1979)

When we think of Berkeley, California during the period of the late 60's, our consciousness is inundated with the vivid images of great social and political upheavals of which we in this country are still attempting to come to terms. It is interesting to note that one of the longest lasting cultural influences of this period is not political (ironically, California is becoming increasingly conservative) but is instead, musical. A small group of composers of shared vision and philosophy attending various bay area universities (San Francisco State, Mills College, and U.C. Berkeley) incorporated the diverse influences of tape looped recordings, Indian mysticism, meditation, traditional African percussion, and Balinese gamelon into one cohesive musical style which has single handedly changed the direction of American composition. Now referred to as "minimalist" music, it has developed into a style of composition based on a complex rhythmic foundation which uses small alterations to the metric pulse or harmonic structure to create tension. With the early pioneers being the composers Terry Riley and La Monte Young, we now see Steve Reich firmly established as the genre's torchbearer.

In 1964 while a student at Mills College, Steve Reich helped organize a public performance of Terry Riley's *In C* which is now regarded as the world's first performance of "minimalist" music. After further study at Juilliard, Reich in 1970 went to the University of Ghana in Accra to study with Gideon Alorworye, master drummer of the Ewe tribe. This period in Africa coupled with Reich's study of Balinese gamelon in 1973 is responsible for a cycle of works which are now regarded as masterpieces of the latter half of the twentieth century. They are *Drumming* (1971), *Clapping Music* (1972), *Music for 18 Musicians* (1976), and *Octet/Eight Lines* (1979), which is Reich's first mature work for a conventional ensemble.

Of his compositional style, Steve Reich said in an interview with Edward Strickland, "To me, our piano scale is something one picks up from the cradle. It's imbedded on an unconscious level and I don't want to mess with it! What one learns from African or Balinese music is how it's put together, how to organize sound—and the knowledge of structure and musical form naturally comes later in one's life."

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center for new music

david k. gompper, director

**29th Season
Concert VIII**

featuring
**THE
MINNESOTA
CONTEMPORARY
ENSEMBLE**

Sunday, April 28, 1996
Clapp Recital Hall
8:00 p.m.

Center for New Music

presents the

MINNESOTA CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE

Duane Schulthess - artistic director

Claudia White - flute

Jane Garvin - flute

Bob Samarotto - clarinet

Jen Gerth - clarinet

John Jensen - piano

Mary Jo Payne - piano

Troy Gardner - violin

Joe Meyer - violin

Karen McConomy - viola

Jim Jacobson - violoncello

Tom Trenka - technical support

program

Claptrap (1987)

Paul SISKIND

Six Etudes for Piano (1986)

György LIGETI

1. Disorder, 2. Open Strings, 3. Blocked Keys, 4. Fanfares, 5. Rainbow, 6. Autumn in Warsaw

John Jensen - piano

Third String Quartet (1981)

R. Murray SCHAFFER

intermission

Aeolian Partitions (1969)

Pauline OLIVEROS

Narcissus (1988)

Thea MUSGRAVE

Claudia White - flute

Eight Lines (1979)

Steve REICH

MINNESOTA CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE

Music and Performance for the 21st Century

Dedicated to the innovative performance of 20th century classics and contemporary milestones of Western art music, the Minnesota Contemporary Ensemble (MCE) has quickly become recognized as the twin cities' leading interpreter of contemporary chamber literature. MCE performed its debut at the Walker Art Center on May 13, 1993 and featured the Minnesota premiere of R. Murray Schafer's *Third String Quartet*, which received a standing ovation. Star Tribune critic Michael Anthony wrote of the concert, "Platt led intense, thoughtfully paced readings of the Varese and Schonberg. Flutist Peter Pearse brought a colorful, varied tone to Berio's *Sequenza I for flute* and violist Eric Peterson displayed agility and a feeling for the character of each of Felice's brief solo pieces...The Loring String Quartet played, and shouted, the Schafer quartet vividly."

MCE's objective is to bring contemporary art music to those in our society to whom it is foreign. What differentiates MCE from other chamber music organizations is its unique structure which utilizes a core group of musicians in many different capacities. This gives the ensemble greatly varied programming choices and complete flexibility to perform large portions of the contemporary repertoire which have rarely been presented within Minneapolis - Saint Paul area. Furthermore, MCE's chamber groups or soloists have a deciding voice in their performance repertoire and musical interpretation, giving ensemble members an integral part in the artistic process which is often neglected in today's musical environment.

As an educational resource, MCE actively engages in outreach concerts within schools of the twin cities metro area. These performances feature question and answer sessions with local composers as well as open forum discussions to the importance and understanding of contemporary esthetics. MCE has also instituted an innovative program which distributes free tickets to economically challenged students for their formal evening concerts. Encouraging participation as a vehicle for understanding, MCE outreach concerts include student volunteers performing for their peers under the guidance of MCE members. MCE strives to promote the highest standards of educational awareness and creative performance to meet the needs of our ever changing musical landscape.

