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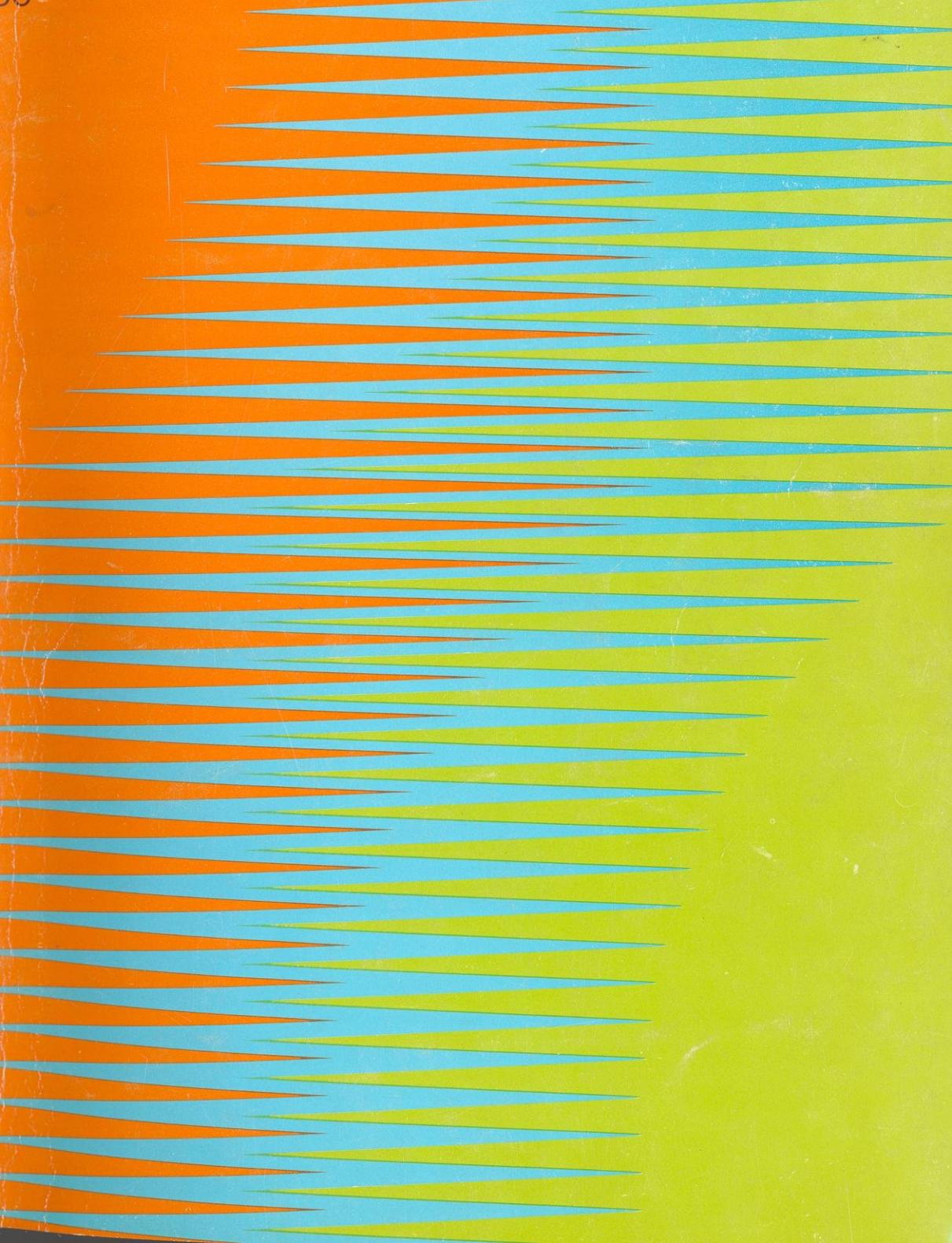
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arts in society

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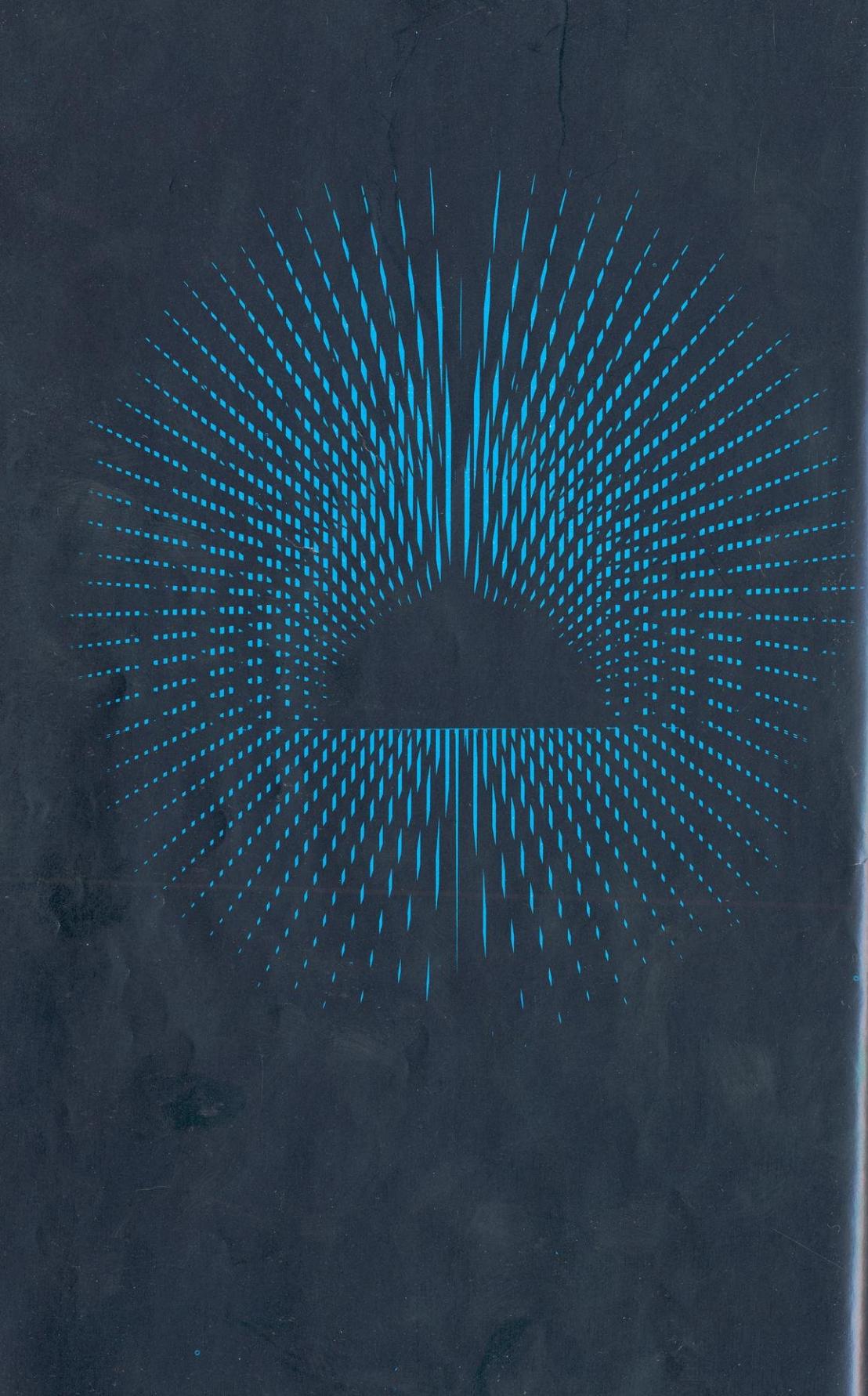
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A Visit to the Aquarium: An Introduction to This Issue

Gilbert Chase

... the contemporary aquarium (no longer a dark hallway with each species in its own illuminated tank separated from the others and named in Latin): a large glass house with all the fish in it swimming as in an ocean.

John Cage, Preface to NOTATIONS

There is something to be said, I suppose, for this notion of indiscriminate togetherness — the temporal coexistence of diverse species of the same genus, whether they be fish of the sea or human beings who make music. It's obvious that different species **do** coexist in time: Stravinsky and John Cage, Walter Piston and Earle Brown, Howard Hanson and Gordon Mumma, Roy Harris and Robert Ashley, and so on. Cage has chosen to make this coexistence visible in his new book, NOTATIONS (The Something Else Press, New York, 1969), a sampling of contemporary musical notation from the work of 269 composers. In his desire to avoid any kind of formal, aesthetic, technical, or chronological classification, Cage chose the most arbitrary system of ordering that could be found: the alphabet. "The manuscripts are not arranged according to kinds of music, but alphabetically according to the composer's name." From Adaskin to Zacher. As in any such procedure, some members of the same species are randomly juxtaposed. For example, avant-garde composers Robert Ashley and Larry Austin, or traditionalists Arthur Bliss and Ernest Bloch. On the other hand, swimming side by side are such incongruous pairs as Luciano Berio and Leonard Bernstein, Cornelius Cardew and Elliott Carter, Alberto Ginastera and Jimmy Giuffre, Lejaren Hiller and Alan Hovhaness, Douglas Moore and Robert Moran, Ned Rorem and Diter Rot, Christian Wolff and Stefan Wolpe.

What is the purpose of such a collection? According to Cage, "it shows the many directions in which music notation is now going." That it does indeed. But where does this leave the reader, the observer, the visitor to the aquarium? I have never been to the contemporary aquarium described by Cage. My boyhood memories take me back to the old New York Aquarium in Battery Park, a dark circular hallway with each species in its own illuminated tank separated from the others and named in Latin. I liked it that way; of course, it was a benighted age, and I knew no better: John Cage was still an infant. I was predestined to be a critic, hence it seemed natural to me that every living creature should have a label and be observable in its own habitat. Later this habit of thought was applied to forms, styles, techniques, influences, affiliations, genealogies, developments, trends — the whole crummy bag of critical impedimenta.

The trouble with the critical-historical, didactic-pedagogic, informative-expository books about contemporary music is precisely that they are **about** something that needs to be seen and known and felt from **within**. Their authors write about Cage or Stockhausen in exactly the same way, with the identical criteria and point of view that they write about Prokofiev or Hindemith. They are incapable of initiating us into new realms of being and experiencing. Hence the really valuable writings on contemporary music are those that create a truly contemporary visual-verbal environment through which we enter another world of awareness and perception. A good example is Dick Higgins' new book, *fo e w & o m b w h n w* (see Basic Bibliography), which combines interpretative essays with creative pieces. Moreover, the book is printed in four separate columns, running simultaneously from beginning to end of the volume. This sort of reading experience is worth more than ten treatises on the properties and effects of simultaneity in the arts.

There are many books on contemporary music — or at least on twentieth-century music (they are not quite the same thing) — written by academic types with conventional criteria in mind. None of them, in my opinion, is very helpful except in a merely informative way: they give dates and names and titles; they juggle terms like atonality, expressionism; pointillism, serialism, parameters; they are didactic,

pedantic, pedestrian; they analyze, describe, explain; they give good advice ("the reader is urged to familiarize himself with the new music") — and they are one hell of a bore.'

Having dumped most of my critical impedimenta somewhere along the line, I can sympathize with Cage's desire to discard classifications and labels and compartments. I have just taken a look at my record collection, and I see that there too I've largely let the alphabet be my guide (after all, it is convenient). To be sure, I may put Latin American Music on one shelf, and "classical" music on another. But that still makes a jumble of periods, styles, forms, aesthetic criteria, etcetera. And anyhow, within the space of fifteen or twenty linear feet, a sampling of the entire universe of music — past, present and future — is at my fingertips.² Centuries, civilizations, primitive and complex cultures; continents, nations, cities; folk, popular, exotic, and fine-art traditions; every source of sound known to mankind, from the gourd rattle to the Moog Synthesizer, can pass through a pair of earphones into my entire nervous system. In this moment of truth, of total immersion in the music itself, of complete existential communion with the phenomenon of sound, at once spiritualized and corporealized — books, theories, systems, classifications, periods, opinions, dates, influences are as blown chaff, as flecks of dust one whisks from the platter. Besides, I've read all the books.

And so back to the aquarium. "No explanatory information is given," declares the Maestro. Nevertheless, there is a text (with typography marvelously composed by Alison Knowles): "The composers were asked to write about notation or something relevant to it." So that the resulting information would not be too explanatory, it was manipulated by employing I-Ching chance operations:

These determined how many words regarding his work were to be written by or about which of two hundred and sixty-nine composers. Where these passages (never more than sixty-four words, sometimes only one) have been especially written for this book, they are preceded by a paragraph sign and followed by the author's name. Other remarks were chosen or written by the editors — John Cage and Alison Knowles. Not only the number

of words and the author, but the typography too — letter size, intensity, and typeface — were all determined by chance operations. This process was followed in order to lessen the difference between text and illustrations.

From the chance-manipulated statements in NOTATIONS I have selected — not at all by chance or at random — some representative examples (reprinted, alas! in uniform typography):

Relevant notation is the only answer.
— Kenneth Gaburo.

After weighing an average-sized tenor's F sharp, he said that music is a dirty business. — Anon.

Composition does not terminate with the construction of the graph but continues orally through the dramaturgic transmutation of the visual into sound. — Sydney Wallace Stegall.

To give these sounds to people in a form that has the constant availability and listening privacy of a recording, and yet is not a past event preserved but something which is continuing. — Max Neuhaus.

Paik. *When you compose, do you think notation first? May I ask?*

Cage. *Yes, you may ask. . . Both constitute inseparable entity. . . I cannot separate them. . . (1958, Ongakugeijutsu).*

. . . the music-schools are old-fashioned, dead museum-machines — Gertrud Meyer-Denckman.

The notation is provocation-memory of sonorous occurrences, commemorative stone, gravestone of the musical thoughts themselves. — Franco Evangelisti.

The rules are remembered but they've lost their hold. — Anon.

Notation can be nice. — Lou Harrison.

Our system of notation is incapable of representing any except the most primary divisions of the whole note. — Henry Cowell.

I welcome the introduction of any astounding, unprecedented new sounds into general music use, but the sounds themselves must be extraordinary — I find meaningless the representation on paper

of effects which cannot reach the ear in actual performance. — Henry Brant.

Since the problems arise from constriction, not freedom, why not begin with the notion that anything will do visually as long as you get the sound? — George F. Flynn.

Notation of sound in time and space must give its information as clearly, as precisely and as beautifully as possible. While it is primarily a chart for ears, it must play provocatively and irresistibly on the eye. — Noël Llinos.

The writing down of a musical thought is in every way as personal and revealing as the writing down of any thought. Examining a music manuscript, inevitably I sense the man behind the notes. The fascination of a composer's notation is the fascination of human personality.

— Aaron Copland.

This notation appears as seen from an airplane, suggesting how music surrounds us and rises up. In the scale of the images, one would be listening a hundred feet above — the staves become roadways, with pianos and strings marking blocks and intersections. — Anon.

... good notation is what works. — Earle Brown.

Fundamentally, notation is a serviceable device for coping with imponderables. — Roberto Gerhard.

A new sense of the ordering elements: not to pretend to catch in a work the whole of the sonorous event, but to accept the unavoidable percentage of indetermination and to propose an order, suitable to be applied to the suggested elements. — Graciela Castillo.

To perceive simultaneously several discontinuous structures as being one total syntactical manifestation is unique to our twentieth century. — James Drew.

Silence more than sound expresses sound's parameters (including parameters we've not noticed). Thoreau said sounds are bubbles on Silence's surface. They burst. It's a question of how many bubbles Silence has on it. — Anon.

Why, hell, it isn't anything, it's just one damn thing after another! — Barney Childs.

It would be regrettable to have these qualities sacrificed for originality or intellectuality. — Jimmy Giuffre.

Exit this way. The management hopes you have enjoyed your visit to the Contemporary Aquarium of Musical Notation. Sight without Sound. A visual-verbal experience. Bubbles of silence blown by strange fish. What next?

II

WHAT IS CONTEMPORARY?

In all the arts there is a physical component which can no longer be considered or treated as it used to be, which cannot remain unaffected by our modern knowledge and power. . . . We must expect great innovations to transform the entire technique of the arts, thereby affecting artistic invention itself and perhaps even bringing about an amazing change in our very notions of art.

Paul Valéry, *Pièces sur l'Art*.

Here we leave the realm of hypothesis to enter that of the possible.

Blaise Cendrars, *Moravagine*.

The reason that textbook, musicological lucubrations, and other standard "guides" to contemporary music never get to the heart of the matter is that, for the most part, they deal with music as a self-contained phenomenon, an object-in-itself to be analyzed, dissected, described, and classified. But "contemporary" is a state of mind. You are either with it — *con tempo* (as Stravinsky once said) — or you are not. Many people find it easy to be contemporary as regards the material things that affect their lives, such as transportation and television, but balk at accepting the contemporaneity of art. This is because they fail to make the essential connection between art and its environment. In today's world, this connection — at least in America — has been best explained by three key writers: Buckminster Fuller, Marshall McLuhan, and John Cage.³ Among the younger men, Dick Higgins has done some brilliant exegesis.⁴ There were also some remarkably clairvoyant precursors, notably Paul Valéry, Walter Benjamin, Marcel Duchamp, and (in music) Erik Satie.⁵ The work of these men is all that one needs for a basic

understanding of contemporary art,' but one can pick up many interesting insights and points of view from other writers, especially poets and artists. There is, for example, this bit by Blaise Cendrars (from *Moravagine*):

As it is performed (and especially as it is taught) music is no more than a laboratory experiment, the diagrammatic theory of what modern technique and mechanics achieve on a vaster scale. The most complicated machines and the symphonies of Beethoven move according to identical laws, they progress arithmetically, they are ruled by a need of symmetry which breaks down their motion into a series of minuscule, minute and identical measures. The figured bass corresponds to a certain meshing of gears which, infinitely repeated, releases with a minimum of effort (wear) the maximum aesthetic value (useful energy). The result is the construction of a paradoxical, artificial, conventional world which can be taken to pieces and put together again at leisure by the understanding.

The extraordinary prescience of this passage (written in 1926) resides in its anticipation of one of the basic processes of post-1950 music, namely the transformation (through electronic and/or environmental metamorphosis) of works from the classical repertory. The discovery that the standard musical repertory is an artificial and conventional construction susceptible of being continually taken to pieces and put together again, is a prime accomplishment of the new aesthetics.'

Of course, this discovery could only become meaningful when the means for its realization became available through electronics. The process was most recently illustrated in a composition by John Cage and Lejaren A. Hiller, titled HPSCHD, first performed at the University of Illinois, Urbana, on May 16, 1968.'

The impulse for this work came from a desire to "make with the computer an art that had not been possible before." As described by Richard Kostelanetz in *The New York Times* (May 25, 1969):

The sounds came from 59 amplified channels, each with its own loudspeaker high in the auditorium. Fifty-two channels contained computer-generated music composed in octaves divided at every

interval between five and 56 tones to the octave. . . . On top of this mix one could hear seven amplified harpsichords. . . . Three of the harpsichords were playing fixed versions of Mozart's late 18th-century *Introduction to the Composition of Waltzes by Means of Dice*, in which the performer is allowed to play sections in any order he wishes. With computer assistance, Cage and Hiller realized three different fixed versions of the fragments, two of which incorporated other passages from Mozart. Two more harpsichordists . . . played differing but individually fixed collages of harpsichord music from Mozart to the present, while David Tudor played computer print-out for 12-tone gamut. The seventh harpsichordist . . . had nothing more specific than blanket permission to play any Mozart he wished. . . .

Who says the classics are dead? Drastic metamorphosis is the supreme test of the immortals. Computerized Mozart, switched-on Bach . . . who's next? This way for Instant Contemporaneity. There's even hope for Brahms. . . .

The essence of contemporaneity is different things happening or existing at the same time. That is actually what the term means. For that reason I am now inclined to accept Cage's view of the Contemporary Aquarium, which I previously wanted to reject. I was annoyed, for instance, by a book like *Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music* (edited by Schwartz and Childs) because it includes such disparate figures as Ernest Bloch and Edgard Varèse, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Morton Feldman, Paul Hindemith and Richard Maxfield.' If these composers (I said to myself), belonging to utterly different mental and technical worlds, are all equally "contemporary," then the term has no significant meaning — it indicates merely an indiscriminate chronological jumble. I confess that this juxtaposition still irks me:

Yet I can't fully accept the notion of indiscriminate contemporaneity. Just as they say that all men are created equal but some are more equal than others, so I would say that all persons living at the same time are contemporary, but some are more contemporary than others. Much as I would like to accept Cage's permissiveness, his ideas of no order, my critical bias impels me to seek an idea of order.

For me, the ordering idea in contemporaneity is not chronology but temporality. The "most contemporary" composer is he who is most completely with the time. The variable factor, of course, is time. Every moment in history has its own contemporaneity, defined by a repertory of realized possibilities — such as, in our own time, nuclear energy, outer space travel, laser beams, electronic generation of sound, etc. In the arts, the avant garde has the function of realizing the maximum aesthetic potential of a given temporal "climate." Hence the avant garde, by definition, forms the apex of the contemporary situation. From this temporal apex, everything else recedes backward in time — which is not to say that it is less "valuable:" it is simply less contemporary.

The process also operates in reverse order: some composers whom chronology places in the past are actually more "contemporary" (with relation to our own time) than many others living today. Two cases in point are Erik Satie (1866-1925) and Charles Ives (1874-1954). They were, as the saying goes, "ahead of their time." Now they are our contemporaries. Ives, among other things, showed us that "to simultaneously perceive several discontinuous structures as being one total syntactical manifestation," would result in a new kind of musical experience. The multimedia experiments today carry this concept much further, not only in combining the various arts but also in utilizing the total environment.

In a fascinating article in SOURCE (Vol. 3, No. 1, January, 1969) Dick Higgins writes about one aspect of Satie's contemporaneity: the importance of boredom.⁹ As Higgins writes: "Boredom was, until recently, one of the qualities an artist tried most to avoid. Yet today it appears that artists are deliberately trying to make their work boring." In trying to find out how this came to pass, he concludes that, "In music the key personality in this development, as in many others, is Erik Satie." He mentions a piece that Satie wrote shortly before World War I, called *Vieux Sequins et Vieilles Cuirasses*, spoofing the military and the glories of nationalism:

At the end of the piece there appears an eight-beat passage evocative of old marches and patriotic songs, which is to

be repeated 380 times. In performance the satirical intent of this repetition comes through very clearly, but at the same time other very interesting results begin to appear. The music first becomes so familiar that it seems extremely offensive and objectionable. But after that, the mind slowly becomes incapable of taking further offense, and a very strange, euphoric acceptance and enjoyment begin to set in. . . . By the time the piece is over, the silence is absolutely numbing, so much of an environment has the piece become.

The acceptance of boredom as part of the musical experience not only has interesting possibilities for contemporary art-music, but seems also to have permeated some sectors of popular music, as in the extremely long "sets" played by some Rock groups. But duration and repetition are of course only two aspects of boredom. The whole question needs to be studied in depth.

The paradigm of contemporaneity in music is Cage's "silent piece" titled 4' 33" (1952). In this piece the performer is not directed to produce any sounds. Instead, the sounds, which constitute the content of the piece, are found in the environment — wherever, whatever, and whenever it happens to be. Thus, with three built-in variables — time, place, and content — this piece triumphantly solves the problem of perpetual contemporaneity (corresponding to the old idea of perpetual motion). In general, the principle of variable content — through "open forms" that permit the indefinite utilization of environmental sounds — is a fundamental and far-reaching factor in much of the new music.¹⁰

The next step is to extend this principle in practice so that it becomes readily available to the individual private consumer of music — whose role should no longer be passive but active. That is to say, he should be able to manipulate the music he hears and to modify it in any way that he pleases. Something of this is already happening — as Otto Henry points out in his article on "The Electrotechnology of Modern Music" — through the individual's control of his high fidelity equipment: speaker placement, volume, balance, treble and bass adjustments, etc., which gives him "the power of creating his own personal

arrangement or interpretation of a sound ideal, an ideal that is different in each person. . ." A rudimentary beginning, but one that has infinite possibilities for counteracting the standardization of modern life. These possibilities for individualized music-making are more likely to be realized through the very flexible and versatile medium of the tape recorder — at least until the Moog Synthesizer or its equivalent becomes a household item. Again, Cage was a pioneer in this field.

His *Williams Mix* (1952) consisted of a score (i.e., directions) for making music on magnetic tape, using some 600 recordings for this purpose, with chance operations derived from the I-Ching. Of course, in 1952 few people had the equipment or know-how to do this. But the growth of the small, do-it-yourself electronic studio has been phenomenal. Mass production is certain to come; the human problem is how to save the individual from being merely a passive consumer, as he is in the concert hall or sitting before a television screen.

I believe that Max Neuhaus went to the heart of the matter when he stated the need "To give these sounds to people in a form that has the constant availability and listening privacy of a recording, and yet is not a past event preserved but something which is continuing." Marvelous as are the benefits of disc recordings, they have not overcome the limitation of being "a past event preserved" — inflexible, immutable, embalmed. Even spontaneity becomes stale by repetition. This is the humanistic challenge of contemporary music: to make the listening experience instantly and privately available, as a personal, individual experience in a society increasingly dominated by mass consumption and cultural regimentation, and at the same time to prevent it from being merely a passive experience based on an invariable mechanical repetition of identical units (like the music machine described by Cendrars) — "not a past event preserved but something which is continuing" — perpetually renewing itself in the creative psyche of the individual.

A significant practical step in this direction appears to have been taken by composer Jon Hassell (b. 1937), with the do-it-yourself pieces titled *MAP₁* and *MAP₂*. The latter, reproduced in *SOURCE* (III, 1, January

1969), is described as follows by the composer:

MAP₂ is to be realized by means of a hand-held magnetic playback head with appropriate pre-amplification and power amplification (i.e., the tape-head input found on many home-type hi-fidelity amplifiers). The various speeds and kinds of motion used in moving the head over the surface will create corresponding modulations in the magnetically printed sound, making it (desirably) difficult to trace exactly the same path twice. Hopefully, each 'explorer' will discover the potential of the surface in some special way.

The "surface" to which Hassell refers consists of a six-inch square surface made up of pre-recorded magnetic tape arranged in horizontal strips, with "sounds of crowds, laughter, excerpts, African drums, generators, motorcycles, water, whispering, etc." — a total of about 48 tracks of varied sound material. To these were added vertical tracks, "written" with hand-held recording head. In the third and final process, diagonal tracks were added, also with hand-held recording head. In steps two and three, fewer sounds were used (in step 3, only "widely spaced sine-tone 'blips'"). To avoid an impression of total confusion, the composer adds this reassuring note: "The nature of magnetic recordings is such that, while reading the sound in one of the three layers, the sound from the other two will be almost (or completely) inaudible."

Once the "master" has been made, it can be reproduced in quantity (e.g., two thousand one hundred copies of *MAP₂* were printed). Anyone who has or can get a hand-held magnetic playback head (Hassell assures us that they are readily available and "very inexpensive"), and the necessary amplifying equipment, is ready to let his hand trace a voyage of discovery through this contemporary Map of Sound.

BASIC BIBLIOGRAPHY

N.B. These writings do not (primarily) give information about contemporary music and its makers. Their main purpose is to create a mental climate of perception and receptivity, whereby one comes to understand — and perhaps to accept — the premises and values of contemporary art.

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Translated by Harry Zohn. Edited and with an Introduction by Hannah Arendt. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1968). Especially "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."

John Cage: *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1961).

———: *A Year from Monday: New Lectures and Writings* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1967).

Marcel Duchamp: "The Creative Act," in Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Grove Press, 1959). This volume also includes a list of writings by Duchamp (statements, quotations, letters, interviews, etc.)

Buckminster Fuller: *Untitled Epic Poem on the History of Industrialization* (Highlands, N.C.: Jonathan Williams & The Nantahala Foundation, 1962). (Recommended only for those who wish to go deeply into the backgrounds of contemporary art.)

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———: *f o e w & o m b w h n w. a grammar of the mind and a phenomenology of love and a science of the arts as seen by a stalker of the wild mushroom.* (New York: The Something Else Press, 1969). Especially "Intermedia," "Games of Art," "Intending," "Boredom and Danger," And "Structural Researches" — but it's all good.

Marshall McLuhan: *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1965). Like it or not, an indispensable work (and one does **not** have to swallow it whole).

Paul Valéry: *Pièces sur l'art* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946). Especially "La Conquête de l'Ubiquité" (1929) and "Propos sur le Progrès" (1928). English translation by Ralph Manheim, in *Paul Valéry, Aesthetics* (New York: Pantheon Books, The Bollingen Series, 1964).

NOTES

1.

An exception is Peter Yates' *Twentieth Century Music* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1967). But, as the title indicates, its subject is not, strictly speaking, **contemporary** music.

2.

The very act of selecting the recordings that one will play at any given time is in itself a kind of "composing." One chooses not only the musical content, but also the order of performance and the over-all duration. Much more flexibility is obtainable with a combination of record player and tape recorder. One may then select **parts** of any compositions, of any duration that one wishes, and combine them in any sequence that one chooses — either at will or by chance operations.

3.

It is interesting to note that this trio of aesthetic luminaries is brought into conjunction in a work by the Canadian avant-garde composer Udo Kasemets: *T: Tribute to Buckminster Fuller, Marshall McLuhan and John Cage* (a cybernetic, computer-controlled audio-visual audience participation piece).

4.

Another young composer-critic, Eric Salzman, has specialized in multi-media theatre works, about which he has written knowledgeably in *New American Review*, *Performing Arts*, *The Drama Review*, etc. Larry Austin is a strongly articulate and controversial spokesman for his own wing of the avant garde: and he is of course

influential as editor of *SOURCE: Music of the Avant Garde*, of which five issues have thus far been published at Davis, California.

5.

Satie, who did not write systematically, had a highly original mind and his ideas have proved stimulating to a number of avant garde composers of the present day, notably John Cage and Dick Higgins.

6.

See Basic Bibliography at end of this article.

7.

The same is true of the plastic arts; for example, the Mexican artist Gironella has been "decomposing" and "recomposing" famous paintings of the past, mostly by Velazquez (e.g., *Queen Marianna*), in a sequence of startling metamorphoses in mixed media.

8.

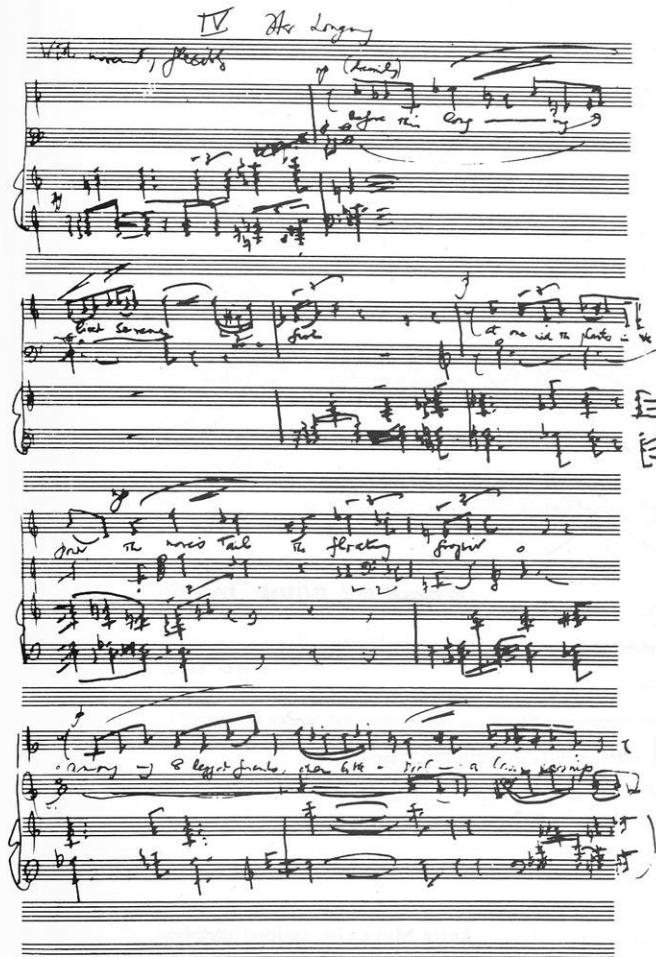
In a joint interview with Larry Austin (*SOURCE* II, 2, July, 1968), Cage and Hiller describe the procedures used in the composition of this work. A recording of it is available (Nonesuch H-71224). I find it significant that at about the same time, Karlheinz Stockhausen was composing *Hymnen* (recording: DDG 139 421/22, four sides), described as "Anthems for electronic and concrete sounds," which takes a number of national anthems through an extreme process of metamorphosis.

9.

This article is reprinted in Higgins' book, *foew & ombwhnw* (see Basic Bibliography).

10.

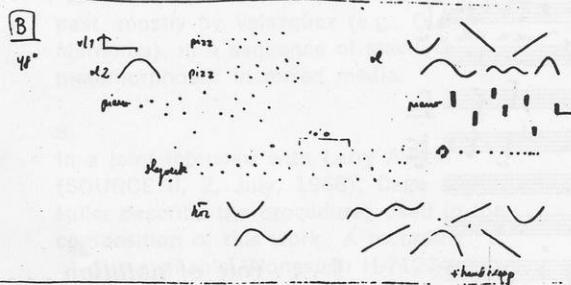
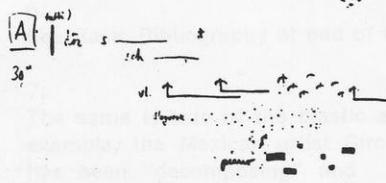
The concept of "found sounds" — drawn from the environment — corresponds to that of "found objects" in contemporary painting and sculpture. A good example in music is Cage's *Variation IV* (1965), of which a recorded version exists (made with the assistance of David Tudor) from a performance at the Feigen-Palmer Gallery in Los Angeles (Everest ST-3132). The Cage-Hiller HPSCHD has been described by Donal Henahan as "A collage of found sounds."



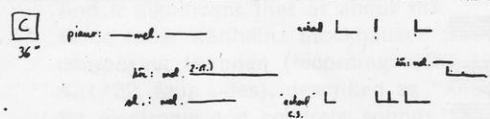
... role of notation ...

WILFRID MELLERS, *Love Story* sketch

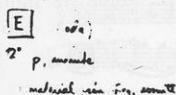
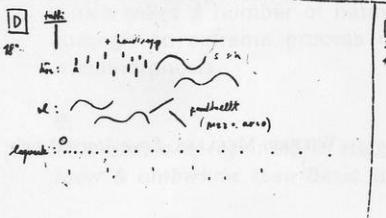
The photographs appearing on these pages are reproduced from the book
NOTATIONS by John Cage, with permission of THE SOMETHING ELSE PRESS.



to change the noun "music"



into the verb "music".



Tohru Takemitsu.

ARNE MELLNÄS, untitled sketches

Violin I

QUARTET DE CATROC

Josep M^o Mestres-Quadreny

The score for Violin I includes a circular diagram at the top left with concentric rings of numbers (1-25) and musical symbols (dots, circles, triangles). Arrows indicate a clockwise cycle. Surrounding the circle are tempo and dynamics markings: $J = 60$ (pp), $J = 100$ (mp), $J = 60$ (p), $J = 120$ (f), $J = 80$ (mp), $J = 40$ (ff), and $J = 20$ (ppp). The musical score consists of three staves (I, II, III) with various note heads and stems, some with accidentals like \flat and \sharp .

No key signature. Instead, each repeated note is given an accidental. What's written's a record of a place where

he himself was. No special sounds. Nor even a signature. A rubber stamp.

¶ Composers would do well to remember that notation

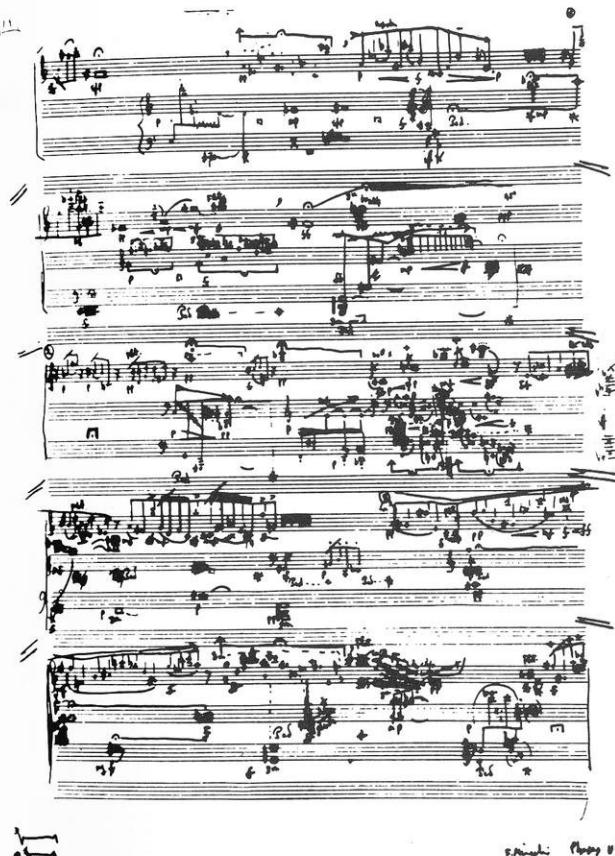
is not the end but rather the significant means to the end.

Gardner Read.

JOSEP MARIA MESTRES-QUADRENY, *Quartet de Catroc* (1962)

José E. Corté

GERTRUD MEYER-DENCKMAN, *Aktionen-Reaktionen* (1966)



Violence. Half-noted decisions,

Finale: Phase VI

FRANCIS MIROGLIO, *Phases pour un flutiste*

thumb-prints, scribblings, erasures, form a painterly page that pleases the eye. **No time for deciding which side's up.**

Interpretation. Sketch for a skeleton. Crosshatching is discarded bones.



GEORGE MONTANA, 4PTPC

Printed by permission of George Crevoshay.

RJ ✓

She longs, yearning the child from her
him her looks her face in Bryan's coat
Takes steps forward and Takes her from Bryan's arms

May 29

Character: Silver Scales

Clouds (Clef) no

314

build a fairer Eden Up from the west the

lion shall lie down with the lamb shall

Rail

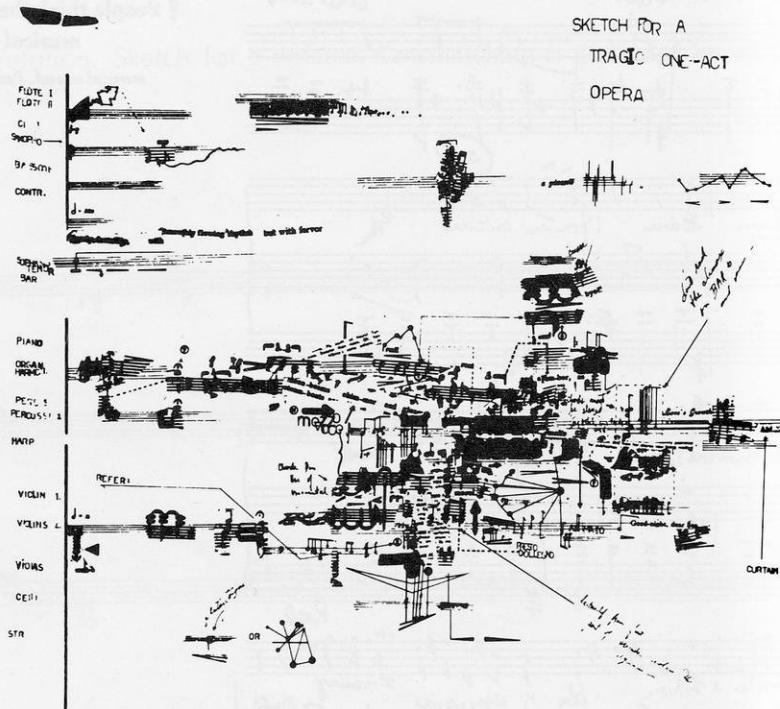
¶ People think that
musical notation is the
musical sound. People think that

DOUGLAS MOORE, sketch for the Bryan scene in Act II of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*

musical notation has nothing to do with the musical sound. All right.

Tomás Marco.

Printed by permission of the composer.

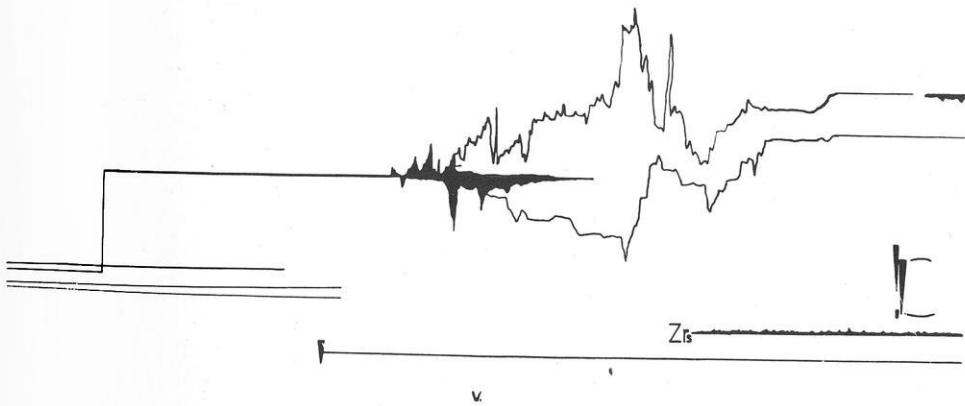


ROBERT MORAN, *Sketch for a Tragic One-Act Opera* (1965)

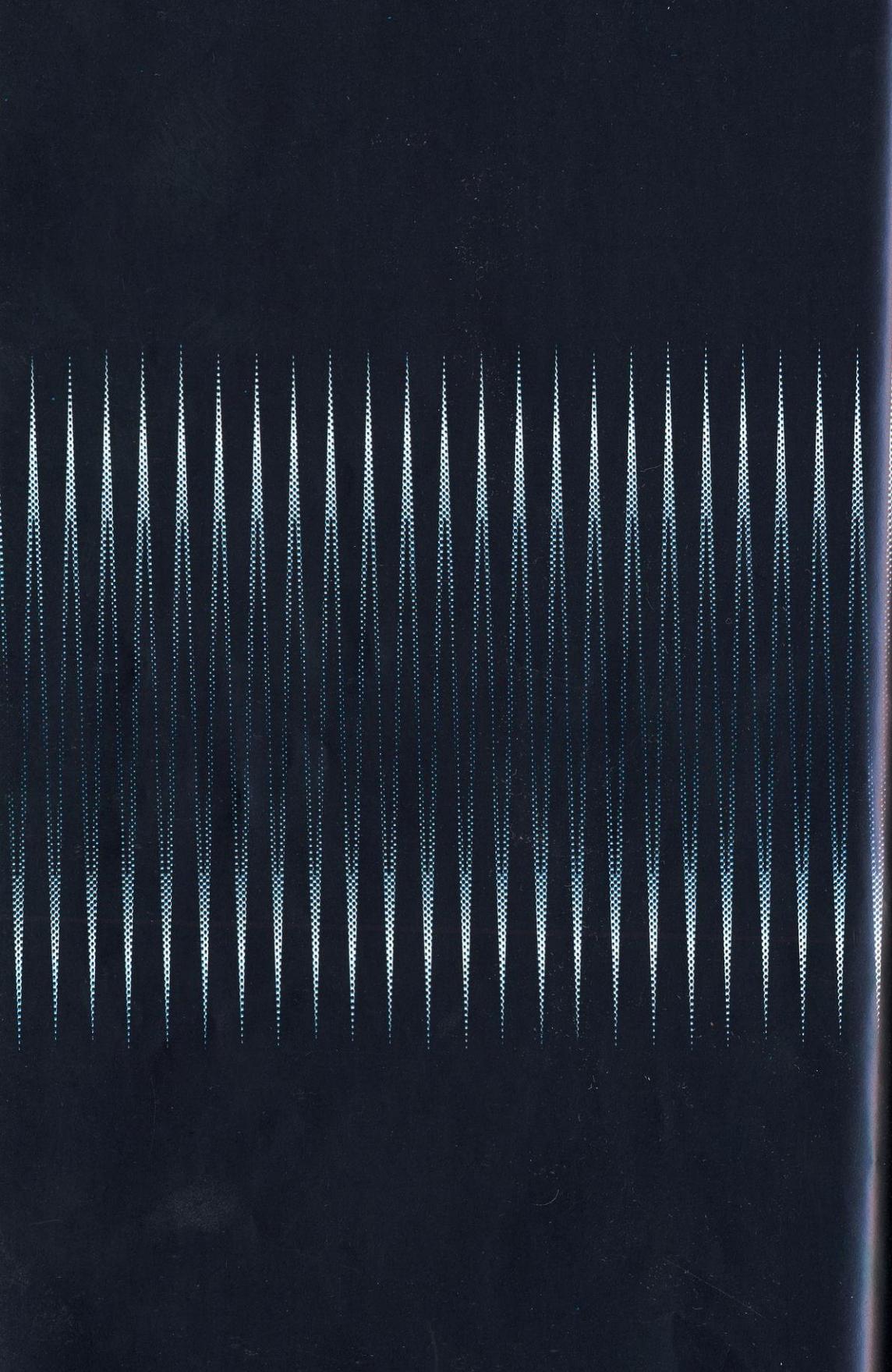
! . . . communicate . . . not only statistics but . . . shades of meaning . . . expressive intentions from one person to another . . . although, as in love letters,

cannot be completely successful . . . Ingolf Dahl. ¶ The colors *were very important in my* *fusaiques, but much* more exciting was assembling the small stones of notes into the five pictures.

Karel Husa.



JAN W. MORTHENSON, *Some of These* (1963)



The Electrotechnology of Modern Music

Otto W. Henry

The time has come to acknowledge that the greater part of musical experience is acquired today not by attending concerts but by staying at home. Over 90 percent of all music heard at present comes from loudspeakers. Even performing musicians spend a large amount of time in recording studios, or else listening to recordings to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the repertoire.

With this as a premise, it is to be expected that the electronic technology of the recording and broadcasting industry will have a profound influence on how music is perceived, what is heard, how it is performed, and how one acts in its presence. The major effect of this technology is diversity and the destruction of the boundaries between musical types, between music and the other arts, and between the arts and technology. The result may seem chaotic but the trend is actually towards a re-unification of the arts, made possible by technology.

I. Music and Diversity (What the Walrus Said)

Mid-twentieth-century technology has made all kinds of music available to everyone. That which was once the entertainment of kings has become as common as cabbage. The higher levels of society which once controlled the character and quality of "art" music because they were the only classes that had the money to sponsor it and the leisure to enjoy its benefits, no longer exist. Instead, music has become available to all social classes in unrestricted quantity and uncontrolled quality. With the arrival of the long-playing record and the tape recorder, music has undergone a sea change like that produced on literature by the invention of the printing press and paper, and in a much shorter span of time.

Books, for example, became less expensive and more available to everyone. People could afford to buy them; it was no longer necessary to go to a library for all reading and research material. This had a monumental effect on what kinds of books were available, what kind of books were kept in a library and how people behaved in a library.

The same applies to music here and now. It is no longer necessary to hire musicians in order to hear music or to laboriously acquire the means of producing it or to pay a fee to wait in line at a concert. You can, in effect, buy the music by purchasing a transistor radio, or records or tape recorders, according to your means. Music, like literature, is more available today because a cheaper means of reproduction has been created by technology, and a buyer's market prevails which is suited to every taste imaginable.