DUANE SCHULTHESS is the Artistic Director and co-founder of the Minnesota Contemporary Ensemble. He has performed under the baton of Hans Werner Henze for his opera *The English Cat* and as soloist with the Manson Ensemble at the Paris Conservatory in October of 1990 for French National Radio. He was a founding member of London's Regent Wind Quintet, which maintained an active international schedule of over-100 concerts

a year, and with them, performed recitals for the BBC, National Public Radio, Ars Musica 1990, and the Toronto Mozart Festival. Duane Schulthess was a scholarship student at London's Royal Academy of Music from 1988 through 1991 in the studio of acclaimed horn soloist Michael Thompson. While abroad, he was the winner of the Leverhulme Trust, the Richard Merewether Memorial Scholarship, and the Royal Academy of Music Concerto Competition. Since returning to America, Duane Schulthess has won the Schubert Club and Thursday Musical Recital Competitions, has been a substitute performer with the Minnesota Orchestra, and served as Principal Horn of the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra from 1993 - 1995. Mr. Schulthess received his Master's Degree from the University of Minnesota and his Bachelor's Degree from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California where he graduated Magna Cum Laude. Currently, Duane Schulthess is a lecturing member of the Community Faculty of Metropolitan State University in the Twin Cities.

Pianist **JOHN JENSEN** is a founding member of the new music quartet Helios and was an Artist-in-Residence at Iowa's Grinnell College as member of the prestigious Mirecourt Trio until 1991. He has appeared in concert with Judith Raskin, Sidney Harth and the Gregg Smith Singers and has also accompanied violinist Endre Balogh and baritone Bruce Yarnell through the auspices of Columbia Artist Management. John Jensen has recorded the first and second piano sonatas of Charles Ives for the Music and Arts CD label and made his New York recital debut performing Ives' second sonata, the *Concord*. The New York Times said of this performance, "Jensen handled the enormous technical demands with aplomb...a first-rate performance of a great work."

CLAUDIA WHITE is the Principal Flautist of the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra and has performed recitals and competitions throughout the Midwestern United States. Of her solo performance of the Nielson *Flute Concerto* with the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra one reviewer remarked, "Her performance exhibited a mature sense of the tonal concepts and her fingers were a joy for audience flautists to watch." Claudia White holds degrees from Wichita State University and Northwestern University where she studied with Walfrid Kujala.

PROGRAM NOTES

Claptrap (1987)

Paul Siskind's music has been performed by such diverse ensembles as the New Amsterdam Singers, the Gotham Chamber Orchestra, the Omaha Symphony, and the Arditti String Quartet. He was the winner of the 1995 G. Schirmer *Young Americans Art Song Competition* and the 1994 *Omaha Symphony Guild Prize*. Dr. Siskind has also received grants and fellowships from the McKnight Foundation, ASCAP, Meet the

Composer, The Minnesota Composers Forum, and the Puffin Foundation.

In 1992 Paul Siskind was invited to be a guest composer at the University of Colorado's *Artsweek*. In 1994, Paul Siskind was invited to attend the first international conference on *Words and Music* sponsored by the Latin American Music Center at Indian University, where his composition *Homage* utilizing hymn tunes, burning oil, and placards bearing Senator Jesse Helms' name inspired vigorous debate. Paul Siskind currently teaches composition and music theory at Northeast Missouri State University and has previously been a Composer-in-Residence for the Minnesota Opera, Music Director of One Voice Mixed Chorus, and director of the Entourage Eclat composers consortium. He received his Ph.D. in composition from the University of Minnesota and has studied with Dominick Argento, Thea Musgrave, and Pauline Oliveros, among others.

Paul Siskind writes of the composition *Claptrap*, "The problem of how to afford performers some degree of improvisational freedom without allowing this device to usurp control of formal structure has continually fascinated me. *Claptrap* explores this issue by distilling out the parameters of pitch and harmonic organization, leaving rhythmic coordination as the primary focus. The piece begins with a free-form improvisation, then continues through a series of freely repeated rhythmic loops. At times, individual rhythms may emerge; at others, sheer cacophony might inundate. *Claptrap* was written in 1987 during a seminar with Pauline Oliveros at Brooklyn College."

Six Etudes for Piano (1985)

Although it is safe to say Gyorgy (George) Ligeti is not a household name, it is quite probable that many Americans are keenly aware of the music of the composer via its prominent place in the classic Stanley Kubric film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*. A kaleidoscopic array of dissonance and color, Ligeti's music is a rich study of a multitude of cultural influences. Born in what is now Romania in 1923, George Ligeti was a student, and subsequently a professor, at the Franz Liszt Music Academy in Budapest until 1956, when, faced with Russian tanks, Ligeti chose exile in the West. Taking Austrian citizenship in 1959, his earliest works in this new environment were developed in the electronic studio at West German Radio in Koln (Cologne). Although the bulk of his compositional output is for acoustic, not electronic instruments, the early quest for new sonic possibilities are alive and well in the entirety of the composer's catalogue. With his recent interests in the complex rhythmic structures of traditional musics of Central Africa and motets of the European Renaissance, the style of this fascinating composer continues to evolve.