We are experiencing, in fact, the first stages of what is known in science fiction as the problem of the matter duplicator — i.e., what happens to our socio-economic culture when technology produces the final machine, a machine that can duplicate anything for nothing? Some presentiments of this ultimate problem are present today in the form of audio-visual duplicators. Why buy a book when all you want is a single chapter? Why spend hours in a library taking notes like a Medieval monk when you can photostat material for pennies? Why spend twelve or fifteen dollars for a record album when you can borrow it from a library or a friend and record it on a 99-cent reel of tape with space left over? Both means of reproduction are currently illegal, but this does not stop anyone. The only solution is still cheaper books and records, only possible now by printing books and recording music overseas and importing the product. Computer printout and electronic synthesis may replace this in the future.

On still another level, a great deal of music — if you care for it — is absolutely free. It is silence that is becoming a commodity. Music has become a common necessity and is furnished as a public service in department stores and office buildings along with water fountains and toilets. This over-exposure of music has brought about an undeserved but inescapable banality to music and a

kind of built-in obsolescence which becomes more marked the closer one approaches the lower levels of popular music.

Although it is true that musical experience has been cheapened both economically and aesthetically, there is at the same time a great deal more of it in terms of variety. It is not the concert halls that are providing this variety, nor any form of "live" entertainment. The concert with its closed cycle of fifty or seventy-five "masterworks" is dedicated to supporting a social institution in which innovations are unwelcome, never achieve a permanent place on the program, and are only tolerated out of a mistaken sense of duty. Concerts are more like popular reference libraries to which one may refer for a good edition of a standard work. The latest periodicals are kept on display for a while and then discarded. The really unusual material is recorded on microfilm, and this is so cheap you might as well order your own copy.

The concert halls, then, provide very little variety, and understandably so, because they have become one of the pillars that support our cultural tradition and are in turn supported in the main by people who are conscious of this tradition and their obligations to a traditional social hierarchy — not a few of whom, fortunately, also enjoy the music. Recordings have had the effect of stimulating participation in this tradition by making the repertoire available to outsiders, and providing an excuse for disenchanted concertgoers to stay at home. Either way, the repertoire is being served so well that overexposure is inevitable and a great many people are ready for something different.

This need for variety is being satisfied by a flood of recordings of neglected composers and forgotten music brought to light by the increase in musicological research over the past twenty years. A closed loop between supply, production, and demand has been forged which seems to sustain and encourage all parties in this respect. It would almost seem that by delving into the past and reviving centuries of neglected music we are able to provide more than enough for contemporary use. Through the medium of records, contemporary society can enjoy the music of the whole Western tradition. This has never been possible before.

Historical styles, once so separate and remote from each other, are now being mixed and can be assimilated as part of something unified and complete. People are more aware of Western music as a tradition (something accomplished centuries ago by older Oriental civilizations without the aid of phonographs); but if the unification of tradition is a pre-destined cultural goal, it is being accelerated by the technology of Western civilization. Moreover, with the advent of better and more portable recording equipment, non-Western types of music are becoming more familiar and more popular through recordings (the Nonesuch *Explorer's Series*, for example.) We are assimilating not only historical styles from our own culture, but from other musical cultures as well. And it is working both ways, for other cultures can become familiar with our own in the same manner. If in fact we ever achieve a single world-wide culture someday, the technology will have made it possible.

The outlook for new music, seemingly excluded in this interest in historical styles and other cultures, is really very good, for once we learn to understand Machaut and Liszt in close proximity it is not so far to Ligeti. The latest trends in avant-garde music which are beginning to capitalize on this heterogeneous situation will be discussed later.

II. Music and Technology ("Won't you step into my parlor . . . ?")

Chamber music is music for the home, and if it seems a little out of place to go to a concert hall to hear chamber music it can be blamed on the 19th-century Romantics. The recording now substitutes for a large amount of concert activity, and, since this substitution takes place in the home, the phonograph has become the twentieth-century chamber music instrument and is even replacing the piano. The hi-fi enthusiast, in fact, can perform or participate in the re-creation of music by his technical knowledge. Speaker placement, balance, treble and bass adjustments — all of these and more are under his direct control: so much so that he can be said to have the power of creating his own personal arrangement or interpretation of a sound ideal, an ideal that is different in each person and is reflected for good or bad in the type of equipment he chooses and the

adjustments he makes to the system. Many will object that this activity is not as musical as learning to play an instrument or going to a concert, but the more electronic technology intrudes upon the making of music in any sense, the more musical such electronic activities will become.

To take the argument to a higher level in this context, it is difficult but necessary to admit that the recording engineer is more responsible for the total effect of a recording than the conductor. Skilled microphone placement and blending, together with reverberation and other electronic "enhancements," can improve a bad performance or even a bad composition. Mismanagement of these elements can ruin even the best. Music, in any case, has become a double discipline: one that specializes in manufacturing sound and another that specializes in capturing it on tape. They are even now in the process of becoming more closely associated.

Electronic technology is, in effect, creating a new idiom for the phonograph because it is producing records that are far superior to the live product and by the same reason it is taking the experience of music beyond the capabilities of the concert hall. The record listener enjoys "super balance" because the microphones always occupy the most acoustically advantageous positions. The "super-accuracy" of recordings are misleading, because even the smallest slips can be edited out of the tape or whole sections can be re-recorded and spliced together. "Super-interpretations" result from this same process, culled not from a single continuous performance but from generations of "takes" that may occur weeks apart and which combine the superior versions of the sections or movements of a single work. The "super-performance," an especially brilliant interpretation by a world-renowned artist or an excellent performance of a piece made rare by the extravagance of its means — Wagner's *Ring* cycle, or Mahler's *Eighth Symphony*, for example — cannot be matched by live performances.

All these factors are having an effect on what Aaron Copland calls "the sonorous image," our personal concept of music as a sound, because the real product at the live concert is beginning to seem dim in comparison with the boosted basses and

clairvoyant interpretations we are used to at home. The effect on orchestras is an increasing tendency towards a brighter sound and a cleaner bass line. Concert halls are being designed or "improved" to conform more with an electronic image rather than an acoustical one, particularly as regards the bass register because our concept of what a bass line should sound like has been changed by listening to records where this is easily reinforced. The acoustics of concert halls are beginning to be controlled by electronics. The whole "environment" of a hall can be altered to fit the occasion by leaving a hall "dry" without amplification for chamber music and increasing the reverberation time electronically for larger ensembles. Then, too, a lot of music today is never heard "live," but only through speakers and it is natural to suppose that music that is going to be heard only in recorded form is going to be written to sound good over microphones — music for television or the cinema, for example, or the juke box. Electronic technology has intruded into the music of popular groups to such an extent that some are incapable of reproducing their arrangement "live" and have to ape the lyrics and the motions of playing while their "hit" record is played over the public address system.

III. The Boundaries of Art and Logic ("Two Miles from Shore and No Bottle Opener")

It is surprising that the musical medium that is best suited to the idiomatic qualities of the high fidelity set — electronic music — has not received more attention from the recording industry. Electronic music has developed from dry collages and mathematical schematics into a marvelously varied field of great potential, although one would never realize this from the rather pitiful amount of electronic music on records. No one actually knows what the true picture of electronic music is in this country because there is so much of it and the Columbia-Princeton Studios produce only a small part of it. The last five years have seen a decline in the "tape piece" as a concert idiom: this now belongs to the high fidelity set at home. The newer trend is towards the performance of electronic music in "real time" by amplified modification of instruments or objects, often in combination with other technological

aids such as lighting, films, and projections. Theatrical action on the part of the performers — such as directions for posture, facial expression, gestures, or movement from one place to another — is becoming more frequent. A composition such as Daniel Lentz's *A Piano Piece* (see *Source*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Jan. 1968) with its tape part, projections and final delivery of a toy piano out of the case of a grand piano by an attending pianist-physician complete with stethoscope is actually a "theater piece," a diminutive cousin of the "happening." Both forms are *Gesamtkunstwerke* which remove the boundaries between the arts and between the arts and technology — on a Wagnerian scale. The mixture of historical and cultural styles and finally this dissolution of the boundaries of art and technology must seem like the end of art altogether, but the true direction is towards unity, not dissolution. We are in the midst of a Romantic revolution again, tearing down boundaries to build larger, more universal structures.

One sign of organization that is emerging from this process of destruction and reunification is a new logic of music made possible by recent scientific and technological research into how human beings perceive and react to sound. Acoustical phenomena and psycho-acoustical effects have begun to replace the functions of melody, rhythm, and harmony. Electronic music has led the way in this because it deals with the totality of aural perception. The total range of the human ear is from about 20 vibrations per second to about 20,000. Contrasting with this is the rather limited area in which instrumental and vocal music is produced. The "a" that lies one ledger-line above the treble clef marks the approximate center of our hearing; there are another four octaves that up till now have been of little use because of physical limitations. Electronic music is not only capable of working within the total range of hearing, it can reproduce any frequency within this range, removing the necessity for fixed scale degrees, which have largely disappeared within this medium. The most profound and far-reaching effect this has had is the elimination of octave-equivalence, a fundamental law of Western music until this time. Octaves do not hold their identity in the midst of constant microtonal variation, and tend to lose their quality

in the extreme registers anyway, as a brief experiment with the upper and lower registers of the piano will demonstrate. Similarly, rhythm or duration, no longer restricted by breath or bow-length is now capable of greater and shorter articulations that defy metric groupings. In short, the elements of pitch and duration have now become comparative qualities like timbre and loudness which have always lacked a subjective means of measurement. For example, loudness has always existed in terms of "soft" and "loud," or "softer" or "louder." We can measure it in decibels with an instrument, but not with the ear. There is no discrete scale of gradations that the ear can identify, as there is with pitch. When these gradations of pitch are removed pitch becomes like loudness — "high" or "higher," or "low" or "lower" in this context. Duration without a fixed recurring pulse, likewise becomes "short," "long," or "shorter" or "longer."

These elements of music — frequency, duration, timbre and loudness — are now known as "parameters," and they have become equalized, not by choice, or mathematical conceptualization, but by necessity, because this is the way they have to function. Karlheinz Stockhausen predicted this ten years ago and he has been proven essentially right.

These new roles for the parameters of music have made it possible or even necessary to move from a language-oriented music logic in which "subjects" follow "introductions" and are concluded with "developments" and "summaries," to the formation of a logic this is based on patterns in sound, not patterns in formal rhetoric. Music composed in this fashion is highly unattractive to a person listening for rhetoric rather than sound. Robert Ashley's *Wolfman* is a classic example of this.* One hears a badly distorted collage of television commercials mashed together with "a continuous succession of automobile accidents." One sees only the face of the performer illuminated by a flashlight taped to the microphone he is howling into. Most people miss the myriad flashes of sound that are created by the gradual change of the vowel sound he is

*A recording of this composition is included in *Source*, Vol. 2, No. 2, July 1968 (Ed.).

sustaining, modulating the feedback of the over-driven public address system. From this viewpoint, the effect is elegant in its simplicity and even delicate despite the fantastic volume level; but understanding this requires a new orientation and a new vocabulary.

With electronic music preparing the way elements of this new logic are appearing in instrumental music; this has had the effect of removing part of the boundaries that originally separated electronic music and instrumental style. One indication is the use of the "spectrum," a dense and seemingly motionless cluster of sustained pitches, in orchestral music. Spectrums first appeared with full psychological effect in pieces such as Gordon Mumma's *Megaton for William Burroughs* and can now be heard in Michael Colgrave's *As Quiet As*, Elliot Carter's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, and with more effect in Georgy Ligeti's *Atmospheres*, featured in the motion picture *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The experience is psychedelic if you are listening and perceiving. The ear like the eye has a tendency to become bored and dart around, a trait that enables us to follow several conversations at once at a cocktail party. In this case, where there are so many pitches particularly in the high register, the ear singles one out, grows tired of it, moves on to another and still another with increasing rapidity until suddenly the whole upper register is boiling with activity — an activity that another part of our perception tells us is impossible because all the tones are sustained; the ear is skimming across the spectrum like a stone across a lake.

IV. The Immediate Future (Jupiter and beyond . . .)

Another sign of organization and unification has appeared in the form of a technological development: the synthesizer. One of the major conflicts of interest in electronic music has occurred between the musician-composers who have avoided traditional timbres and forms of expression to concentrate on the potentials of electronics as a new idiom, and the musician-engineers who have shown more interest in the imitation or synthesis of traditional music and sounds. Within the past five years a perfectly timed development has produced what may

amount to an artistic renewal — a practical performing instrument for electronic music on which either style is possible. The new electronic music synthesizers can be programmed to present sequences of timbres, rhythms, intensities, and pitches, but they are monophonic instruments for the most part. Their real advantage lies in eliminating most of the time-consuming and sometimes questionable processes of manual tape manipulation, especially splicing, which seem to detract from the validity of music in this idiom. A sense of credibility is coming to electronic music, which in turn seems more reasonable — to have more reason — if it can be performed at least in part on a single, identifiable instrument, even if the nature of the producing mechanism is not completely understood. The ability of the composer to control his music directly; to "perform" it on an instrument, helps to restore a certain amount of faith in what he is doing and at the same time his efforts can be compared to what others have done using the same instrument.

Three recordings that use the Moog Synthesizer are available in this case. *The Nonesuch Guide to Electronic Music* (HC 73018) by Paul Beaver and Bernard Krause demonstrates the capabilities of the instrument and includes an original composition, *Peace Three*. Andrew Rudin's *Tragoedia* was commissioned by Nonesuch (H 71198), and Walter Carlos and Benjamin Folkman's *Switched-on Bach* appears on Columbia MS 7194. Other types of synthesizers can be heard on records. Morton Subotnick used the *Buchla Associates Modular Electronic Music System* (commonly known as the "Buchla Box") to complete two commissions from Nonesuch, *The Silver Apples of the Moon* (H 71174) and *The Wild Bull* (H 71208). John Eaton performs on the *Synket* in *Microtonal Fantasy* (Decca DL 710154).

The Subotnick and the Carlos recordings are perhaps the most significant of these, for they prove that unaccompanied electronic music is more suitable as chamber music for the home rather than a source of concert music without visual aids. There is a kind of poetic justice in this, a reason for being that ought to be obvious to everyone by now.

Of course the public may be more willing at first to accept the medium rather

Moog synthesizer

Courtesy: Electronic Music Center, Trumansburg, N.Y.

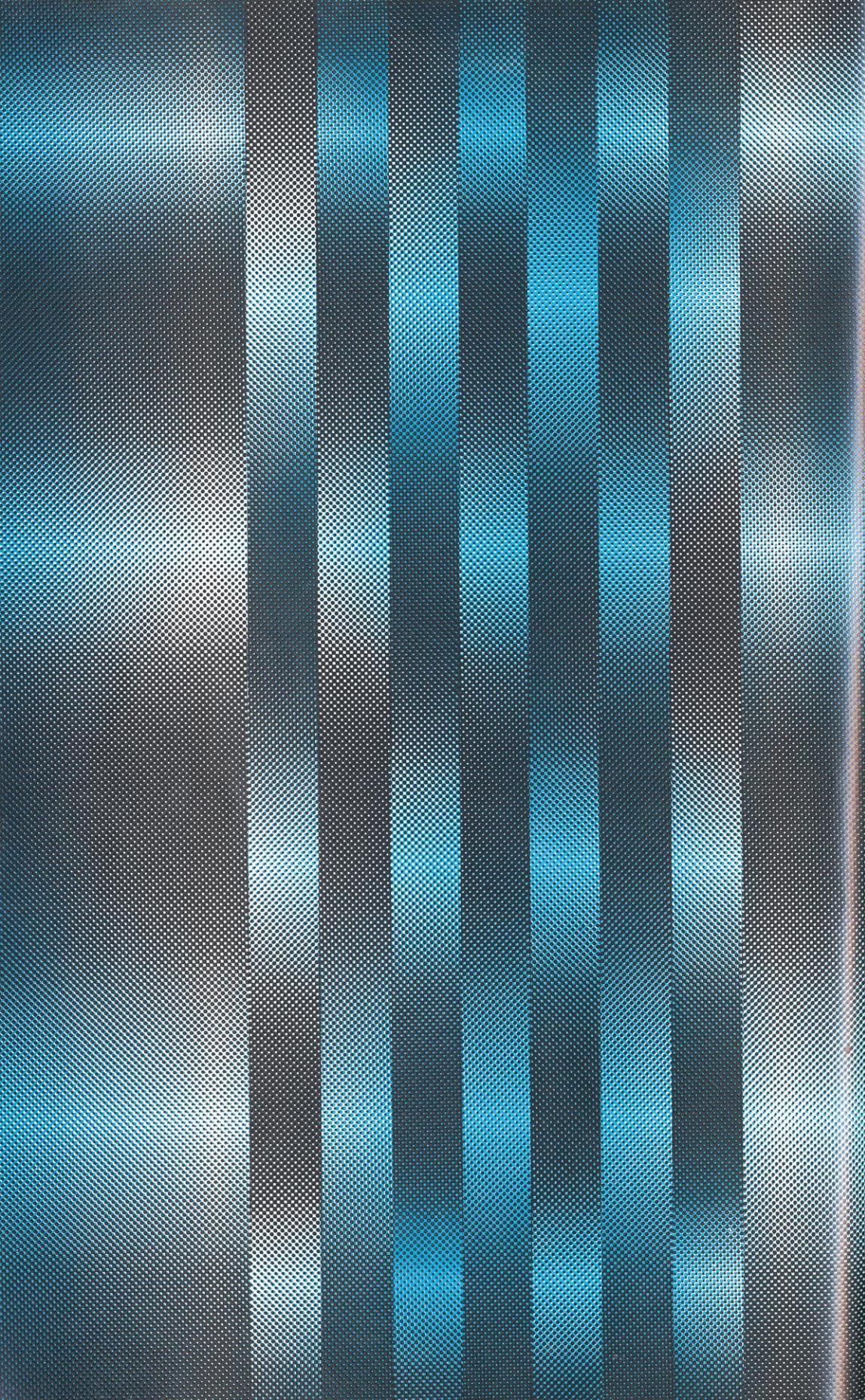


than the style the medium has created, as demonstrated by the current notoriety of the electronic realizations of *Switched-On Bach*. Despite the rather commercial aspects of the title and the capitalization on the current Bach fad, the approach used on this recording is reasonable and justifiable, but one that many have had difficulty accepting. A performance of Bach or Beethoven by a modern ensemble cannot help but translate the older music into modern concepts. Instruments now are different, pitch is higher and questions of tempo and dynamics are always open to interpretation, so there is no use fooling ourselves that we are hearing what Bach and Beethoven intended us to hear—if, indeed, they ever gave that a serious thought. Part of the charm of older music, anyway, lies in this transition: making it "come to life" in modern terms. Electronic synthesis only carries this one step farther, but it does not stop with Bach or this recording, for with a synthesizer one can truly become a one-man band. This is the other part of the exciting future synthesizers have opened up. There is only a short step to the realization of a Gabrieli canzona or a Haydn symphony, or beyond to Beethoven and Brahms.

This, in fact, will be one of the new uses of older music, though not the only use. Composers in both instrumental and electronic styles are turning to traditional

music to create new effects, as Charles Ives did in the earlier part of this century. The film 2001 makes a collage out of Richard Strauss' *Zarathustra*, Johann Strauss' *Blue Danube*, Aram Khachaturian's *Gayne* suite and Georgy Ligeti's *Atmospheres* and *Lux Aeterna*—and it works. Phonograph recordings have for a long time served as the basic sound sources for electronic music; for example, Arthur Maddox's *Hi Lo Joy Honk* (1967) uses eight recordings in such a manner, including Beethoven's *Grosse Fugue* and several Chopin Mazurkas.

A new type of cantus-firmus or improvisational art is growing out of this, one sign of which can be seen in the improvised cadenza inserted by Carlos and Folkman between the movements of the *Brandenburg No. 3* in *Switched-On Bach*. Furthermore, so many re-interpretations of Bach in jazz and popular styles have appeared in the last ten years that one can almost speak of a Bach-Raga in which the major compositions form sub-categories for improvisation. Other composers will follow; Beethoven is probably next. Our traditional music then, is capable of serving as the basis of new styles and approaches to the composition of music, through the medium of technology which, by making the music more available and adaptable, is contributing towards the reunification and renewal of the arts in our society.



Does Avant Garde Mean Anything?

Dick Higgins

The only dictionary on my favorite desk is Barlow's *The Complete English Dictionary*, which I like for the conciseness and ingenuity of its definitions. It's a pity it's been out of print since 1772.

The only meaning it gives of "avant garde" is "the first division of an army in battle array." Granted this isn't a sample of Mr. Barlow's charm (one might try his definitions of "art" and "artist" for instance), it still makes clear the precise military metaphor involved in describing an artist as avant-garde.

But is art like a military situation? Is there one movement to a given day, and one objective to be achieved? In the Romantic period it may have been that there would be considerable agreement that the expression of greater depths of feeling through music constituted an advance, to be explored by an avant garde and followed up by the more conservative or, eventually, most popular composers. A similar consensus might have been possible in the 1920's or, later, again in the 1950's, with respect to the "liberation of the dissonance" or the "rediscovery of music as sound (or noise) in time and space" as clichés of their times.

But any concept of a steady progression with its avant garde and its main force following along behind implies a linear (or, at most, polylinear) concept of progress. On the one hand the question can be raised whether there exists any progress in any art, since the new ground one reaches is not necessarily demonstrably better than the ground one has left — it is merely newer, which may provide motivation for the artist to explore and achieve freshness. Or it may not. But then, on the other hand, if there is any relatively consistent line of development in the music or other arts of one's own

time, it would be hard to spot since neither is all the important material available to us, nor have we the wisdom of hindsight to guide us. So now let us look at a few fairly recent developments and try to put them into context, so that later we can pick up the line along which we have started.

One of the more obvious changes in all the arts in the last decade has been the move away from the Neo-Primitivism that characterized much of the arts of the 1950's, when Kline and De Kooning ground their own pigments and sized their own canvases; some composers rejected, in quite a number of their works, conventional instrumental machinery in favor of radios, toys, guns, etc. Cage and others rejected the acoustical substance altogether in favor of the most bland and traditional kind of instrumental language combined with highly abstract allusions to 19th-century mathematics (Babbitt, Boulez, and the Cologne School). This last approach had the double distinction of being artistically primitive (since it raised no questions outside of the stock mathematical metaphor) and mathematically primitive (since it never dealt with the theory of sets, on which the more modern mathematics is based), and in fact two composers who have moved the farthest from mathematical allusionism are former lights of the Cologne school, Stockhausen and Kagel.

The more mechanical Neo-Primitivism, however, led to a number of developments in the early and middle 1960's which were considerably less primitive. On the one hand there were experiments by artists and students of John Cage, such as George Brecht, Al Hansen, and myself. Brecht pushed the extremes of minimal experience. One piece was played in the dark (to avoid visual excitement) by one performer on a comb. Another (also from 1958) used three light bulbs blinking in the dark, each only once. By testing these extremes, Brecht raised philosophical issues that were very interesting, and which later led to Minimal Art. Hansen and myself, on the other hand, started from toys and unorthodox objects, and developed from collages and action music made with this into Happenings based on sound-producing actions (the best publicized Happenings were essentially visual) and in this way we began to do the kind of pieces which were

later associated with Fluxus. Another kind of Fluxus piece had its origin in these extremely exaggerated simplicity studies: the kind of piece in which the body was the only allowed instrument. Quite a number of people made pieces of this sort, sometimes quite long ones. One particularly good series of performances was given in 1964 by Jackson Mac Low, who wired his body for sound. Most of the people who composed these Fluxus-related pieces continue to do so, though there is a recent tendency for the pieces to become larger, more complex, and more obviously art works.

A second point of departure took place around 1962, when La Monte Young (who had been doing Fluxus-type pieces) began with his various "Tortoise" pieces, improvisations in complex modes, evocative of Ragas and Iranian classical styles, in which isorhythmic phrases moved in and out of synchronization. This style has been developed (with some differences, of course) by Steve Reich, independently, and by Terry Riley, whose extremely coloristic ostinato structures have very clear parallels to psychedelic art, and whose work appears therefore to be in the process of becoming *de rigueur* for the Brotherhood of the Beaded Beard. This will be, perhaps, the first time since the 1930's that a popular movement (hippy, yippy or post-whatever) has had its own classically-based music. But one of the most significant developments socially and culturally during the sixties has been the breaking down of the basically 19th-century distinction between popular culture and so-called "serious culture." It would be surprising if Pop Art did not have its musical cognates (unfortunately the term Pop Music has already been pre-empted, so a slogan-type label is needed) in a time when the Beatle George Harrison is moving from the world of commercial music into more classically-oriented styles, as on his album *Wonderwall*, where he uses a huge array of oriental styles juxtaposed with normal electronic techniques. Or when Joseph Byrd, a former student of Stockhausen and whose graduate work was done in Ethnomusicology, turns up with The United States of America, a straight rock group which, however, used substantial quotes from Charles Ives in its album (Columbia CS 9614). Or when Frank Zappa of the Mothers of Invention becomes increasingly unwilling even to

identify himself specifically as a rock and roll musician or his music even as popular music.

The essential difference still remains between a Terry Riley and a Harrison, Byrd, or Zappa: these last are essentially entertainers, while Riley's music raises a broader scope of issues; but it is interesting and even raises hopes for our society to see the gulf narrowing between our gigantic popular audience and the more experimental of our musical artists.

Of course the main course away from Neo-Primitivism I have deliberately avoided mentioning till now, and this is tape recorder music and its fast-growing relative, computer music. Not being primarily concerned here to make a survey of this field even during the 1960's, I'll try to steer clear of major names and works and to keep my discussion theoretical. First, during the experimental phase of tape recorder music, the work reflected Neo-Primitivism quite thoroughly. The French had a school using collaged recorded sounds from nature. The Germans had a school which used only generated sounds. The former was labelled "musique concrète" and the latter "electronic music." On the supposed profundities of these approaches many fearful battles were fought throughout the world, resulting in the demolition of many a tea-cup. But given the American reluctance at that time to use a complex scientific tool, the tape recorder music was left in the hands of those who were very *pre-fried* in their approach, and who needed grants for survival in order to construct elaborate studios. Which was done. And presto, the cave dwellers cruised around in rocket ships. One concert in Max Pollifkoff's mostly very memorable *Music in Our Time* series featured a work (this was circa 1957) called "A Walk Through Outer Space," and you could really hear the big thumping steps. And all that white noise! While the Cologne School, naturally, applied very handsome charts to construct mathematical poems about Godel's Theorem (a diagram for which even appeared on the jacket of an early Cologne School phonograph record), but which still sounded like very imaginative Hammond Organ playing.

What these early experimenters did not seem to grasp (with the exception of Cage, whose early tape pieces still are

electrifying in their impact, perhaps more than his other work of the 1953-59 period) was the essential uniqueness of tape recorder music. One might draw a cartoon of a patient being wheeled into an absolutely cosmic operating room with an infinity of little tools all over the place, and the surgeon saying to him, "Yes, if I'm clever enough about it, maybe I can figure out a way to use every one of them in the course of removing that tooth of yours."

Meanwhile back at the ranch there were composers making music that was not hyphenated, electronic-music, but simply music, as always music was, with a sense of necessity about its presence, an impact of one sort or another— perhaps evocative of something (an idea maybe), perhaps simply an ear feast, something that had to do with sound which one person had noticed and wanted to share. One of them was Richard Maxfield. His musical training was excellent. But he also was well trained as an engineer, and there was no question of having to explain his mis-conceptions of what electronics might do to a technician who didn't speak the same language or have the same artistic standards. He found the perfect collaborator in himself. So on rather modest earnings he built an electronic studio the equal of those which others had to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to acquire. And then, since his incredibly complex circuits were second nature to him, he attributed no undue importance to them, and simply concentrated on the unique things about electronic music, which others seemed consciously to be ignoring: (1) the tape was a notation, and any tape machine only an instrument, on each of which the piece would sound differently; (2) in making the tape, the nature of all performances was pre-determined, and therefore one must plan in such work not to suit the needs of some live performance, but to develop the potential from the fact of working with tape; and (3) since one was working with a recorded medium, repetition within a work and even from work to work of materials and even whole fragments was natural to it (as opposed to using the ambiguity implicit in different performances, different performers and different performance situations, which usually leads to a reluctance to repeat oneself in any

way, within a work or from work to work). The results were, among others, *Stacked Deck*, *Cough Music*, the *Pastoral Symphony*, and the various versions of *Steam and Night Music*. It is unfortunate that so few of these works have been made available to the large public.

Mention the word "technology" to an artist today. It usually will stir up images of banks of computers, looking like endless aisles of huge tape recorders, tended by white smocked technicians mysteriously coaxing visionary results out of endless supplies of oscilloscopes and analog devices. Actually, of course, computers are simply overgrown adding machines which can handle verbal results* or a variety of printouts and formats of printouts, these last of which might power television screens, scanners of all kinds, and even tapes playable on ordinary tape recorders, rough ("hairy" seems to be the word that is often used for low numbers of scanned outputs per second) or fine and slick (for more rapid outputs) as any tape-recorded signal could be. Even speech has been synthesized, using the SNØBØL computer language, though this is, as yet, hard to deal with for aesthetic purposes, thanks to the high cost of computer time. But such pieces as James Tenney's *Homage to Che Guevara* (1967) could not have been achieved by any other means, and therefore justify their medium. Furthermore, they have impact, and could become quite popular for home playing, even though they are not designed for concert hall use particularly.

Finally, among the kinds of electronic music there are works of the less identifiable sort, such as Gordon Mumma's *Mesa* or Max Neuhaus's *Maxfeed*, the notation for each of which is simply an electronic circuit, and any use of which machine, when it is constructed, is a performance of the work. Each is capable of producing only one kind of result, as are most machines. But the machines are devised with the concept of the result in mind, which is the act of composition in this case.

*Several specimens of computer poetry will be included in the forthcoming (late, 1969) Simon and Schuster book, *Expanded Poetry*, being edited by Ronald Gross with (for their Concrete Poetry and Intermedia sections) the collaboration of Emmett Williams.

The Maxfeed is a collaging device, which structures whatever radio signals happen to be in the air at the time it is switched on, according to feedback principles. The results of each, the Mumma Mesa and the Neuhaus Maxfeed, are exciting to hear and interesting to think about. Both are the result of anticipating probable sounds. Are they not therefore art works, even musical works, even though the material is filled in by simply playing the given material (just as one might do with Mozart)?

And at the same time as all these technological pieces, we are as rich as ever in work which is even less classifiable. For instance there are Philip Corner's pieces, elusive to define except as metaphors of one or another heard or experienced found situation. Though he is still best known for his piano performances of Ives and Satie, Corner's own compositions are perhaps the more poetic and performance-oriented parallels to Duchamp's Ready-Mades. And what about the puristic works in a traditionally musical sense of Michael Sahl and Lou Harrison, which seem, somehow, to aim for us to experience a major third more deeply than ever before?

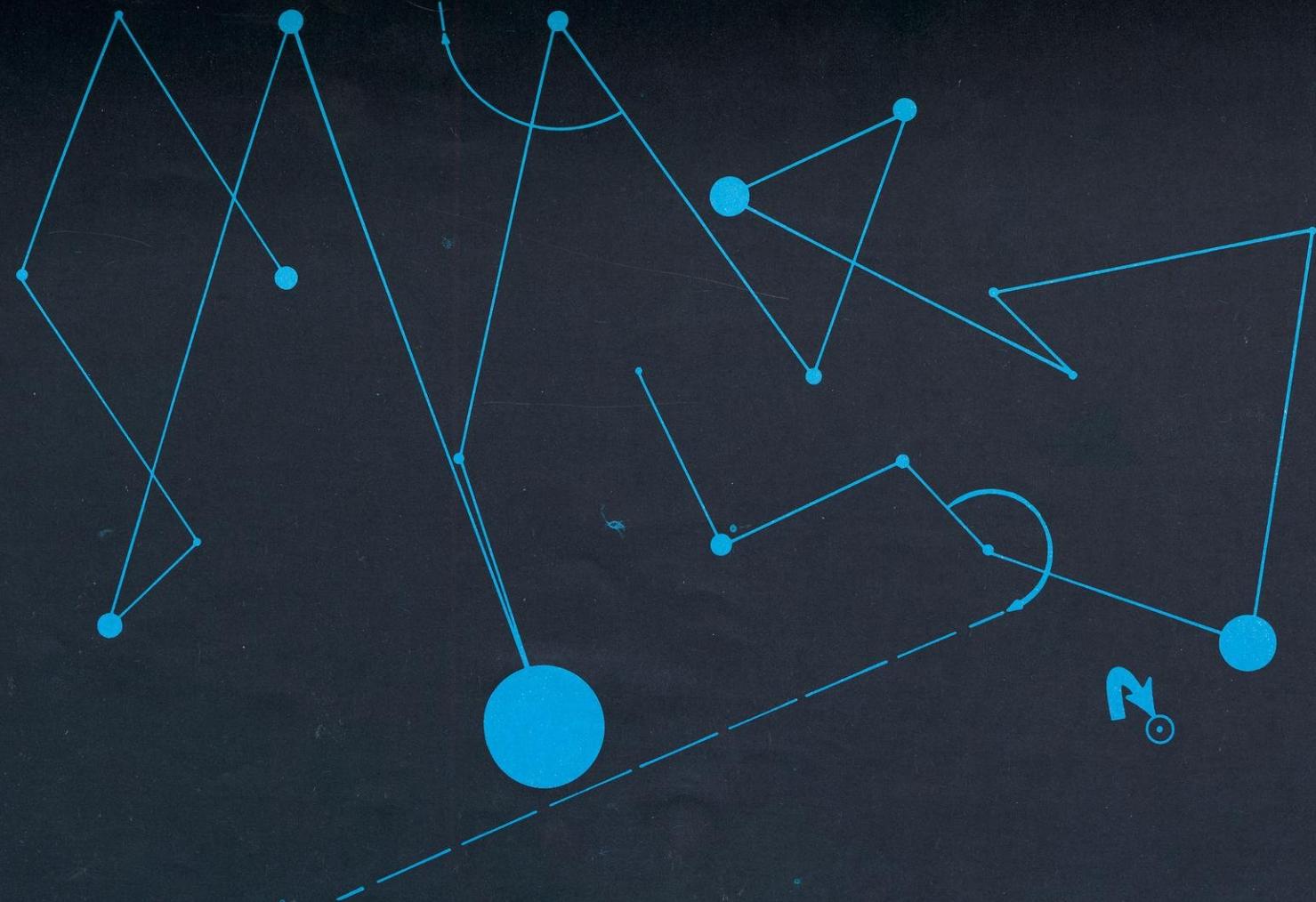
Now perhaps we can begin to answer the question which is the title of this writing: Does the avant-garde mean anything? My answer has to be that it means as much and as little as it ever did. True, we are experiencing a time, in these late 1960's and early 1970's, in which the variety of the intended musical result is staggering. It is not easy for us to apply to our present moment a simple conflict between classicism and romanticism, Apollonian and Dionysian, logic versus anarchism, as we could — **perhaps**, if we deluded ourselves enough — even as late as the 1950's. Sometimes it seems as if we are watching, in the musical world, not even a three-ring but a six-ring circus. Still, I think music has always been like that. And the 1970's may find important, above all others, many of the marvelous composers I haven't even mentioned — such as the composers around the magazine Source, in Davis, California, or Harry Partch or David Reck (both of whose work I feel the poorer for not knowing better), or the various composers trying, here and abroad, to work out new logically structural metaphors to replace the naïve mathematical approaches

used in the heyday of the Cologne and Princeton schools.

No, avant garde does not mean anything if one is to start by saying "so and so is 'avant-garde' while so and so is not, because the first so and so is doing this while the second is not." That may be all well and good to say about our time, the 1980's, or in the 1990's. But until we have isolated what the common denominator is among those who are achieving a composer's role of adding to our experience and richness of life, culturally, it is premature and stultifying.

Yes, to say that any given composer is adding to this experience in his own way by pushing the frontiers, technically and in terms of impact, and that he is therefore avant-garde — this is meaningful, because then, if one is told one is about to hear an avant-garde work, one need simply expect that it will not duplicate his past experiences.

There is an avant garde. It does not consist of those who simply are content to attack the past: these are the victims of the past. The avant-garde consists of those who feel sufficiently at ease with the past not to have to compete with it or to duplicate it. What has been done need not necessarily be done again. Now that we have conquered all the earth by beginning to know it and understand our neighbors, now that we are on the verge of adding the moon to the known world, the last frontier is the frontier of our experience, in all our communications including the cultural ones. Better to think of avant garde as an inevitable and wonderful kind of pioneering.





How to Cook an Albatross

Ben Johnston

The world of "serious music" stubbornly bases itself on a sterile presumption. Since the "standard repertory" in no matter what areas of performance, is historical, it creates a **museum** situation. While there is nothing wrong with having museums we should not take their contents to be the principal means to satisfy contemporary needs. Perennially we make just this error.

The proportion of music of our own times now in the repertory of most concert artists and ensembles is smaller today than at any other period in the history of concert-giving. When most performing artists, warned that they are not bringing about a repertory for the future, set about to find new works, they seek imitations of the old works, which they believe they "understand." In fact most of them do not understand the art of the past at all. They do not make the effort to imagine what it was in its own time, taking it instead in the context of today. The role they find repertory music playing in today's society they impose unthinkingly on today's music. Looking back for all "greatness" has become so reflex an action that it is presumed normal. In fact it is not normal at all: it is an historical anomaly. As Gilbert Chase writes:

In the eighteenth century it was an asset rather than a liability for a composer to be alive. Not only his music but also his living presence were solicited as a privilege for the public. . . . The eighteenth century might indulge in idolatry . . . but it was the distinction of the nineteenth century to develop the cult of musical necrolatry . . . The "Great Repertoire" cannot change because it involves too many vested interests. Far from being an incentive to the American composer, it is a permanent barrier.'

In the United States today a "serious composer" is called "young" up to the age of fifty if he has not been accepted into the musical establishment by then. The composers' wing of the establishment is a bureaucracy, comprising the few who, after waiting out a protracted "youth," finally have a moment's recognition. This privilege they defend for as long as they can, knowing its radical impermanence. Innovators are recognized by the establishment, if at all, only in old age, since independent thinkers are the toughest competition of all.

Most performers and conductors advise composers (if they want performances) to write music (if they **must** write at all) which does not deviate much from the standard repertory. But a docile composer who wants only to write conventional music for standardized solo, chamber, and orchestra concerts has to struggle for all of his career for more than a few scattered first performances. His work (it is pointed out) is poor competition for the "masterworks." The following arrogant quotation was recently widely reprinted in the press and popular magazines: "I occasionally play works by contemporary composers, and for two reasons. First, to discourage the composer from writing any more. And, second, to remind myself how much I appreciate Beethoven." — Violinist Jascha Heifetz.

The difficulty was that by the end of the nineteenth century admission to the Standard Repertory (the effective vehicle of the Great Tradition) had become increasingly difficult for new composers. . . . Not only was the competition keener, but the club was getting crowded. It was approaching the saturation point. Guest memberships were available, but permanent admission was virtually impossible save for a very select few. To make a place for himself a newcomer had to oust an old member. The Europeans had all the advantages; not only were most of them dead, but those who were living had an inside track on the Great Tradition. No wonder that no American composer has ever really made it.²

Conventional concert and opera audiences led by performers and by writers about music, usually gravitate toward comfortable, familiar music, even at the cost of boredom. They seem to know little about pertinence. The idea that a piece of

music could be apt (or inept) at a given time and place for reasons more important than its vogue seems never to have occurred to most concertgoers. A concert may be pleasant, diverting, and "uplifting," but the listening experience it provides rarely has any urgency or potency. At the worst it can even induce sleep by its failure to keep attention.

The public performance of repertory music has become a variety of genteel entertainment. To fulfill this role it confines itself to readily intelligible schemes of order, to familiar and accepted emotional associations and to conventional musical sounds. For the kind of people who want confirmation that the status quo will not be threatened by changes, such entertainment is a symbol — not to say a ritual — of social and ideological stability. When (and if) most performers and conductors seek new works, their criteria are above all those of the "Great Tradition," which they claim the public demands.

Such demand as there is comes from a small, elite and largely wealthy public, conditioned to want this traditional music by social custom, by musical education and by promotional propaganda (which encompasses the vast bulk of music criticism). This conditioning is, moreover, class-oriented.

Now that more than a wealthy minority of society faces a leisure problem, we find "the amusements" rushing in to fill the vacuum created by alleviating the hard, competitive struggle for existence. There is widespread alarm among many thinking people at the harm done by a manipulative, irresponsible amusement industry.

Properly understood, **art** would be a far healthier activity with which to fill leisure time, because it is educational in the classic sense: it can train one's **abilities**, which can then be applied as one sees fit. Art is our sharpest tool for training sensitivity and responsiveness in action with others, along with keen sensory observation and alert muscular coordination in the performance of precise actions, and with intelligent grasp of the many kinds of order and disorder in phenomena and in behavior. The problems of what to do about leisure time and of what to do about our

culture's abysmal failure to educate feeling and sensitivity in people can become one problem. Until and unless "serious" composers and performers serve such a real need as this, and not simply a status-seeking and status-serving one, they will deserve exactly what they are getting: a social function as dubious luxury items.

It is dishonest and self-deceiving to claim that by maintaining the supremacy of the standard repertory we are enabling the public to benefit from the continuance of a precious artistic heritage from the past. It is not true that the public understands Beethoven more easily than Webern, Webern than Cage. The over-familiar is what people usually understand least. Even the irritation of an audience jolted into listening with unjaded ears shows a much greater degree of understanding than their conditioned response to the classics.

Just as commercial exploiters of popular taste usually claim to be supplying a demand, when in fact they are actively engaged in creating one, so leaders of community musical culture make the same false claim. Actually, little long-range effect upon concert series' policies of program selection results if a majority of their audiences express like or dislike of a particular work, composer, or musical style. If the monied few who donate funds to support the concert series disagree, they decide otherwise.

When Eleazar de Carvalho resigned as conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in 1966, he stated that this was because the Symphony Board demanded to make up the program content for each season.³ The board's strongest objection was to de Carvalho's utilization of the available rehearsal time in favor of new works. This had resulted in some rough performances of standard works.

Former critic Peter Yates attended one of these premieres and afterward was quoted to this effect by a St. Louis newspaper. Yates later expressed alarm and resentment at this quote for being taken out of context. A letter he wrote to Barney Childs about the new (American) work on this same concert suggests the proper context of his remark: "The audience divided between applause and boozing. . . The enthusiasts kept the

applause going until the boozers quit. . . . Occasions like this make possible the existence of a native music."

Yet ignoring completely the audience's manifest insistence upon accepting the new work, the press implied repeatedly that this and other new works of the 1965-1966 season in St. Louis had received negative reactions from the audience. Ostensibly on this basis the board cracked down. They claimed that attendance at concerts had dropped off, due to de Carvalho's musical policy.

An argument is often advanced to the effect that new works have (in Europe) perennially received hostile treatment at first, and yet have gone on to become repertory. So, runs the argument, what are American composers griping about?

Quite simply, they are griping about being forced to choose either to be treated as poor relations of Europeans or to become drop-outs. Almost without exception, up to the present generation, to be a drop-out from the musical establishment required accepting "amateur" status, either supported by an independent income, like Charles Ives, or not supported except part-time now and then, like Harry Partch.

But today it is possible to drop out and still remain an effective member of the profession. Independent composers and performers more and more often organize festivals, concert series, even permanent performing groups. These increasingly tend to concentrate on works which are new in more than a chronological sense, and to negate explicitly or by implication the very occasions, attitudes and behavior patterns which society has established for concerts.

That is why the establishment, which aims to continue conventional traditions and customs of concert presentation indefinitely into the future, feels the tenor of many young musicians' activities to be not merely non-conformist but actively revolutionary. Such musicians are seeking and finding a new audience, new kinds of social occasions for listening to music, new ways of presenting sound-experiences to people. They work with performers so closely that the boundaries between composer, performer, electronic technician, and theatrical director are often all but obliterated.

The kind of composer of whom I speak is not at all content with an audience of specialists whose expertise approximates his own. **He cares if you listen,*** but he is not about to say what he thinks you wanted to hear. For his purpose the kind of performer who will give to a composer's work the same respect and meticulous care he regularly gives to Bach is simply not good enough at all. A new challenge has been offered the performer: to participate as actively as the composer in the **creation** of music, not merely to **interpret** it, certainly not merely to **realize** it. There are many young performers who meet this challenge with enthusiasm, relieved finally to drop the role of museum curator for that of fellow artist.

William Blake observed in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* that "One law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression." He might have added that one music for all people is a bore. Popular music has won its revolution. The monopoly of musical trivia for so long forced on everyone by means of commercial promotion has given way. Tin Pan Alley's song lyrics get stiff competition now from real poetry. Today's rock music is a far better equivalent to the folk music of rural cultures than were any intervening varieties of urban popular music. For "serious music" to win an analogous revolution would really give grounds for optimism because that would indicate that intellectuals were giving up class values in art for more durable values.

I do not know a better formulation of the "rock" point of view than Burt Korall's.⁴ Today, however, the voices of dissent are louder, for cause; we cannot wait any longer for the rapport to develop whereby we can live with one another. It is either pass down an inheritance of absurd reality or change direction. . . . It comes clear that it is no longer possible to separate music and life as it really is. Politics, sexuality, racial pride, deep and true feelings have entered popular music to stay. Our youth is central to this metamorphosis. . . . Confusion reigns. Truth and honesty are at a premium. A valid way of life is sought. To this end,

*The allusion is to an article by Milton Babbitt, "Who Care If You Listen?" (See Chase, *The American Composer Speaks*, Baton Rouge, 1966).

the young explorer rolls across a wide spectrum of subject matter and musical means and mannerisms. He experiments with ideology and sounds, often shaping answers in the process. But they are always open to change; flexibility is part of the concept. . . . Hope is implicit in the negation of past and present mistakes — the hope for an apocalypse, which will make the blind see, the intractable feel, the world's fearful face change.

A radical left position outside the context of pop culture has found incisive expression by John Cage: "Twentieth Century arts opened our eyes. Now music's opened our ears. Theatre? Just notice what's around . . . the last thing I'd do would be to tell you how to use your aesthetic faculties. . . ."⁵ And, even more searchingly, Cage writes:

How does Music stand with respect to its instruments, . . . pitches, . . . rhythms, . . . degrees of amplitude . . .? Though the majority go each day to the schools where these matters are taught, they read when time permits of Cape Canaveral, Ghana, and Seoul. And they've heard tell of the music synthesizer and magnetic tape. They take for granted the dials on radios and television sets. A tardy art, the art of Music. And why so slow? . . . in our laziness, when we changed over to the twelve-tone system, we just took the pitches of the previous music as though we were moving into a furnished apartment and had no time to even take the pictures off the walls. What excuse?

The first of these two views (the rock musicians') is moral, prescriptive, critical, involved.

The second (Cage's) is detached, liberating, critical, involved.

In both cases abstract matters of perennial concern in the tradition of Western music (such as order, structure, form, proportion) either are banished or are assigned subordinate, almost non-essential roles. In both a viable new alternative to the establishment is sought — earnestly, uncompromisingly. In both cases the aim is freedom, artistic and social. The rock movement, however, is a group phenomenon, while Cage very

much affirms the primacy of the individual.