The *Six Etudes for Piano* won the 1986 University of Louisville Grawemeyer International Prize for Composition. Regarding the style of the work, the composer states, "I have always had an interest in puzzles, paradoxes of perception and ideas, for certain aspects of the shaping and building of form. Furthermore, I am very partial to the works of

Lewis Carroll, M.C. Escher, Saul Steinberg, Franz Kafka, Boris Vian, Sandor Weores, Jorge Luis Borges and Douglas Hofstadter. Since the beginning of the 1980's this list of stimulating interests has been extended to include recordings from Simha Arom's collection of Central African music and Benoit Mandelbrot's fascinating fractals." In summary, Ligeti's *Six Etudes for Piano* are not just an exercise of the scientific or the mathematical, but rather a unique synthesis of intellect and emotion channeled throughout the lens of diverse experiences and interests.

Third String Quartet (1981)

My *Third String Quartet* was written in the late spring of 1981 at the same time as I was composing *The Princess of the Stars*, a large scale music drama which is performed around a lake at dawn. Not only did the composition of the two works overlap but the premieres coincided in September 1981, when *Princess* was performed on a lake near Toronto and the quartet was performed by the Orford Quartet in Boston. Space is a theme in both works. In the case of *Princess* the space is a lake over which the performers move; in the case of the quartet, the limited space of the concert hall is expanded to create a virtual space of seemingly greater dimensions. This is most obvious when the first violinist leaves the stage and moves off into the distance to a point where we cannot be sure whether we still hear his playing or merely remember it, so that in the end, space and time become intermingled.

While the beginning and ending of the work are open, the middle movement is densely packed, almost as if the players were fighting one another. Vocalizations accentuate the physical gestures of the playing and the momentum is relentless throughout. By contrast, the third movement is a sustained mediation in which players have become united in a long unison line suggestive, perhaps, of Indian mysticism.

"All my six quartets are related and the third begins at the precise point where the second ends (with the cellist alone on the stage) and ends where the fourth will begin (with the first violinist in the distance.) As such, they can, and have been, performed together."

R. Murray Schafer

Aeolian Partitions (1969)

A composer, performer, author and philosopher, Pauline Oliveros has influenced American music extensively through her works, incorporating improvisation, electronics, myth, ritual, and meditation. Her most recent commissions include *Ghost Dance* in collaboration with Boston based choreographer Paula Josa Jones, commissioned by Lincoln Center in 1995, music for the Mabou Mines production of *Lear*, and *Contenders* for the Susan Marshall Dance Co. She has performed at the John F. Kennedy Center for the

Performing Arts in Washington D.C., New Music America Festivals, and in countless concert halls worldwide. In 1985, Pauline founded The Pauline Oliveros Foundation, Inc. to support all aspects of the creative process for a worldwide community of artists. From her early years as the first Director of the Tape Music Center at Mills College to her fourteen year term as Professor of Music at the University of California San Diego, her composition, performances and innovations have already established her place in music history.

Aeolian Partitions was written on a commission from the Aeolian Players and was designed to "de-construct" the formality of normal classical music performance presentation. Although *Aeolian Partitions* appears at the beginning to be a "typical" contemporary composition, the work begins to mutate until the presentation takes on a very theatrical attitude bordering on the realm of the surreal. This evening's performance of *Aeolian Partitions* is made possible by the Minnesota Composers Forum's Performance Incentive Fund underwritten by the Knight Foundation.

Narcissus (1988)

Born in Scotland in 1928, Thea Musgrave was one of many gifted composers to make a pilgrimage to Paris to study with the great composition instructor, Nadia Boulanger. After a very prosperous compositional career in the United Kingdom, Musgrave moved to America in the early 1970's and in 1976 became the first woman to conduct her own composition with the Philadelphia Orchestra with her *Concerto for Orchestra*. Since that time, she has conducted her own compositions in performances by numerous other British and American ensembles, including the English Opera Group, the Scottish and the San Francisco Spring Opera Companies, the Scottish Ballet, the BBC, London, San Diego and San Francisco Symphony Orchestras, and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

Narcissus is based on the mythological tale of the Greek god who, enamored with his own reflection in a pond, drowns while fighting with his own image. What makes *Narcissus* truly unique as a contemporary work is the innovative use of the digital delay unit to create the aural illusion of the flute player's reflection. Thea Musgrave submits the following synopsis of her composition:

Narcissus wanders through the forest, observing, enjoying...unselfconscious but self-absorbed. He sees a pool of water and then, as he approaches, notices his reflection in the water. He is intrigued and then jumps away from the pool to consider this phenomenon. Several times he approaches, the figure is always there watching him. In the shimmering sunlight *Narcissus* seems to see this glorious and attractive being moving in the rippling water. He is dazzled and slowly holds out his arms. To his amazement, the figure responds. In awe and wonder, *Narcissus* approaches closer and closer. With a sudden change of mood, *Narcissus* dances happily and playfully...the figure echoing him. But then, *Narcis-*