If the values and perceptions of our heritage from European art are to be kept alive, they must be discovered afresh by us against a background of vital contemporary art. It is above all the traditions of **making** art which must be preserved, not intact, but seminal, ready to take root in no matter how different a culture. The art treasures themselves, including musical ones, are a matter for museums. It is only common sense not to throw out our European artistic inheritance, but the way we are maintaining it invites radical opposition. The dominance of an imported art culture has always tended to arrest the development of indigenous art. Compare the effect of the art of ancient Greece upon that of Rome, or the effect of the art of nineteenth-century Western Europe upon that of contemporary Russia. The existence of a free avant-garde in the United States makes possible an escape from such cultural smothering. An imported tradition can be domesticated for local use. It can even serve as a staple of cultural diet, but not if it is treated as a sacred cow.

We are now in the midst of learning the hard lesson that glamorous, neo-aristocratic temples of art like Lincoln Center in New York, or the community art centers in Atlanta and Los Angeles, or the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts in Urbana are alarmingly apt to tend in our culture to officialize the art of the past (as in the U.S.S.R.) or else to deteriorate into centers for commercial mass entertainment. This results from the most direct of causes: aristocratic art on a big scale is **expensive**. Someone must pay. If the very wealthy or the government are to pay, the official solution is the only likely one. If the general public is to pay, then exploitation of the public by commercial interests with ready capital is depressingly probable.

In either case, today's **vital** art (whether mass-directed or aristocratic in its appeal) is concerned with the realities of life in the second half of the twentieth century. It naturally shuns such anachronistic environments, which suggest to audiences that they have entered an island, sheltered from the surrounding world: a safe, comfortable seclusion that is the death of art.

In contrast to this the last few years have seen increasing support of new centers of contemporary music by foundations, universities, and even in some cases, state and national subsidy. A ferment of new activity has grown up wherever such support has been extended to active groups of performers and composers, freeing them from dependence upon the competitive commercial music world for their livelihood. Creative musical activity in the United States is decentralizing steadily, despite the concentration of musical activity and related business and publicity in major metropolitan centers.

This can happen today because the present phase of the communications revolution means that a young musician in almost any country of the world where political power does not suppress exchange of information can be informed accurately and extensively about what his peers are doing the world over. With a little effort he can get tape recordings, articles, programs, not to speak of personal news and gossip. He participates in an artistic community which is by no means provincial.

There are increasing numbers of young musicians who don't want acceptance into the establishment, nor do they especially want to do battle with it. Its values — musical and cultural — bore them, except when they arouse anger; and not because these young people are without culture and intelligence. On the contrary, they find conventional and official culture smug and unaware of its own irrelevance in the face of the manifest realities of life here and today.

In less than a generation the age group of which I speak will outnumber considerably its seniors. Perhaps it will generate its own "establishment," but that will be of a very different kind from the one that now dominates what is called our "national musical life." The number of musicians in the United States who don't think "business as usual" can apply to the arts is already larger than ever before.

NOTES

1.

"The Great Tradition," unpublished lecture.

2.

Gilbert Chase, *ibid.*

3.

A news story by Robert K. Sanford, which appeared in the St. Louis Dispatch, Sunday, May 7, 1967 bore the following headline: "De Carvalho Tells Why He Chose To Leave / Asserts Management Ordered 'Workhorse' Compositions." I quote from the body of this story:

De Carvalho, who has been conductor and music director of the orchestra since 1963, has presented a number of contemporary musical works in his programs. Eleven compositions were presented here as first performances, nine as first performances in the United States.

But during discussions about programs for the next season he was told that the contemporary works should be avoided, that they were bad business, the conductor said.

In recalling a conversation with three persons described as 'very high in management', De Carvalho said the restrictions went beyond contemporary works. He said he understood that in selecting a Beethoven symphony, for instance, he should not choose Beethoven's Second, or Fourth, but should choose the Fifth or the Ninth, compositions with which people are familiar.

4.

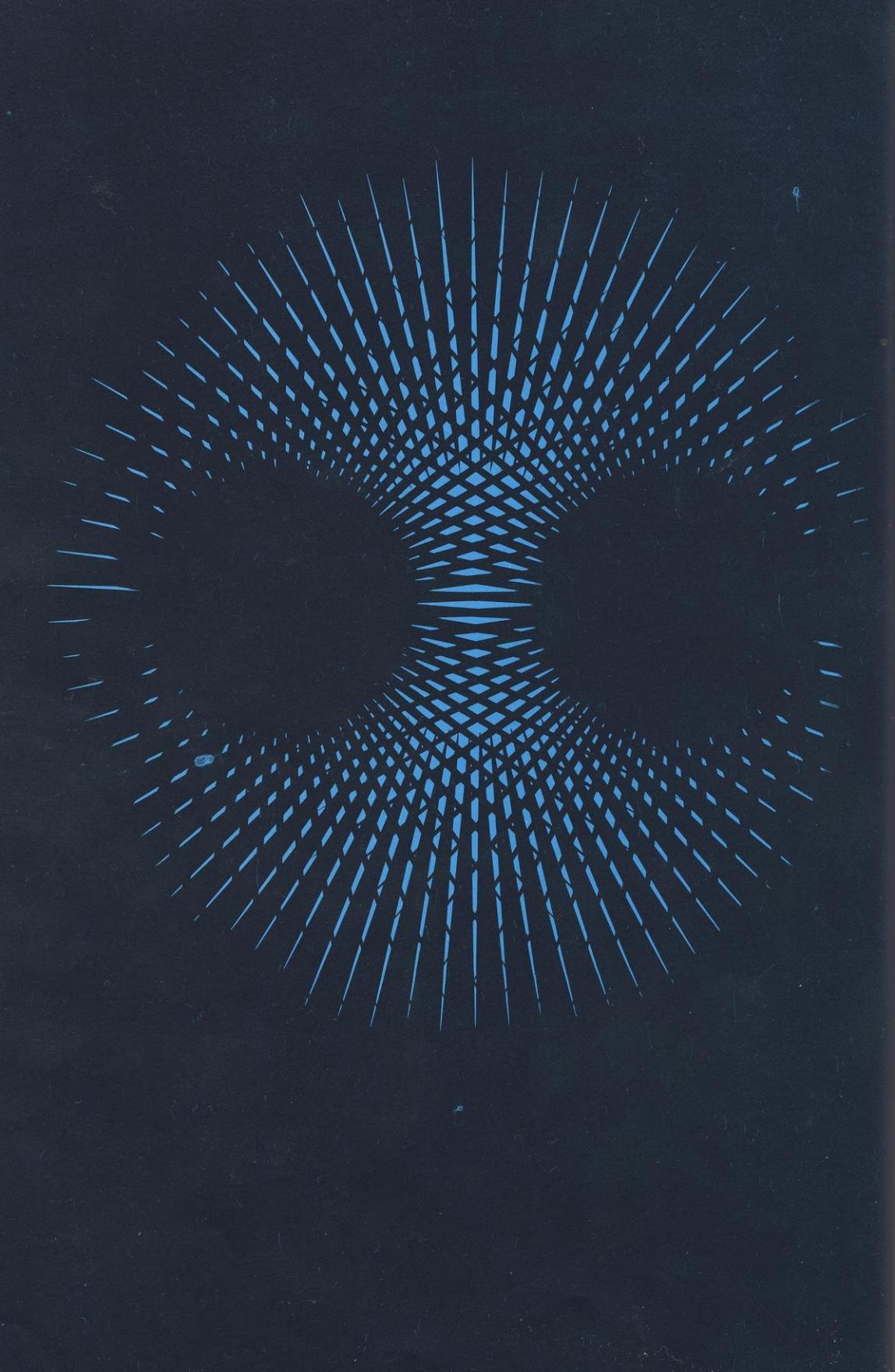
"The Music of Protest," Saturday Review of Literature, November 16, 1968.

5.

"Diary: Audience 1966," A Year from Monday, Wesleyan University Press, p. 50, ff.

6.

"Rhythm, etc.," *ibid.* p. 122.



Recent Reinstantiations of Pumice in the Mustard Tusk Scene

R. Meltzer

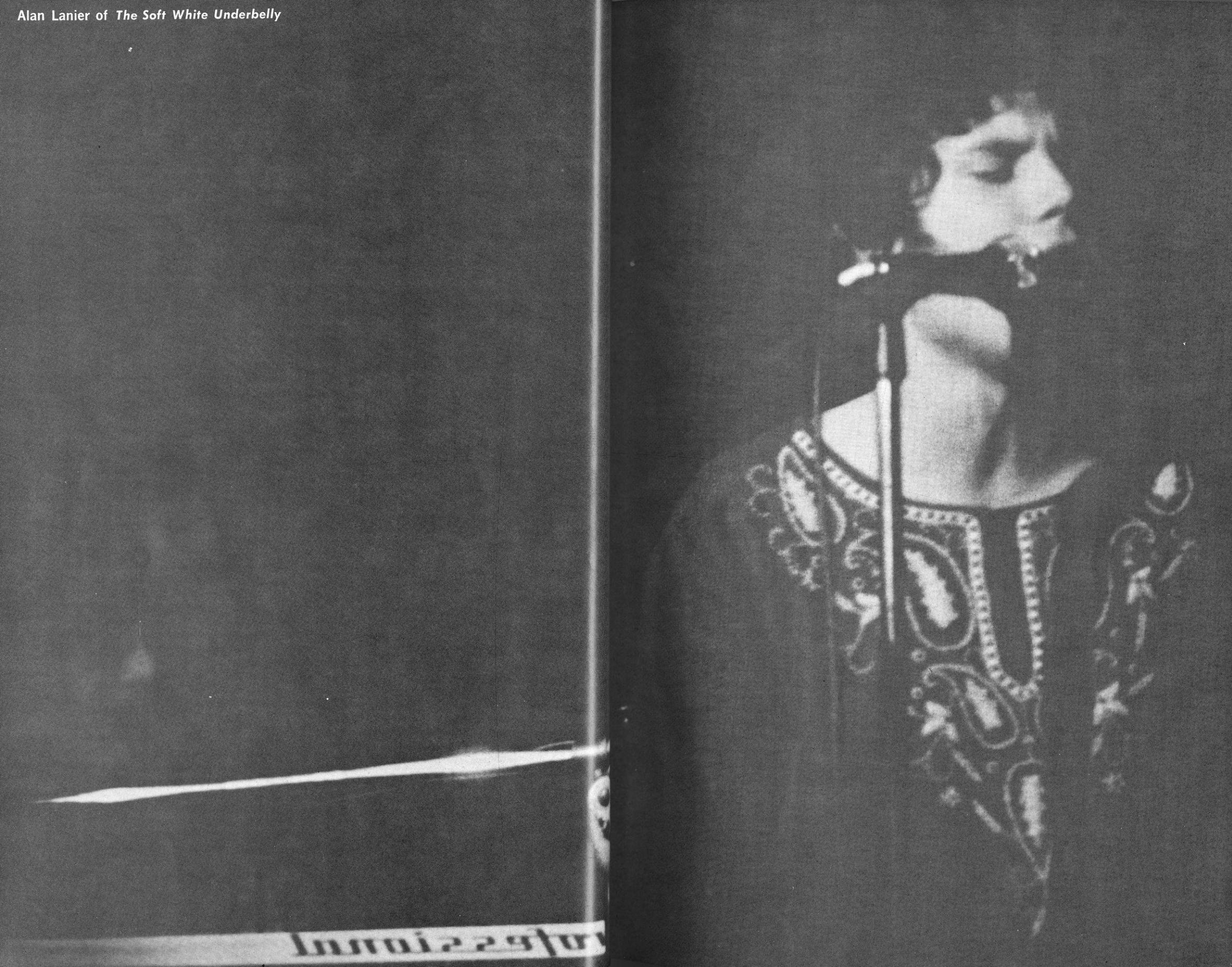
Bartok and Cage were non-non-navigational archaeologists but they couldn't/can't withstand a gander at (real reliable masters-of-the-craft) Van Morrison or Moby Grape: Robert Plant (Led Zeppelin) and David Clayton Thomas (Blood, Sweat and Tears) and whoever was the singer for the Knickerbockers and the actual (a surprise-if-you-want) (actual was a surprise) empirical _____ of the vocal conceptually-necessitated-but-long-unawaited non-non-non-non-renunciation of the quality-trash continuum (and quality-trash fusion and confusion, fusion-confusion fusion, fusion-confusion confusion), an art-for-art-sake mere structural pie easy-as-pie to take if you're an audience guy (it's non-non-unpalatable for you Jack and just for you too: post-Anything is post-Everything, pre-post-post-pre-pre-post-pre-pre-pre-etc is _____ too of course: actual concrete collapse of your analogical framework (any one you can think of, including collapse framework, George's-guitar-as-the-rock-focal-point-if-nothing-else-too framework,) and mine too. But that's near enough to barking up the wrong tree to be something else entirely, so a couple of grains of tentatively temporary temporarily relevant focus grit: 1. massive potential suspension-of-valuational-disturbance-of-the-actual-meat-experience in the midst of any and all actual meat experiences except in any and all specific that-ones and vice versa and neither and both and never: total heavy ad hoc (utterly insulated (and all other spots on the insulation continuum)) spontaneity (plus-minus systematic interference and no); 2. ad hominem pressure, as massive as anywhere else anywhere ever, and capable of being located and relocated anywhere anywhere at all: like the Kinks're a groove so therefore this song by the Kinks is great (n. transcendence of and thru

clichéhood, especially clichéhood of systematic transcendence in all possible forms) even when it's not (if such a conceptual stumbling block is conceivable: good-bad, art-non-art, this-that, all a big lump of the total content of the total experience; experiential rumblings for the systematic artifacthood of mere experiencedness/experiencingness and tarpaper and.); 3. thus the big utter hierarchy move (which includes the big monistic mushroom and the pluralistic thing too) and 4. well the move move of course (afterthought pressure or 5. afterthought pressure (and, obviously, the beginning/end of all history/geography: it's all gone, it's all back, it's all all, it's all even in the neat-as-a-pin total-clarity-as-applied-to-all-that kernel, like oldies-but-goodies forever even then and across all somehow-there's-been-a-content-change content changes involving the very range of palatability etc)); 6. 7. 8. 9. (you fill em in yourself: go ahead it's YOUR GROCERY LIST) 10. 11.

Which (which? the grocery list reference) brings to mind the Dylan (and thus the non-Dylan-by-way-of-being-post-Dylan-by-way-of-being-still-around-after-Dylan-by-way-of-his-motorcycle-accident (the great merely actual empirical anywhere actualization of the publicly clearly inevitable in one form or another) and now it's merely everywhere-after-the-fact (hence one mere indication of the collapse of a priori-a posteriori distinctions both a priori and a posteriori as you'd expect)) yeah Dylan whose grocery lists took up an entire side of an album, giving the illusion of 20-minutehood while just hanging around for 11 minutes or so and it's on a record which everybody owns and everybody scratches (giving rise to art:destruction-analogies analogies and of course there's the whole infinite ephemeral scene and money-spent-as-a-dissipation-analogy-all-its-own too and so many more similar scenes like buying it for its cover and the cover falls apart even sooner than the record (but now they stick cellophane over it) but with less impact cause there's still all the time-dissipated visual potency while the record's getting scratched and so there's even more interference with sound).

Which leads us to sound it's sound it's music, finally the big move form (often

Alan Lanier of *The Soft White Underbelly*



innuia 29 July

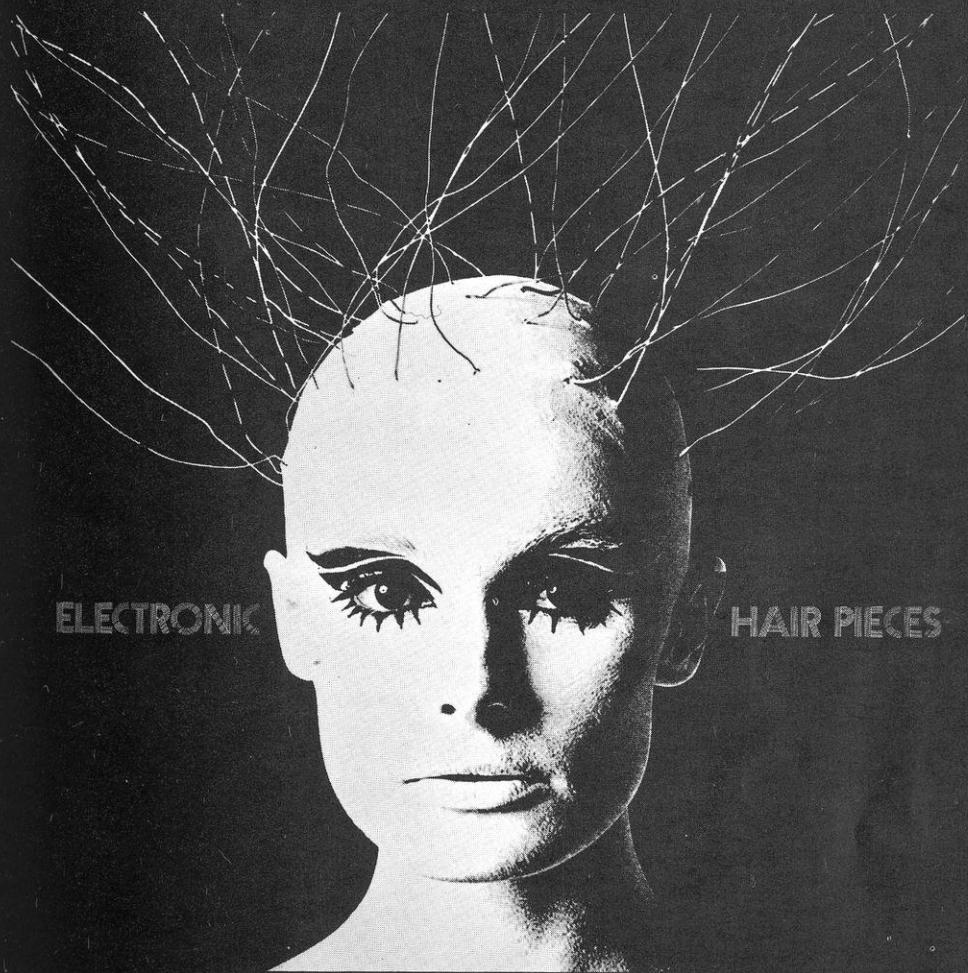
captured and swallowed by guys like Duchamp and Babe Ruth and Kaprow and J. Christ and Cassius Clay and Borneo Jimmy) has been intersected with the famous publicly-acknowledged-as-magic big move form (music and stuff like that) just for the heck of it (just for the hell of it). Sometimes you get the senseless-masochism-of-reconstructing-it-all of Zappa or Burdon or David Peel, sometimes the nothing-like-it-it's-easy-as-a-tadpole-and-I-sure-know-even-if-you-don't ease and grace of Ricky Nelson or infinite wisdom incarnate of the everlasting Trashmen (Surfer Bird). Or the. And. And Dylan's let's-take-a-move-move-break right-now on John Wesley Harding and the effortless way people lay off the infinite Dylan plagiarism opportunities while he's gone (well there was Who's Been Sleeping Here but that's an exception and exceptions should be made as often as often, look what that would've done to prolong the Lovin' Spoonful's career which might have mattered) but wait til he's back (and just mentioning now the whole bit about super-duper-plagiarism moves and move moves and afterthought and all: follow the Kinks thru Party Line to the Stones' Connection and everything else and stuff). And the internal-external definitive general repetition scene. And, speaking specifically, unchanged Paul Jones **readymades** in Something Happened to Me Yesterday.

And OH YEAH can't forget to mention the whole actual big fat source of something's form-content: the whole soul udder, which itself is big (enormous) on let's-not-even-bother-to-call-it-plagiarism-anymore and specific form-content specification with no rest at all and of course the whole great big (biggest) unity-of-form-and-content-in-as-many-places-as-you'd-care-to-look scene, leading to the whole merely-the-greatest-artist-of-all-time-and-that's-all abyss later perfected to oblivion by the Beatles (but there's, but that's, if-ya-want, in context, take heed of rock as the supercontextualizer of any everything you can name. And other sources (hick music, Redi-Whip cans, Indian garbage) could have served just as well (except people worry about their gonads a lot). In addition, transcendence of politics (the Dylan specific once made it clear) to the point of fun.

And, as we all know, transcendence-etc of meaning, meaning itself, even meaning as mustard: here's where continuum-pressure-rather-than-polarity is just about biggest, and the always-underhanded-anyway postulation-of-credibility-as-a-variable becomes merely a variable like everything else (like would YOU drink to the salt of the earth? maybe you would: but you can still groove on the song: absolute valuational splits in a rock unit are possible, each totally validating/invalidating all other possible-actual parts (the next-to-the-last note of Ticket to Ride can do it for you, so can Ringo's hair next week: heaviest dose of out-of-context sludge ever to be found anywhere, and sure it's the heaviest useful and most useful dose too and height-and-weight and stuff like that is rich in immediate self-negation-cross-negation/self-affirmation-cross-affirmation).

Like-it-or-you-don't has varied (or hasn't) pretty much over the last ten yrs and for some big easily discernible irrelevant reason 1957 is taken as a big reference point or 1955 and things like that. Elvis Presley, the mere father of modern mere charisma, only partially (minimally in fact) filled in those great expected satisfaction points/holes before slipping into some conventional unpalatability hole or other etc. That's Elvis and his Hound Dog was originally a Mama Mae Thornton song and he did it more vulgar than her by virtue of trying and not even having to try and the fact that she could just as easily have been a postulated vulgarity constant if you wanted her as that even if she wasn't but she was anyway no, and anyway he was the birth of wow-in-wow's-clothing-and-but-what's-all-this-wow-man as far as he went while she was already in a quality-defined relevancy-determined traditional art/culture/folkiness/etc scene full of hierarchies and just the best at it well that's where she was or something so he had to without-realizing-or-foreseeing-it build a whole new scene that's always been around. And that was the point.

Just think about how that famous fool (Leonard Bernstein), always the big promulgator of scenes he had no inkling of the true import of, gets knocked on the seat of his ass by a sudden mere handful of Beatle songs and sees the universe in



Courtesy: A&M Record Co.

Janis Ian. Well he's an external fool. Now look at how everybody, particularly everybody in this recent wave of England, has been caught up in the Vanilla Fudge fool's-product (nought but organ stuff although Country Joe and Doors had alternative organ scenes) and has shown everybody the transcendence-of-foolhood metaphor concretion just by stepping on the right-wrong specific archetype bundle rather than _____. Led Zeppelin's really something, huh?

And Eric Clapton, and the Yardbirds. Never an ounce of eschatological viscera, but enough specific-and-discriminable noise and noise-quality to corner the market and generate a scad of easy plagiarism designations (like: "That's a Clapton cop" just cause there's wah-wah-etc and it's not Jimi Hendrix or Tommy James). Nice. If everything's a more-or-less obvious spike-in-the-wood, here's an exercise for you: where's the next Miss Amanda Jones if it's not Chuck Berry? (wrong question but answer it anyway).

And have you traveled very far: far as the eye can see — and that's pure conceptuality man, about like looking out on an unbounded infinite like the Atlantic Ocean and picturing it as the unbounded finite-as-hell like Lake Superior (that's what kind of job it is, not what it is): Eight Miles High and when you touch down and it's chopped into units that still make quite a pile: I can't reach you + I can't see feel or hear from you (while I'm a million yrs behind you, a thousand yrs behind ya too, etc) and conceptuality of unithood or anything else is in the way (in the way of what? who knows, but you get the spatial metaphor in there for laughs and you can go anywhere you want, even musically reinforced and things like that: magic or mud or both or neither and the science-fiction of dull trash: Jimi Hendrix for one, Soft White Underbelly for another, Spyder Turner for Another, Dr. Byrds & Mr. Hyde for another, Beach Boys for another, Arthur Lee for another, Mick for another, Fabian for another, the Poni-Tails for another, Eric Burdon for another, Chad & Jeremy for another, systematic clarity for another, anybody you'd care to name for another, etc).

Put on your thinking caps, are there any rock songs about sparrows? You're darn tootin' there are, it's Pandora's Golden Heebie Jeebies by the Association (what a song) and John Kay of Steppenwolf used to be in the Sparrow (were you?).

Question (to Ernie Graham of Eire Apparent): Are the Stones regarded as gods and all that in England?

Answer (by Ernie Graham of Eire Apparent): Yeah they're up there.

Q: What about the Zombies?

A: They're highly regarded musically.

Q: How about the Kinks and the Yardbirds?

A: Nobody listens to them anymore.

Q: How about the Searchers?

A: No.

Q: The D. C. Five?

A: As I hear they were pretty good on stage but I never saw them. (So you get lots of geographic dispersion of public world stuff, as well as lots of geography in lots of more conceptuality: bet ya a quarter rock's got the biggest load (all-time) of public world unitary breakdown of the whole sludge simultaneous with nearly undisturbed totality vision accompaniment etc. Numbers on the top 40 used to be okay too. FM radio really missed the point when they ended up with all that merely verbal torpor between tracks anyway, numbers are a better excuse for being dull and temporarily taxonomically irrelevant.)

The Waste Track (is what Looking Glass and stuff of that ilk is on the Association's Renaissance album) is not a rock exclusive but it is a great rock exclusive. In other art scenes you gotta wait til the guys get senile or too young or only occasionally in order to get to see some wholesome throwaways.

Uses of the super-plethora: disperse monistic-&-or-pluralistic-but-spread-out-pretty-well interest in a big bulk (excite just via mere plethora) AND dump so much on everybody that sorting it all out is a drag (the One's fun but the All's too tall): hit the famous All-One in terms of the playedoutness scene (the fire that burns out rapidly and whose flash is its mere flash (ephemeral etc), Fauvism as a 2-yr virus, Wayne Fontana

& the Mindbenders forever for at least a minute; and it's short/long enough to be structurally ready to be boring as soon as possible, sometimes even before it excites and sometimes after, you know...) The whole very idea of Country Joe & the Fish took about six months to die.

And Monterey (Monterey Pop Festival '67) was the accumulation/release of it all (in terms of all (at least nominally all) the empirical prerequisites) at the moment of the youth of youth (not its maturity) when drugs were something new and Sgt. Pepper had just come out and the Beatles seemed to be there hidden inside stagehands and arabs and Paul McCartney masks and Brian Jones was really there dressed in alien freak stuff when that was big and still on the horizon (things in rock are already full-size on any convenient horizon: triumph of raunch epistemology): well Eric Burdon was there falling all over the place on an Owsley Flying Saucer (1000 micrograms of acid) singing about San Franciscan nights (which he claimed were warm sometimes) and doing an electric violin version of Paint It Black and preceding Simon & Garfunkel on a dismal first night there (featuring Mr. Consistency, Johnny Rivers who was thankin' everybody after each but not after the introduction to each (after his type of before)): LOTS OF HITTING THE NAIL ON THE HEAD WITHOUT EVEN TRYING, all on the one great big occasion for the whole thing as one big flash; and what is Eric Burdon's post-entropic comment on you know what, it was Down in Monterey (ha ha). Down in Monterey: (ancient) Greece is a drag no matter how you swing it, but not (ha) as geography (but no geologic (heavy geography) interchangeability between the two scenes): oh phaw. Mark Twain's a hard scene to crack these days unless you're a foreigner.

Okay take a peek at the Grape's Moby Grape '69 album (oh man). Notice (for instance) that you've got the lackadaisical Beatles (the album not the group) freakout: 1957 all over again (that scene in a nutshell carving) BUT just check out the difference in general approach. Beatles work out the generalized ALL by looking out of a ONE so heavy and effective that archaeology comes on too too strong

so you're stuck with things like pretense (which is a gas) and cuteness (which is pretty awesome too) in the context of Beatles (some context etc). So many canaries who are still waddling around the quality-credibility-authenticity-etc scene figure they're faced with a bummer and can't handle that very easily, maybe even just dump it right away without thinking for a second (although, as we know, bummers are just non-non-bummers all the while) and things like that . . . and so what. . . . The Grape (on another hand, THE other hand in fact) grab hold of Beatle-reformulated forms (which might seem like form-as-flash-as-form-as-flash-as- -as- - and who knows the final component) and by doing a masterpiece type lazy job on them pull off a flashy version of form-resisting-unlazy-formulation-as-flash-as-form as mere form (read that any way you want, What's to Choose is a Grape goody: the Hey Jude cosmology-and-logic contained within Penny Lane and Me & My Monkey: and if it begins to turn into a swamp (a seductive swamp even swamps beyond even the Byrds' Younger Than Yesterday) well Going Nowhere's Who readymade (wow just like the one in Birthday where Townshend swings his arm around and turns a circle into a straight line long enough to make the big musical geometry move utterly explicit) to stomp it up to infinity so it's instant explosion of polar cosmology (not polar cosmos but polar cosmology) (well take the case that Memphis Sam's trying to make about how the Byrds and maybe the Who have comprehended the FORM MODULE with which all readymades can be used to do ANYTHING at all: well the GRAPE, armed with NOTHING BUT a few scattered readymades which might just as well be the same to the unaided ear, armed with nothing but that and (aha) the CONTENT MODULE plus a little vocal oblivion and easy instrumental easy-listening torpor, well they pull off the biggest of all simultaneous Beatle (note those George Harrison mere boss licks at the end of the Grape's Captain Nemo) readymade usage plethora and in-terms-of-everything-else equivalent Beatle parallel universal construction (Arthur Lee once tried it but variety was too noticeable with him as he got along in years): reference to the whole thing by way of reference to the whole thing and to the biggest of the big public world reference points, the big oblique easy repetition-

plagiarism move move conscious of itself within a mainstream for mere consciousness and within the traditional without in order to be beyond the point where they'll (who?) notice that your stuff is obviously super-explanatory (Traffic tried that once but only for five minutes, and the Grape's been tag along approaching this point all along, now they've hit it and they're past it; what about the Stones, what about Dylan?: they've been hitting it too but only sporadically cause they've got the FLASH MODULE down pretty good so they haven't needed to resort to non-muzak structural resorts; but the Grape: form as form, form as function, function as fun, . . .))). (Jazz came in somewhere around there, Charlie Parker of 1946-7-8 cracked it, so did Eric Dolphy, Ornette Coleman, Albert Ayler, Monk too, Cecil Taylor probably, Jaki Byard, Thad Jones once, *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, Charlie Haden, but not Coltrane unless the Vanilla Fudge and Deep Purple too (so of course) . . .)

Grape and post-soul comes out in Ooh Mama Ooh. Ray Charles was biggest lightning bolt ever until a merely alien form weighed so heavily that he became merely mechanical in his flash production (starting late in the Atlantic early Genius era and becoming utterly obvious by the time of the country-western stuff). Otis Redding finally arrived at no-longer-dynamic opposition to any-and-all form (soul music as the least adequate soul form, hence best crucible for soul freakout but inevitably too familiar to be alien anymore so if you conquer it and transcend even Ray Charles-defined soul butter and stuff like that you're nothing but the most wholesome artist yet flashed around and the form has little to do with flash) (listen to Otis' version of The Glory of Love) but there really wasn't an indication of total post-form vision at the beginning (it would've got in the way in retrospect — and empirically, if it always does, that's a basic traditional quality-oriented mere form-oriented remnant (of all the older stuff) that gets in the way (of the transcendence of creativity and other elderly buzzards: what leads to stagnation-before-the-fact, which is (it happens luckily to be the case) still in-context in the rock eggplant: even the victims of the older (another great cliché) art scenes that have made pretenses at rock and

bummered out are in there kicking: even Les-Lee of the Soft White Underbelly makes it). Ooh Mama Ooh (shama-lama booma-lama mama-wawa dippity dom without laughter, following the Hey Grandma which follows a fakeout soul or bluesy or something guitar intro): the Everly Brothers (no not as sound or anything like that, just as some big metaphor or something) without the scars of culturally advanced country boyhood or the marines or heroin qua scars, all this before the fact, all form is played out, all form is alien, all form is salvageable, specific forms taken together can do such and such a job, that's easy to handle right from the start and no formal specifics can get in the way enough to crucially interfere with anything (even inevitably) (and nothing's crucial anyway) and this initial before-the-fact laying of groundwork is so simple and easy and merely presupposition-oriented that intensity and youthful exuberance are never cut into by the weight of any specific specific. Yeah, if you think music's abstruse try to figure why anybody tries to figure post-musical music (what?), no not exactly but rock requires the smallest amount of literature and (lo and behold) it's got the most (and it does the least direct damage-wreaked-by-criticism-upon-art, least upon the stuff itself but since you're still stuck with occasional old-time people doing it there's an occasional mere artist who gets trapped: Clapton convinced by Jon Landau (a remnant of the Downbeat Aristotelian drudgery) that the Cream was a drag and his guitar stuff was dragful of clichés (parts of this are hard to believe)). Rock can without really trying (but when they try wow) do the more powerful more potent more exciting more flashy less boring more/less anything (and vice versa) version of the old-time stuff, just as you'd expect.

As far as drugs and rock go I figure DET will be pretty big eventually — but don't ask me why (listen to Ask Me Why on the Beatles' VeeJay album, then There's a Place, Please Please Me, I'll Get You, Thank You Girl (the Beatles were once a big harp band), Dear Prudence). As far as possible heresies go, up for analysis are always Elvis, the Lovin' Spoonful and Memphis Sam: do you believe any of that? No you don't cause you know why. It's silly stuff, so it's

obvious why Donovan's up for consideration right now. As a heretic. Man that's a big lump to conceptualize without having fun.

Bee Gees (New York Mining Disaster of 1941, Odessa): pathos for anything, blandness for anything, incredible plagiarism anywhere (even red velvet cover for a double album quick on the heels of The Beatles, even Whisper Whisper which is both Mick and Lennon) unknown tongues anywhere at all.

One always convenient pole-or-whatever that's always around is the famous Beatles-Stones dichotomy-and-collapsed-dichotomy. They're essentially something altogether different they're essentially the same they're. And the internal plagiarism between these groups is as big as a hippo or a giraffe. A far heavier scene than even the Stones taken alone. In the same weight division is the Spoonful's Darling Be Home Soon on the Ed Sullivan Show using the Ray Bloch Orchestra.

Undergroundhood for that which was previously ineligible for undergroundhood, all thru totally visible discrepancy between fame and fortune: Van Dyke Parks et al. And discrepancy between fame-fortune and extra-fame-fortune relevance is big too, once in a while it's with somebody who persists having hits all over the place but is never in any designated place etc: Bee Gees? Used to be that way with the Four Seasons? Most stuff is too peripheral to official peripheral categories to be other than peripheral (to x or to peripherality). The Hollies, Blues Magoos, early Cream, Wind in the Willows, Graffiti, Influence, Spirit, Autosalvage, 1910 Fruit Gum Company, Fugs, early Richie Havens, future Richie Havens, Jefferson Airplane, Mamas & Papas, Phil Ochs, Stone Pillow, MC5, Ten Years After, Blues Project with John-John McDuffy, Dennis Johnston and the Beach Boys, Brute Force, Mad River, Red Krayola, Vagrants, Box Tops before the second thing came out, Martha & Vandellas, Percy Sledge, C. C. & the Chasers, Taming Power of the Great, Blue Cheer. And in some easily graspable public world stump categories, of course, are the Trashmen, the Grateful Dead,

the D. C. 5, Pink Floyd, the Move, Righteous Brothers, the Cyrkle, Grapefruit, and your 11 favorite groups including the Chambers Brothers.

Jethro Tull, the Dubs, Platters, Flamingos, Ravens, Orioles, Raven, Strawberry Alarm Clock, Terry Reid, Fleetwood Mac, Bonzo Dogs, David & Jonathan, Monkees, Chocolate Watch Band, Canned Heat, Smokey Robinson, Arthur Brown, Derek, Incredible String Band, Shields, Crests, Little Peggy March, Little Anthony, Little Millie Small, Burl Ives, Jackson Browne, Spencer Davis, Grachan Moncur, Spooky Tooth, Gary U. S. Bonds, Gary Lewis & the Playboys, Fats Domino, Five Satins, Tommy Sands, Mongo Santamaria, Al Kooper, David Ruffin, Perry Como, Judy Collins, Iron Butterfly, John Hammond, Shirley Bassey, Buffalo Springfield, Scaffold, Lulu, Anthony Perkins, John Fred, Rolf Harris, Them, Noel Harrison, Jackie the K, Chuck Jackson, Ultimate Spinach, Ian & Silvia, Johnny Hallyday, Del-Satins, Belmonts, Gerry & the Pacemakers, Gene Vincent, Buddy Knox, Buddy Holly, Bobby Vee, Impressions, Kokomo, James Brown, Big Bopper, Soupy Sales, Supremes, Les Paul & Mary Ford, John Lee Hooker: each and every one has either had one or more hits or hasn't.

Jack Sprat could eat no fat.



The New Arts and Their Scenes

Richard Kostelanetz

Even though "the end of art" was frequently forecast a decade ago, a "new art" has since emerged from each of the traditional arts, just as there have always been new arts in the twentieth century, just as there will probably continue to be a "new art" and an "old art" at every modern historical moment; for while the arts themselves may change drastically within our own lifetimes, the reasons for their transformation remain more or less constant. One cause is the inevitable depletion of an established style, which has a life cycle of its own — fathered by one or a few men, it earns admirers and eventually imitators ("a response keyed to time," in Harold Rosenberg's phrase) until its intrinsic, or apparent, opportunities are thoroughly exhausted. Just as inevitably as its audience's enthusiasm is dulled by inundation, so the style's children undermine a genuine innovation with an increasingly popular panoply of mannerisms. At this point in its cycle the style can be characterized as senile, if not dead, even though it and its exponents may continue to thrive, along with other children, in the protective shelter of academies and other places of cultural isolation.

"The importance of the need for patterned novelty as a basic human requirement," reports the musicologist Leonard Meyer, "is implicit or explicit in a large number of recent studies of creativity, developmental psychology and stimulus privation." Therefore, since people in general and artists in particular are always doing things in original ways, the demise of a recently dominant style provides opportunities for other ways of working; so that a number of alternatives inevitably compete in the free-market of critical admiration and artistic imitation. To put it another way, either out of

cussed rejection of established art — indicatively, so much that is new in art since Dada originates from avowedly anti-artistic impulses — or out of the passion for innovation that is perhaps intrinsic in man and/or our times, there are distinct leaps in art; and the new way of rendering that persuades most effectively, usually by its intrinsic merit or art-historical relevance, establishes another transiently dominant style. Less a fixed formula than a dynamic process, "style" is superficially a particular way of working, but more profoundly, the word describes the characteristic means by which particular general perceptions are expressed in individualized objective forms. Art ultimately reflects selected strains of previous art, as most new paintings, for instance, inevitably look like familiar recent paintings. However, an inventive one or few make a leap that will be adopted by the many; and in these many are yet another few who will take yet another leap that will again convert the multitude.

In addition to following the logic of its own history, art also responds to changes in the world's historical situation; and this explains why works created after the rise of Sputnik, the decline of McCarthyism, the end of cultural censorship, the growth of mass television, the sophisticated taste of John F. Kennedy, the increased affluence that doubled nearly every middle-class income, the contraceptive pill and other new drugs, more widespread protests by minorities, Soviet-American détente, the war in Vietnam, the dissemination of transistorized appliances and computers — after all that has happened around the world in the past decade — current works of art, as well as other acts and thoughts of contemporary men, will inevitably be different, in form as well as content, from those of the fifties. Similarly, the new art reflects informational overload by offering both much more and much less stimuli than previous art, as well as the incipient apocalypse in the world by creating incipiently apocalyptic works; and the increasing pace of change in art inevitably reflects the increasing speed of change in society. (Moreover, the new

*This essay will appear in Mr. Kostelanetz's forthcoming book *METAMORPHOSIS IN THE ARTS* to be published by Abrams-Balance House.

If it comes to his notice that someone else had one of his ideas before he did, he makes a mental or actual note not to proceed with his plan.
—John Cage, "Jasper Johns: Stories and Ideas" (1964)

If we proceed on the assumptions that style is both relational and developmental, we need to test the connection between relatedness and change. Several propositions, seven at least, can easily be advanced, together with their counter-propositions.

- 1.) Styles, being historical configurations, are neither perpetual nor in random change. Being in change, however, their identity is in doubt at every instant.
- 2.) Elements dispersed evenly throughout all historical time cannot mark style. Yet style presupposes such stable configurations within limited durations.
- 3.) Style is identifiable only among time-bound elements. Yet if the components are in differential change, as they always are, the relation among them is a changing one.
- 4.) Presupposing a style presupposes that it has a beginning and an end, although the components may have begun earlier, and might end later than the style itself.
- 5.) Each kind of human action has its style: no actions or products escape style. Yet the preceding observations suggest that such configurations are more instantaneous than extended in duration.
- 6.) We participate in going styles, and we observe past style. But the operations of esthetic choice are unpredictable: a past style may at any instant be revived.
- 7.) Different styles can coexist, like languages in one speaker. Such coexistence itself can be more various than style. — George Kubler, "Style and the Representation of Historical Time" (1967).

And in any well-ordered household the very thought that one of the young may turn out to be an artist can be a cause for general alarm. It may be a point of great pride to have a Van Gogh on the living-room wall, but the prospect of having Van Gogh himself in the living room would put a good many art lovers to rout. Ben Shahn, *The Shape of Content* (1958).

Modernism includes more than just art and literature. By now it includes almost the whole of what is truly alive in our culture.—Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting" (1965).

For a very long time everybody refuses and then almost without a pause almost everybody accepts. In this history of the refused in the arts and literature the rapidity of the change is always startling. When the acceptance comes, by that acceptance the thing created becomes a classic. It is a natural phenomena, a rather extraordinary natural phenomena that a thing accepted becomes a classic. And what is the characteristic quality of a classic. The characteristic quality of a classic is that it is beautiful. . . . Of course it is beautiful but first all beauty in it is denied and then all the beauty of it is accepted. If every one were not so indolent they would realize that beauty is beauty even when it is irritating and stimulating not only when it is accepted and classic. — Gertrude Stein, "Composition as Explanation" (1926).

The Characteristic feature of the new art is, in my judgement, that it divides the public into two classes of those who understand it and those who do not. This implies that one group possesses an organ of comprehension denied to the other—that they are two different varieties of the human species. —Jose Ortega y Gasset,

"The Dehumanization of Art" (1925)

America now boasts an established tradition in contemporary creation that is active and reactive, that moves our artists in their various directions as the School of Paris once did. It is a tradition of native origin and international consequence, a shared impulse which strongly shapes the outcome of the individual's struggle with new artistic forms and ideas in Paris, London, Rome, and Tokyo, as well as in New York. The decisive American development of the past two decades has been the creation of a collective and sustained body of invention which works as a generative tradition within the mainstream of European modernism. — Sam Hunter, "American Art Since 1945" (1966).

A new kind of writing appears, to be greeted at first with disdain and derision; we hear that the tradition has been flouted, and that chaos has come. After a time it appears that the new way of writing is not destructive but re-creative. It is not that we have repudiated the past, as the obstinate enemies — and also the stupidest supporters of any new movement like to believe; but that we have enlarged our conception of the past; and that in the light of what is new we see the past in a new pattern.—— T.S. Elliott. *To Criticize the Critic* (1965).

Ours is the first culture in history to have completely broken down the barriers between conflicting stylistic traditions and to have achieved the possibility of making contact with the entire range of mankind's artistic creations as a totality.

—Joseph Frank, *The Widening Gyre* (1963)

American art of the sixties is all but exclusively indigenous, which is to say most of its creators were born here and educated here; most are and were also working here primarily out of a sense of native traditions and arguments. In 1962, the curator-critic Sam Hunter wrote of young American painters and sculptors. "Pollock, de Kooning, Rothko and [David] Smith, rather than the great European masters of modern art, remain the idols of the new generation."

A related set of historical changes that enormously affects art is technological development, which first of all includes new media such as motion pictures or television and then distinct increases in the materials available to artists; recent painting, for instance, is indebted, as Lucy R. Lippard itemizes, to "industrial materials like formica, chrome, Day-Glo and aluminum paints, false woodgrain or wallpaper textures, cheap textiles, plastics, automobile enamels, lacquers, and neon light." Electronic music, sculptural machines and much else that is new in art are indebted to mechanical improvements of distinctly recent vintage; and if only because certain influential new technologies also radically change the common environment informing all creation, a thick book could be written about the multifarious impact of, say, the transistor upon art of the past decade. Moreover, works created after television, long-playing records, tape recorders, accurate color reproduction and the like inevitably reflect changes in the creative sensibility induced and abetted by these technologies. Beyond that, efficient communications probably makes artistic processes more cerebral than before, because the artist today need not see significant modern works at first hand to assimilate their impact. Communications technology also reshapes the audience for art, increasing not only the number of people thoroughly aware of the current scene but also the multiplicity of cultural audiences (and, thus, the diversity of heralded styles). Indeed, contemporary artists are themselves more predisposed to technology, as well as new insights into nature offered by contemporary science (at times imperfectly understood), than their predecessors, all but repudiating the myth fashionable a decade or two ago that art and technic were culturally anti-thetical. Indeed, as long as technology progresses and

history changes, the fact that so much change has occurred in recent years is no reason to believe that everything has been done, or that the tradition of doing what-has-not-been-done has come to an end; for even though the originalities of the future inevitably remain beyond our capacities to foresee, there are no true terminal points, only illusory ends and new beginnings.

Just as there are no apparent limits on man's artistic or technological inventiveness, so there are no limits upon the materials or precedents or ideas which can be adapted to artistic innovation. Similarly, though critics commonly debunk a claim for originality by referring to one or two previous precedents, the measure should be the innovativeness of the developed style in comparison to earlier styles; even the most adventurous steps ahead echo an earlier endeavor, which more often than not went unnoticed or undeveloped in its own time. A concomitant distaste for the familiar, by recent artists and critics alike, cannot be minimized, for as much as one might admire a structurally superior imitation of Chartres Cathedral, unless the edifice has ironic overtones it would be, in an esthetic context, as "uninteresting," if not as embarrassing, as a Model T Ford. Rather than fear the end of art, it is more substantial to ask whether the art considered new and important in our time — whether, for immediate instance, the works mentioned favorably in this essay — will be similarly regarded by subsequent historians of recent years. Of course, only the retrospect available to the future can finally tell; but it is somewhat comforting to note that our current histories of dance, painting, music and sculpture in the twentieth century deal largely with work that was regarded as "new" and radical in its time.

Every era of modern art seemed, to both its participants and reporters, more receptive to preposterous ideas and achievements than its predecessors; yet what appears to characterize the recent atmosphere, in nearly all the arts, is an unprecedented permissiveness, which encompasses an awareness of further possibilities, a tolerance of genuine eccentricity, a felt freedom regarding both the artistic tradition and available materials and, particularly, an appreciation of outrageous work and/or apparent dead

ends (like silent musical pieces and blank canvases) that, in retrospect, seem more like ironically sensible explorations, if not indubitable breakthroughs. "No period of American art," writes Sam Hunter of the past decade, "has been richer in innovation or generated more heated arguments over the validity of new artistic directions," and what is true for painting applies as well to sculpture, dance, film, music and mixed-media arts. Intrinsic in this permissiveness is the distinctly contemporary concern with alternative forms of coherence — unifying structures other than representation and even cubism in painting, other than the sonata-form or even rough atonality in music; and what such diverse phenomena as extremely atonal and astructural music, like that of John Cage or Karlheinz Stockhausen; serial combinatoriality, exemplified by Milton Babbitt; assemblage; mixed-means theater; minimal painting, etc. all have in common is kinds of coherent encoding scarcely known two decades ago. Indeed, the current attitude would hold there is ultimately no such thing as an unstructured work of art, although the form of a truly original piece is likely to escape the unsympathetic or unsophisticated audience, at the same time that the more persistent spectator may deduce the key to the unfamiliar evidence before him.

A related preoccupation of our time opens artists to materials not previously used for art — whether the noises of the environment, the sounds of non-musical machines, the imagery of advertising, balls of string, crushed car parts, and so forth; for an esthetic open to formal invention also allows the inventive use of previously non-artistic matter, if not ultimately implying the extreme position that everything purposefully made by tasteful men may have the status of art. For these and other reasons, the current moment is generally more concerned with, as well as appreciative of, extrinsic explorations than intrinsic achievement, creative process than finished product, philosophical suggestiveness than declarative statement, ontological questioning than patent answers, in addition to unfamiliar visual, aural and multi-sensory experiences. Nonetheless, the kind of blatant, if not incredible, complexity that informs, say, the multiple cubism of Willem de Kooning's *Women* series, Arnold Schoenberg's *Moses and*

Aaron, and the prose of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* is definitely out of fashion, except in post-serial music; for the currently predominant, though not pervasive, custom holds that complexity should either arise out of relatively simple means, as in certain musical-theater pieces by John Cage or Terry Riley, or stand implied, which is to say in practice discovered by the spectator as he examines the work and experience before him.

Another contemporary canon holds that art should not be too accessible, neither to the artist nor the spectator; and if a way of working should become either too easy to the artist or too comprehensible to his audience, the artist is obliged to create something different and more difficult. This esthetic ethic complements the attitudes toward newness, toward surpassing the current situation, toward continually challenging established procedures of perception, toward demanding more involvement from the audience for art, and toward the surprise of creating something neither the artist nor the public has experienced before. "The so-called 'cult of the new,' with which artists and critics are constantly accused of being obsessed, is actually a self-imposed cult of the difficult," writes Lippard. "And the artist is more often the victim than his commentator or viewer. Success is comprised by acceptance by the wrong people for the wrong reasons, and success in turn can eventually compromise the art." One reason for making perception so arduous is that much contemporary art is about recognizing order in apparent confusion — about the need to discern the patterns in what at first seems irreducible chaos, particularly because of unprecedeted materials or unfamiliar organization; and this esthetic demand corresponds to the larger historical need to make sense of our unprecedeted, chaotic social environment. Therefore, should an artist cease to challenge entrenched and familiar habits of perception, he implicitly neglects, among other things, one of his primary social roles. In this respect, just as contemporary art challenges and then hones the perceptual sensibility to deduce the puzzles of the world, so life educates us for art.

Nothing significant in art today is concerned with representing concrete reality — photographic realism in painting

is just as dead as representation in music; and even when an image is realistically reproduced, as in some pop art, the esthetic purposes are either ironic or iconographic — designed either to satirize or resonantly capture the eternal in the mundane; yet out of both these processes come works of art that eventually reflect and evaluate the hard realities of our common experience. In addition, just as few artists of note present themselves as internally driven to create, so it is that little in contemporary art is expressionistic in technique — as concerned with setting down the insides of oneself as, say, abstract expressionism in painting or some stream-of-consciousness writing; for the new art is generally placid, impersonal, constructivist, and philosophical. (Exceptions include several important "underground" films, suggesting that new technologies can extend expressionistic impulses as conveniently as constructivistic.) Indicatively, this is the era for the "good idea," which in practice may be outrageously original, unprecedentedly complex, conceptually significant, historically resonant, etc. if not also divorced from realized craftsmanship; and not only does much "inspiration" for the best contemporary work start with such ideas, but perhaps because most "good ideas" demand considerably less craft than a replica of Chartres, a measure of a contemporary artist's ultimate competence is as much the quality of his ideas as what he does with them.

"Every broad change in a living art is accompanied inevitably by a revaluation of the arts of the past, which is frequently of the most drastic kind," writes the historian-curator William K. Ivens in *Art and Geometry*. In painting, for instance, the innovative achievement of Robert Rauschenberg revived the example of Arthur Dove, an eccentric American painter of the twenties; the pop artists honored Stuart Davis' use of advertising imagery; minimal painting echoes Kasimir Malevich; artistic machines emphasized the formerly all but forgotten *Kinetic Sculpture*: *Standing Wave* (1920) by Naum Gabo; superficially non-sensical, yet meaning-laden artistic gestures go back to Marcel Duchamp (and perhaps revived his declining reputation), and so forth; for in drawing upon the past, the most adventurous artists invariably leap over the recently dominant style, which in painting

was abstract expressionism, to find their apparent influences in earlier figures. The truth is that no new art springs out of a vacuum; for even behind the most unprecedented positions lies some sort of definable tradition.

Not only has the recent period been dominated by avant-garde work, but what is historically unprecedented has been the sheer proliferation of genuine avant-gardes in nearly every art. In painting in the sixties, for instance, works in several distinct styles moved beyond previous practice — pop art, op art, psychedelic expressionism, monotonous fields, shaped canvases, hard-edge painting — while another tendency, exemplified by Robert Rauschenberg, has favored moving out of the canvas into painted (rather than constructed) three-dimensional objects, imagistic machines and even theatrical performances, all of which show evidence of descending not from sculpture or dance but Rauschenberg's original commitments to painting. Similarly, the former painter Allan Kaprow moved logically from collage to assemblage (three-dimensional collage) into space-encasing environments and then into theatrical performances and finally into happenings, which broke down all restrictions upon space and materials, as well as turning the action of "action painting" (Kaprow's own original style) into its own artistic medium. From this kind of career follows the strictly contemporary idea, espoused by Kaprow among others, of the artist as ultimately not a painter or a sculptor but a man engaged on a creative adventure that will involve him with a variety of media. "Artist" refers to a person," writes Kaprow, "willfully enmeshed in the dilemma of categories, who performs as if none of them existed." It has largely been this species of artist who, in spite of his specialized training, produces work that draws upon several of the traditional arts and yet achieves its final identity between (or inter-) media. Nonetheless, the point for the moment is that all these positions have been clearly avant-garde within the history of painterly art.

The fundamental difference between the two constellations of avant-gardes in painting is that the first would isolate the processes, capabilities and materials of the established medium — the application of paint to a plane of canvas — while

the other direction would mix painting with concerns and procedures from the other arts, such as fabricating three-dimensional objects of using machines; and a similar difference between isolation and miscegenation separates avant-gardes in the other arts. In contemporary music, that avant-garde descended from Schoenberg would isolate the phenomena extrinsic in expressive sound — pitch, register, timbre, envelope and duration — and then subject each of these musical dimensions to an articulate ordering, creating pieces of unprecedentedly rich musical activity, while the other avant-garde, most popularly associated with John Cage, would combine sound with theatrical spectacle in an original way, creating an experience not just for the ear alone but the eye too, as well as at times the other senses. In dance, one avant-garde would explore the possibilities of movement — Twyla Tharp, Yvonne Rainer, James Cunningham; the other inclines toward theatrical conceptions mixing unusual music, props, lights, costumes, and such — Alwin Nikolais, Ann Halprin, Murray Louis, Meredith Monk, Mimi Garrard. Paradoxically, Merce Cunningham, who was at his beginnings a path-breaker for the first avant-garde, switched his emphasis in the early sixties to become an innovating figure in mixed-means dance (the masterpiece here being *Winterbranch* 1964), only to return since 1967 to pieces predominantly about movement. In film, there are those who work within the traditional rectangular image, and those who prefer curved screens and even multi-screen projections, all of which makes cinematic images not ends in themselves but materials in an encasing theater or, if the space is completely filled with pictures, an artistic environment. In each art today, both separation and combination have distinctly modern, as well as contemporary, traditions.

The most appropriate metaphor for describing the recent history of art draws less upon linear Newtonian physics than the more contemporary science of quantum, in which energy is regarded as leaping ahead in discontinuous batches; for the "new" in any art today is not a single step built upon the old house but a diversity of alternatives to current practices. Indeed, both the speed and variousness of stylistic dissemination are indebted to the

communications media, which insure that news of a fresh achievement in the arts is rapidly trumpeted around the world; and this process creates not universal stylistic uniformity but numerous pockets of exponents of a particular style (whether pop or minimal in painting, serial or aleatory in music) — in addition to escalating the pace of stylistic diffusion and hastening the exhaustion of a successful style (the same pop paintings that were shocking in 1962 became depressingly familiar by 1965). Nonetheless, it is the historian, with his bias toward linear understanding, who gives the erroneous impression that one style succeeds another (and reputations are made by fresh artists' climbing over their predecessors' backs); and it is neo-Hegelian Europeans, rather than more pragmatic Americans, who tend to believe that only one group or style can establish the stream of historical change at a certain time. The contrary, profoundly American truth holds that several new styles can develop and thrive simultaneously and that new art stems not from polemical position-taking, as exemplified by the manifestos of coteries, but from miscellaneous endeavors by isolated artists working in ambiance of risk and adventure.

II

For every new art, there is a new scene for art; and each art in the sixties has witnessed, in America at least, the formation of a new social milieu. In painting, the change has been most conspicuous, as the rapidly increasing prices for the masterpieces of the fifties have created a boom market for more recent works of any reputation. This means, on one level, that the number of people painting — i.e., painting seriously out of the contemporary tradition — has increased enormously; on another level, that there were over fourteen hundred one-man shows in New York City in 1967-8. This affluence means also that a few successful artists under thirty-five can afford to purchase town houses, the time-saving aid of hired assistants and specialized craftsmen, perhaps a summer cottage in the country, and many other luxuries traditionally the domain of older artists, if not the upper classes; and as the mores of the profession succumb to affluence, the successful artist is less likely to be ashamed of his extravagant

wealth than a comparable figure was only a decade ago. Perhaps because prestige can be translated into fame, which in turn can usually be translated into money, publicity has become unprecedentedly important to artists and collectors alike, some of whom strive to make fame induce prestige, rather than the reverse. Indicatively, one sculptor of pseudo-note has even hired a press agent, as well as allowed others to found a restaurant in his name; similarly, there is more financial and perhaps professional success to be gained from an enthusiastic mention in the Sunday art news (or gossip) columns of the *New York Times* than a favorable discussion by an important critic. Whether all this money and attention is "good for art" cannot be definitively discerned just yet; nonetheless, much historical truth informs Herbert Read's contention, in *Art and Alienation* (1967), that "There is no demonstrable connection between the quality of art in any period and the quality of patronage."

It is today possible for a successful artist, even one as critically respected as Jasper Johns and Claes Oldenburg, to become far more of a celebrity than Jackson Pollock or Willem de Kooning, totem figures of the previous generation, ever were (or allowed themselves to be); and the social commentator Tom Wolfe has written that the highest echelons of New York City society regard an eminent painter as the most desirable pulling presence at occasions intended to induce other kinds of contacts and commerce. The enterprising collector of new art has also achieved a prominence unknown before, as his name is sought for the directing boards of museums, he is sometimes profiled in the slick magazines, his personal collection is frequently photographed, and he becomes an ersatz critic whose opinion is sought on the current scene (if not made more influential than the judgments of the acknowledged critics). "One who landed early on the shores of Abstract Expressionism," quipped Harold Rosenberg, "is invited to lecture on his deed like a Marine colonel in the first wave at Iwo Jima." While the diversity of American patronage is partially responsible for the stylistic pluralism that allows several styles to thrive simultaneously, the spectacular success of paintings inevitably persuades some people that their purchase can be not

only socially estimable but more lucrative than speculations in stocks or real estate. More than one old-time painter, dealer or art-watcher has complained that a "strictly business" atmosphere has infiltrated the current scene, as well as corrupted the ongoing critical discussion.

Painters and sculptors, on the whole, are probably less susceptible to sociological discriminations than other groups of artists. For instance, although New York painters inhabit a cultural world different from non-New York artists and homosexuals are different from heterosexuals, these distinctions scarcely separate one esthetic style from another, or pervasively influence either the establishment of reputations or the bestowal of spoils. (Sexual persuasion may influence, however, the immediate propagation of a particular style, which lovers-in-common, sometimes female and other times male, have been known to carry from one artist to another.) There is probably a socio-economic difference between painters who have a regular gallery connection, artists who show occasionally, and those who have never shown — an upper, a middle and a lower class of the profession, so to speak; but these distinctions scarcely relate to stylistic differences. Birthdates may divide the first generation of abstract expressionism, born before 1915, from the second, born largely after 1922, as well as explain why nearly all technological sculptors were born after 1930; and it is perhaps suggestive that pop art should come from artists born between 1923 and 1933, most of whom tend to celebrate popular culture of the late forties. However, such a generational interpretation of recent painting disintegrates before minimal and psychedelic styles, whose exponents span the years. American artists under fifty are likely to be more articulate than their predecessors, partly because inarticulateness is no longer fashionable in the community of art, mostly because nearly all the younger figures passed through college, if not graduate school, where language is the local currency; but the ability to talk incisively is no measure of either stylistic difference or artistic excellence in contemporary art. Of those painters who have earned some recognition and yet insufficient income, most teach in the art schools of universities, usually part-time or on short appointments, moving from place

to place rather than climbing up the academic ladder. Neither an academic connection nor the eminence of the painter's university counts for anything in getting a show or establishing his reputation or, unlike literature, even making an artist known, while nothing later than abstract expressionism is regarded, yet, as an academic style. A common artistic aspiration often shapes a friendship, especially if two artists working in the same way have nothing else to unite their interests; and group exhibitions, in both galleries and museums, sometimes serve as occasions for artistically like-minded strangers to establish lasting alliances. Even though people of identical background, age or esthetic persuasion are likely to favor each other's company whenever possible, the world of painting seems genuinely less cliquish than others; and the society of sculptors is more or less similar or tangent to that of painters.

The scene of contemporary music, in contrast, falls rather neatly into sociological patterns, dividing into three distinct communities, each of which has its own compositional outlook, its own totem figures, its own exclusionary membership of composers, its own machinery of spoils, and, inevitably, its own audiences.

In the language of descriptive criticism, the three groups are serial composition, which grew out of Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone innovations; mainstream composition, which observes most of the classic proprieties of music; and aleatory or chaotic music, which descends from atonality through Henry Cowell and John Cage to the "chaotic music" of non-pitched and non-structured noise; and nearly every composer of note clearly belongs to one or another group. All but a scant few serial composers, for instance, are holders of graduate school degrees, professors at liberal arts universities, sometime recipients of at least one commission from the Fromm Music Foundation, subscribers (if not contributors) to *Perspectives of New Music*, heterosexuals; and their works are generally performed before audiences of a few hundred professionals — either fellow composers, musicians, musicologists, or music students. Mainstream composition is the only modern musical language frequently performed in the great concert halls of both Europe and America; its composers win the

grand commissions, the generous patronage, the sponsorship of a non- or semi-musical high society. Theirs are also the compositional names to become household words. Most mainstream composers are also performers; most composers teaching in the music conservatories (as distinct from the universities) practice and inculcate the mainstream style. It would be neither unfair nor libelous to say that most (but not all) major mainstream composers are homosexual, and that this taste informs their social world. Aleatory music belongs to a much smaller society, consisting mostly of composers influenced by John Cage; largely impecunious in economic status, they perform to small bohemian audiences, mostly of painters, dancers and other artists, in dowdy, if not makeshift, auditoria. Most young composers of note — those born after 1930 — subscribe to the compositional predilections of their acknowledged teachers; and this habit explains why the short biographies of rising composers, unlike those for painters, invariably mention the eminences with whom they studied. While published critical opinion influences the reputations of mainstream composers, the informal hierarchies of reputation in both avant-gardes are indebted less to critics than the choices of both the totem figures and the concert impresarios.

The society of film divides, first of all, rather strictly into Hollywood and non-Hollywood; and in this case "Hollywood" includes not only the place itself but those oases of professionals around the country who look toward Hollywood's moguls for both support and approval. The other group coalesces around the phrase "underground cinema," which defines not only an informal network of distribution centers and sympathetic publications but also an increasing number of loosely related people on the campuses, in the bohemias of the cities and elsewhere, whose common marks would be subscriptions to *Film Culture* (even if they regard it skeptically) reverence for the dogged devotion of the critic and publicist Jonas Mekas, and insufficient funds for the basic materials of their trade. Although members of the latter group have, largely following Mekas's initiative, taken to calling themselves the "avant-garde" of film, of "The New American Cinema," film-makers in the Hollywood orbit have produced some

of the most original, eccentric and valuable American cinema of recent years —

Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde*, Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* and *2001*.

Here and there are signs of a middle ground, taking esthetic aspirations from the "underground" and yet financing and distribution from Hollywood — examples include John Cassavetes' *Shadows* and *Faces* and Shirley Clarke's films; but even after a decade of laying planks, the floor of this position is hardly firm.

The first thing to be said about the society of dance is that it is financially impoverished; according to the critic Clive Barnes, neither Paul Taylor nor Merce Cunningham, two of the major figures in American avant-garde dance, earns as much per year as a bank clerk. Particularly if the choreographer has a company, as most of them do, there are dancers, designers, costumers, technicians and sometimes musicians to support, as well as administrative people; and this kind of expense inevitably demands patronage, both from the private foundations and wealthy individuals. Primary patronage for Martha Graham's company has shifted, in recent years, from the Baroness de Rothchild to Lila Acheson Wallace, co-founder of *Reader's Digest*, while Rebecca Harkness has supported a number of individuals and groups, as well as several series of performances, through the foundation bearing her name; and several successful painters a few years ago donated their own works to help establish a Foundation for Performing Arts, whose primary purpose was supporting Merce Cunningham's company and even more impecunious dancers. Otherwise, money comes to American dancers from teaching less in colleges (which usually demand a degree in "physical education") than in schools attached to the choreographer's company, in addition to performance tours, mostly of American universities or abroad under the auspices of the Department of State; and even in New York City, the concerts by major groups are rare, while audiences generally number less than house capacity. The few regular critics of the dance wield unusually great power, affecting not only audiences but the beneficence of the less specialized private foundations. Although there are spectators particularly enthusiastic about dance, the audience for the art generally overlaps with that for music — mainstream people

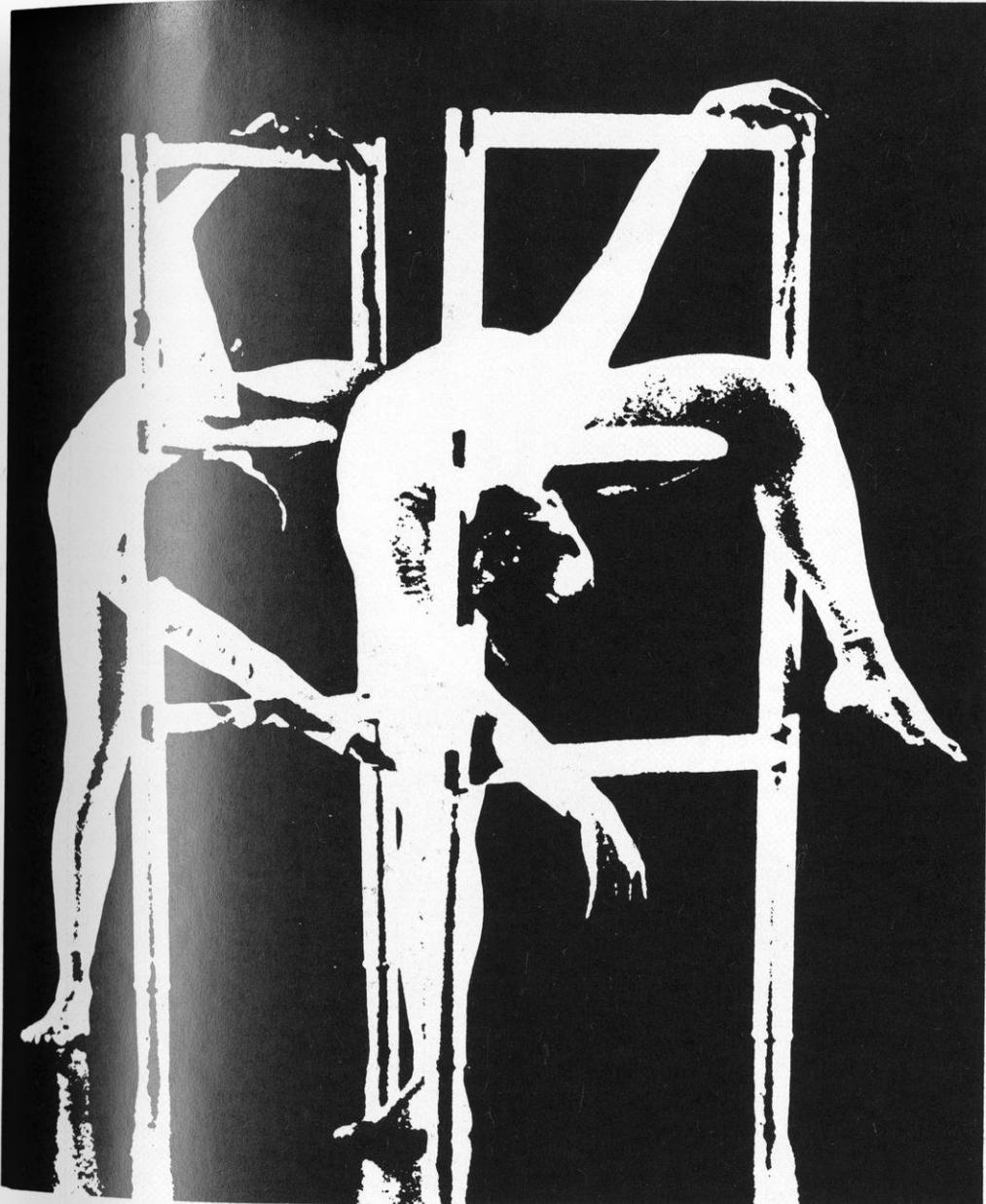
preferring Martha Graham (who commissions works from mainstream composers), aleatory audiences preferring, say, Merce Cunningham or Yvonne Rainer. (Serial composers, in principle concerned with isolating the materials of their art, rarely attend dance performances.) Most choreographers born after 1935 relate best to the institution in which they were primarily trained — Nikolais dancers giving their recitals at the Henry Street Settlement House and Merce Cunningham alumni invariably performing together.

Finally, the mixed-media arts have yet to establish communities of their own, except the collective tribes like USCO or the Merry Pranksters, because most intermedia artists socially still belong to the worlds in which they were originally trained.

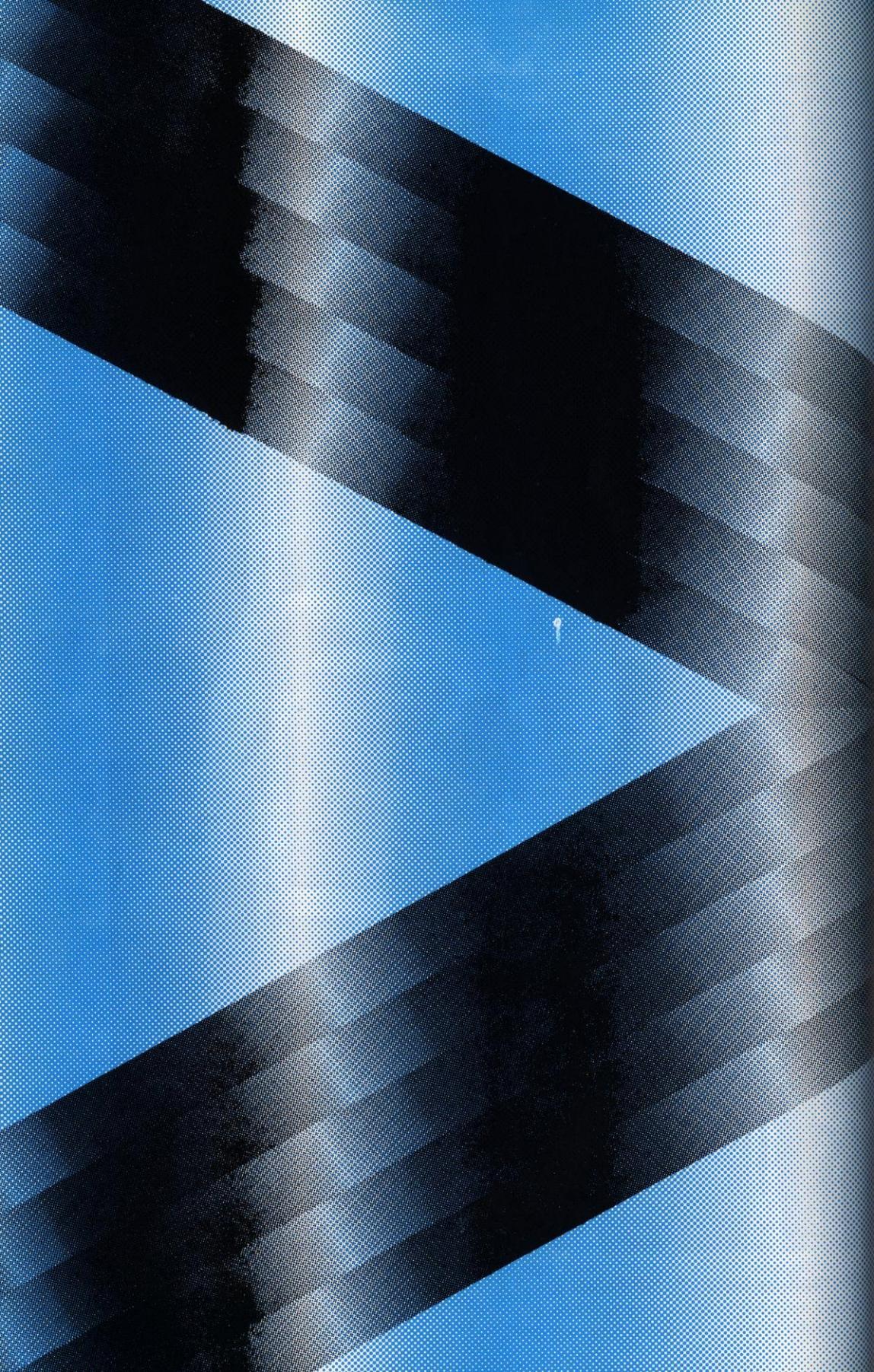
One current argument holds that the traditional avant-garde is dead, primarily because the audience for art picks up so quickly on the latest innovation; but in this criticism the phrase "avant-garde" functions not as an art-historical concept — ahead of the professional pack — but as a sociological term meaning ahead of the cultured society. In the end, this argument is all but tautological, holding that the "avant-garde" cannot be truly vanguard once it is publicly recognized as the "avant-garde" (an error analogous to charging that *Finnegans Wake* loses its complexity once it is explained); but this line of thinking is not only unpersuasive but socially and historically untenable. In fact, while certain new styles in painting and sculpture move with unprecedented quickness into both the established private collections and the art museums, the slick magazines, and even university curricula, all of the figures mentioned in the preceding pages went scorned for a number of years and many still suffer public neglect. On the other hand, the audiences for the new in the various arts have, in general, become more populous, thanks largely to more widespread college education and the general affluence that brings wealthier and increasingly sophisticated audiences, thanks also to the more enlightened tastes of those critics and journalists who disseminate to the larger public. Beyond that, it appears that for every new art there is a new audience, or vice versa; for just as the spectators for an Arthur Miller play presented on Broadway usually average forty-five years of age, so the audience for a mixed-

means theatrical event is generally under thirty-five. The same difference in age separates the people flooding an Andrew Wyeth exhibition from those attending a show of the new sculpture; for just as it seems all but inevitable for most people (and even some critics) to admire for the rest of their lives the

kind of art they learned to appreciate in college, so it is a young audience that inevitably is more open to the claims of a new art, and more aware of its immediate tradition. And so, too, it is the adventurous young artist who is the first to deny, if not eventually disprove, that "everything has been done."



Photograph by Susan Schiff-Faludi



New Ritual and New Theatre

Catharine Hughes

About two-thirds of the way through *The Serpent*, a collaboration of Jean-Claude van Itallie (author of *America Hurrah*) and the Open Theatre, the chorus, with the casualness born of truth taken for granted, reminds the audience:

*And it occurred to Cain
To kill his brother.
But it did not occur to Cain
That killing his brother
Would cause his brother's death.*

The actor playing Cain approaches his brother, looks at him for a moment, then begins to experiment with various ways of killing him. He pulls and twists his arm, attempts to break off his hand, strikes him on various parts of the body. He lifts him into the air and considers whether he should dash him to the ground. In time, he begins to chop at his throat with his hands. *For Cain did not know how to kill/ And he struck at his brother./ And broke each of his bones in turn/ And this was the first murder*, the chorus advises. And Abel does not resist. How, after all, is he to know what his brother is doing?

... But it did not occur to Cain/ That killing his brother/ Would cause his brother's death. The lines are repeated. Cain attempts to revive Abel. He lifts him to his feet only to have him slump to the floor again. He tries again. He puts grass in Abel's hand, urging him to feed his sheep, then places his body across the backs of the two actors who have been playing the sheep. He waits. A long, soft screeching sound comes from the chorus and Abel's ghost rises and moves toward the audience. He reaches out, tense, pleading, in despair. The actors freeze in their positions. Cain continues to wait.

Although, "In the beginning/ Anything is possible . . . now the point/ Toward which I have chosen to go/ Has a line drawn/ Between itself/ And the beginning." We will have the first murder, and all the murders to come. The decision, once made, the act, once begun, must be pursued to its conclusion. It is ineluctable, irretrievable: it, murder, will be repeated through millennia. But there will be a difference: man now has learned to kill. In ritualizing his act, in turning it into a ceremony, the Open Theatre has given it a new reality and the audience a somehow surprising realization.

"The theatre, when it was still part of religion was already theatre," observes the influential Polish director Jerzy Grotowski. "It liberated the spiritual energy of the congregation or tribe by incorporating myth and . . . transforming it. The spectator thus had a renewed awareness of his personal truth in the truth of the myth, and through fright and a sense of the sacred he came to catharsis. . . . But today's situation is much different. . . . Group identification with myth — the equation of personal, individual truth with universal truth — — is virtually impossible today. What is possible? First, **confrontation** with myth rather than identification. . . ."

The Serpent is, in effect, a confrontation with Genesis, not a re-enactment, one which suggests that it was Man who created God in his image, created Him largely out of a need to define his own limits. Perhaps because it evolves from a shared Judaeo-Christian history, employing many words and images from Genesis, blending them with a surprisingly effective evocation of half-remembered shared emotions and our most traumatic recent history — all elements in the experience of the community as a whole — there are moments of shared emotional (and perhaps spiritual) experience difficult to achieve in the theatre, impossible to achieve in the films or television.

"Theatre is not electronic," says van Itallie in an introduction to the published version (Atheneum, \$2.95). "It does require the live presence of both the audience and the actors in a single space. This is the theatre's uniquely important advantage and function, its original religious function of bringing people

together in a community ceremony where the actors are in some sense priests or celebrants, and the audience is drawn to participate with the actors in a kind of eucharist. . . . The important thing is what is happening between the audiences and the action."

The Serpent, like Dionysus in 69 and several other recent examples of new theatre, functions almost entirely in the area of myth and ritual. Lines are often chanted, there is frequent contrapuntal delivery, rhythmic choral humming, carefully formalized movement, repetition in the manner of a litany. And, as in a religious ceremony, the lines and the action interact, complementing and clarifying each other to achieve their meaning and effect.

The play begins slowly and very deliberately. Actors with primitive musical instruments have positioned themselves in various parts of the theatre. One by one, the instruments begin to sound, then to overlap and increase in frequency and volume. Primitive human sounds emerge and the tempo increases to a point where the effect is of a sort of inarticulate incantation. Occasionally, there is the sound of a gunshot and eventually the actors go in procession to the playing area. We have arrived at what will be one of the central threads of the play: death and reaction to it.

A woman is placed across the backs of three actors, which form an operating table. Presumably she is a victim of the shots heard earlier. Chanting a description, the doctor undertakes an autopsy of her brain wound. Inevitably, and inexorably, his description recalls to our minds the two Kennedy assassinations, and especially our scarcely voiced fears of the moment — what would have occurred had either man lived? *If the patient survives/ He may live for weeks/Or months/ Or years./ He functions barely./ He is unconscious./ Or semi-conscious./ We don't know./ We clean him, And feed him./ But there is no measure/ To what degree/ The mind imagines, receives, or dreams.* It is played straight, low-key, without contrived emotionalism. And the impact is quite extraordinary.

In a sense, it is almost more extraordinary than the scene that follows, a ritual re-enactment of the indelible images of the

Kennedy and King assassinations. Four actors assume the positions occupied in the Kennedy car on that afternoon in Dallas. They smile and wave. In the background other actors — the crowd — move from side to side, conveying the impression of the car's movement, as in rear-projection film technique. The assassin-to-be steps off to one side and the sequence so familiar from the amateur film begins. The President is shot; the Governor is shot; the President falls against his wife; her realization begins, and her horror; she starts to crawl out on what would be the back of the car and to extend her hand. It is all done to a shouted count of twelve, as if in slow-motion. Then it is repeated, the "film" is played backwards, random numbers are called out of sequence and their positions assumed, the actors' movements become almost puppet-like. Another figure appears and begins softly to speak lines reminiscent of Martin Luther King's "I have a dream." He is shot. Yet another comes forward. He flicks a shock of hair back from his forehead, grins a little shyly, shakes hands campaign-style — and is shot. The three overlap, gaining speed and intensity. All the while the crowd is shouting: "I was not involved./ I am a small person./ I hold no opinions./ I stay alive. . . . I keep out of big affairs./ I am not a violent man./ I am very sorry, still/ I stay alive."

In terms of combining elements of ritual, improvisation and audience participation, the next scene, "The Garden," is the play's most fully realized. There is the chorus with its chant-like "I've lost the beginning. . . . I'm in the middle,/ Knowing/ Neither the end/ Nor the beginning." As other actors begin to form the creatures in the garden of Eden, there is the sense of a communal "first breath," tentative, short, almost gasping. The serpent emerges, formed by five actors — writhing, hissing, hands, legs and arms moving, tongues flicking — quite remarkable (and quite funny) in its effect. It and the other creatures begin to discover their environment, and themselves. Eve appears and the serpent, which serves also as the tree, starts to taunt and to tempt her, with first one member then another speaking, holding out the apples, challenging her to eat of them. She begins to weaken and admits she might do it "if God didn't know." The serpent presses its advantage,

asking her, "Is a crime/ Only a crime/
When you're caught?" She succumbs.
Then I will eat. Because I want to.
She urges Adam to join her. The ecstatic
serpent separates and two large cartons
of apples are emptied onto the floor,
then handed and tossed to the audience.

God's curses on mankind follow. First
Adam, then Eve, then others provide
His voice, speaking in tones louder and
more resonant than their own. Other
actors simultaneously whisper the
curses to the audience. They mount in
volume and overlap into a final din.
Adam and Eve come to a moment of
realization and accusation. Man has
discovered fear, the sense of shame, the
sense of sin. In looking for greater
freedom, he has condemned himself to less.

In the choral "Statements" that follow,
one idea dominates: "If God exists/
It is through me./ And He will protect
me/ Because He owes His existence
to me." In them one hears a revelation
of repressed inclinations and fears,
the voice of everyday contemporary doubt.
To some extent, the chorus provides a
"de-mystifying" element, a contemporary
and mundane reminder of the fact
that what was possible "in the beginning"
is no longer possible, that it is necessary
to acknowledge that fact, that — as
director Joseph Chaikin has noted —
"when even one person crosses a
forbidden line, nothing is the same for
anyone after that."

Cain's slaying of Abel follows, then the final
major scene, "Begatting." The actors
begin quietly and gently to explore each
other's bodies. It is as if for the first
time. In the background two women
cross and re-cross the stage reading the
"begats" from the Old Testament
as the remaining actors continue their
discovery of sex, embrace and begin
tentatively to grope toward the coupling
of male and female bodies. They
experiment with various positions,
eventually succeed. (Given the prevalence
of nudity in the experimental theatre,
it's probably worth noting that this
scene, which is performed fully clad,
is probably considerably more effective
for it.) The rhythm increases and all
reach their climax at about the same time.
The women go into labor and give birth.
The actors who have played their lovers
become their sons and are taught to

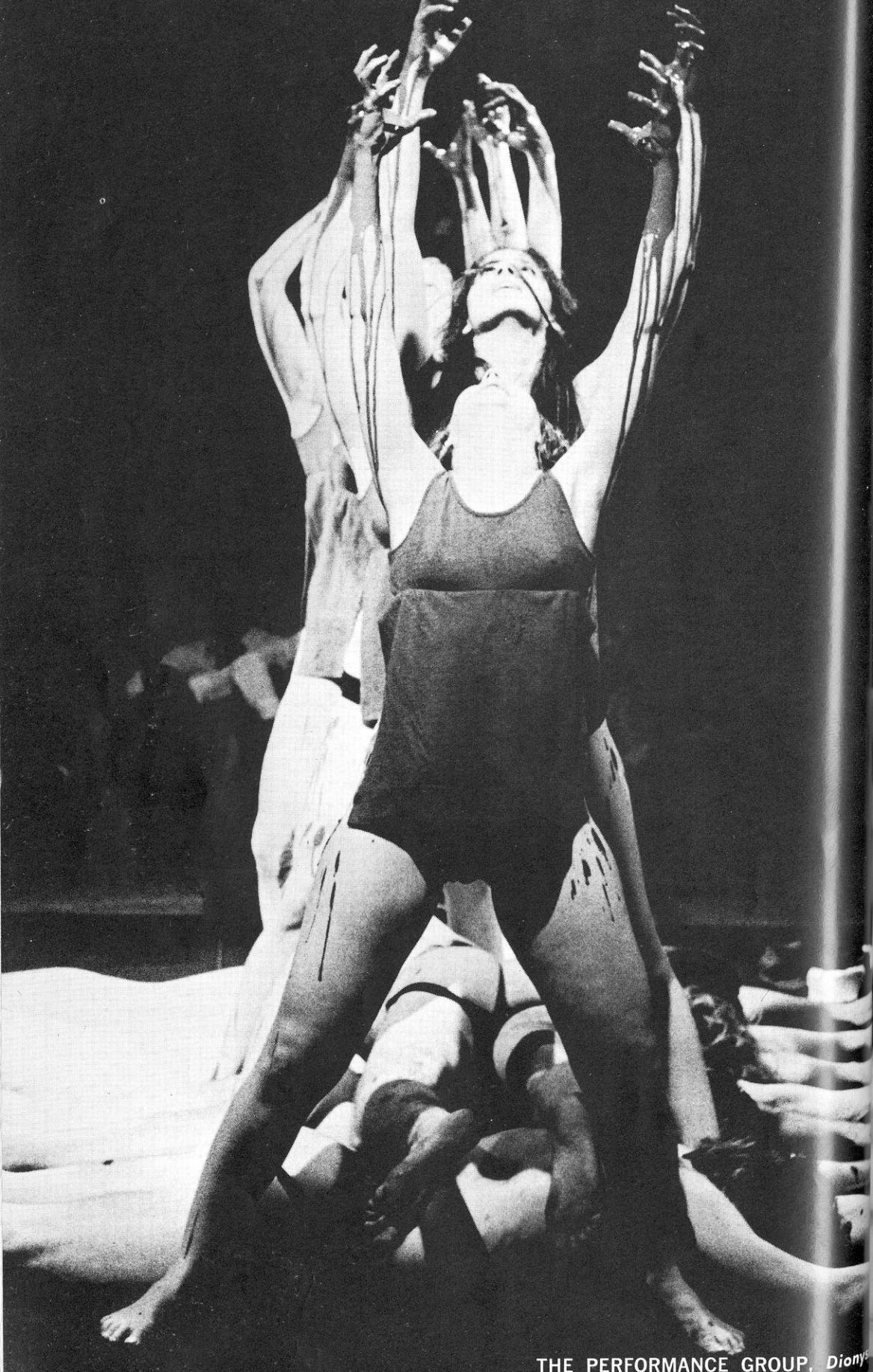
walk, to talk and to play. They grow old,
and as the chorus continues its rhythmic
humming, they die. Suddenly, the
actors resume their own identities. They
go out through the audience singing
"Moonlight Bay."

"Why is *The Serpent* a ceremony?"
Chaikin asks. "What kind of ceremony
is it? It is one in which the actors
and audience confront the question:
where are we at in relation to where we've
been? . . . The ceremony celebrates
this point in time: now. We can't
remake the past. *The Serpent* insists
on our responsibility of acknowledging
that we have already gone in a particular
direction. It says: where are we at?
What are the boundaries we adhere to,
and how have they become fixed?"

How effective is it — as ceremony, as
communal experience, as theatre?
Although there are moments when invention
wanes, the audience's attention seldom
does. Despite the fact that many of
even the best scenes are excessively
protracted, it possesses more arresting
images, more sustained impact, and
more deeply probing moments than
almost any other example of the new
experimental theatre I can recall. Its
respect for form, its discipline and
generally enlightened use of movement are
impressive. Beyond this — and it is this,
I think, that sets it apart from many
somewhat parallel undertakings — it
respects the text and employs it in a
manner complimentary to the action, as a
basis for it, rather than as a mere
pretext for mindless pyrotechnics or
directorial effects. If the new theatre is to
achieve a focus beyond its present drift
and fragmentation — a focus permitting
the coalescence of the best of the old and
the most effective and exciting of the
new — the work of the Open Theatre may
provide one of its most rewarding
approaches.

Although it employs a somewhat
dissimilar approach — more free-wheeling,
greater "audience participation" and
inclination to utilize the text as a
springboard rather than an integral
element — The Performance Group and
its *Dionysus in 69* are not nearly so
dissimilar in their objectives.

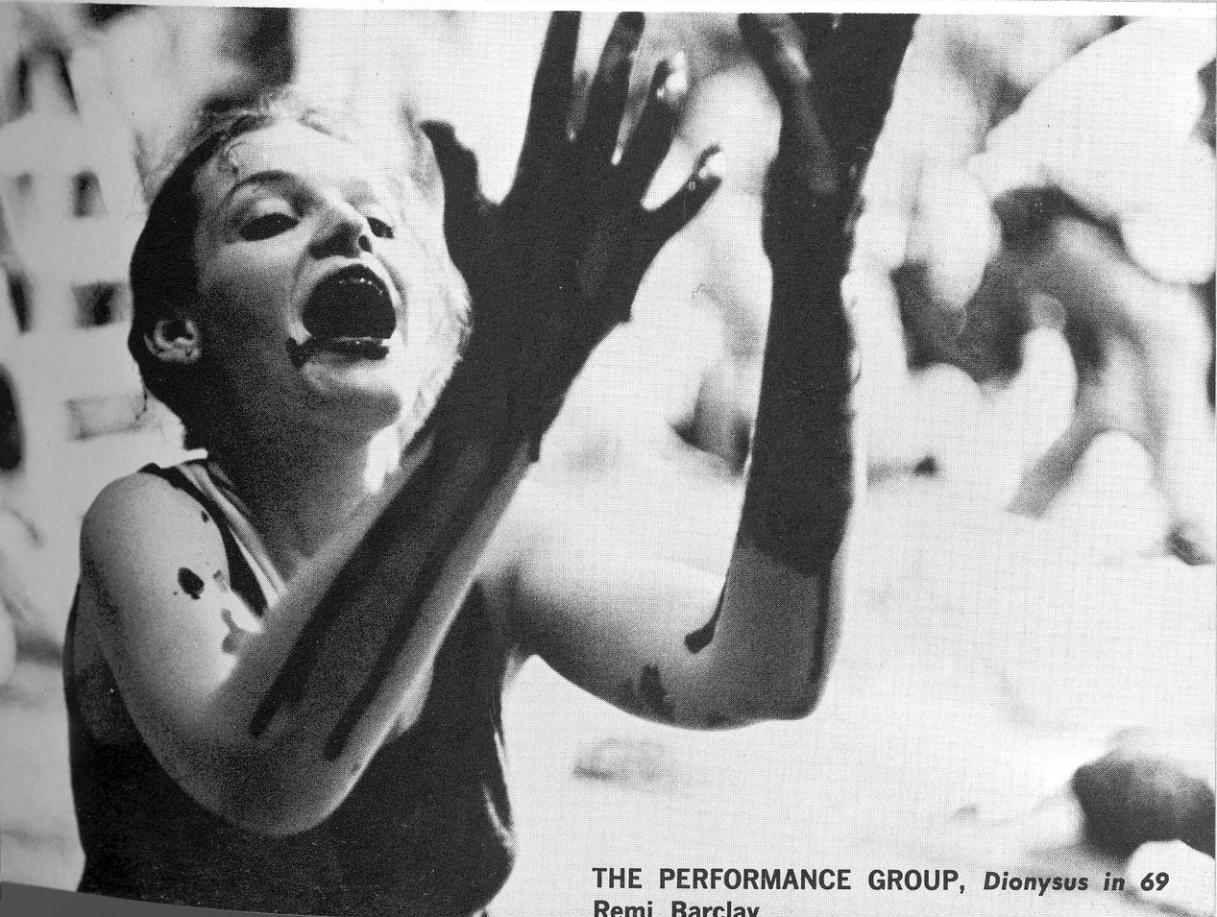
"Particularly now, when the outer fabric
of society is in shreds, theatre is steadily



THE PERFORMANCE GROUP, *Dionys*



THE PERFORMANCE GROUP, *Dionysus in 69*
William Finley (seated) William Shephard (reclining)



THE PERFORMANCE GROUP, *Dionysus in 69*
Remi Barclay

incorporating ritual," according to Performance Group founder Richard Schechner. "Many new theatre groups work toward a kind of participation and audience involvement that touches religious rather than histrionic sensibilities."

In *Dionysus in 69* The Performance Group, whose work has been even more influenced by the theories and psycho-physical exercises developed by Grotowski than has the Open Theatre, engaged in a "confrontation" with Euripides' *The Bacchae*. "We read sometimes randomly, sometimes in order and talked about the lines we reacted to strongly — either positively or negatively," says Schechner. "We talked about what they meant to us and suggested to us. The lines we didn't react to one way or another we just left out." About 50 to 60 per cent of the text remained (or did in the production's early performances; there was less later), though the way in which it is used — the general approach to it — makes it seem much less.

As with *The Serpent*, the play is structured to include both programmed and improvisational elements, and the latter to include participation by the audience, which is seated on the floor and on multi-tiered wooden platforms. The actors move from carefully prepared exercises and gymnastics and low, frequently inaudible chanting of Euripides' lines into an eventual focus on the boy king Pentheus and his cousin, the god Dionysus. But first there is a birth ritual reminiscent of that of the Asmat Indians of New Guinea, in which the male actors serve as the floor of the womb and the girls, their legs spread above them, form its roof. The male bodies undulate rhythmically as the girls simulate giving birth to Dionysus, who proclaims his divinity and demands that the onlookers worship him. The god offers Pentheus his choice of any woman in the room if he will recognize his divinity, but Pentheus declines, choosing a girl from the audience, then beginning to make love to her. Eventually rejected, he succumbs to Dionysus's homosexual enticements and their promise of a new freedom (a good example of "confronting" the text rather than presenting it). When he agrees to Dionysus' urging that he dress in female garb and go off to the hill to watch his mother Agave and the other women of Thebes in their orgy and revelry he is,

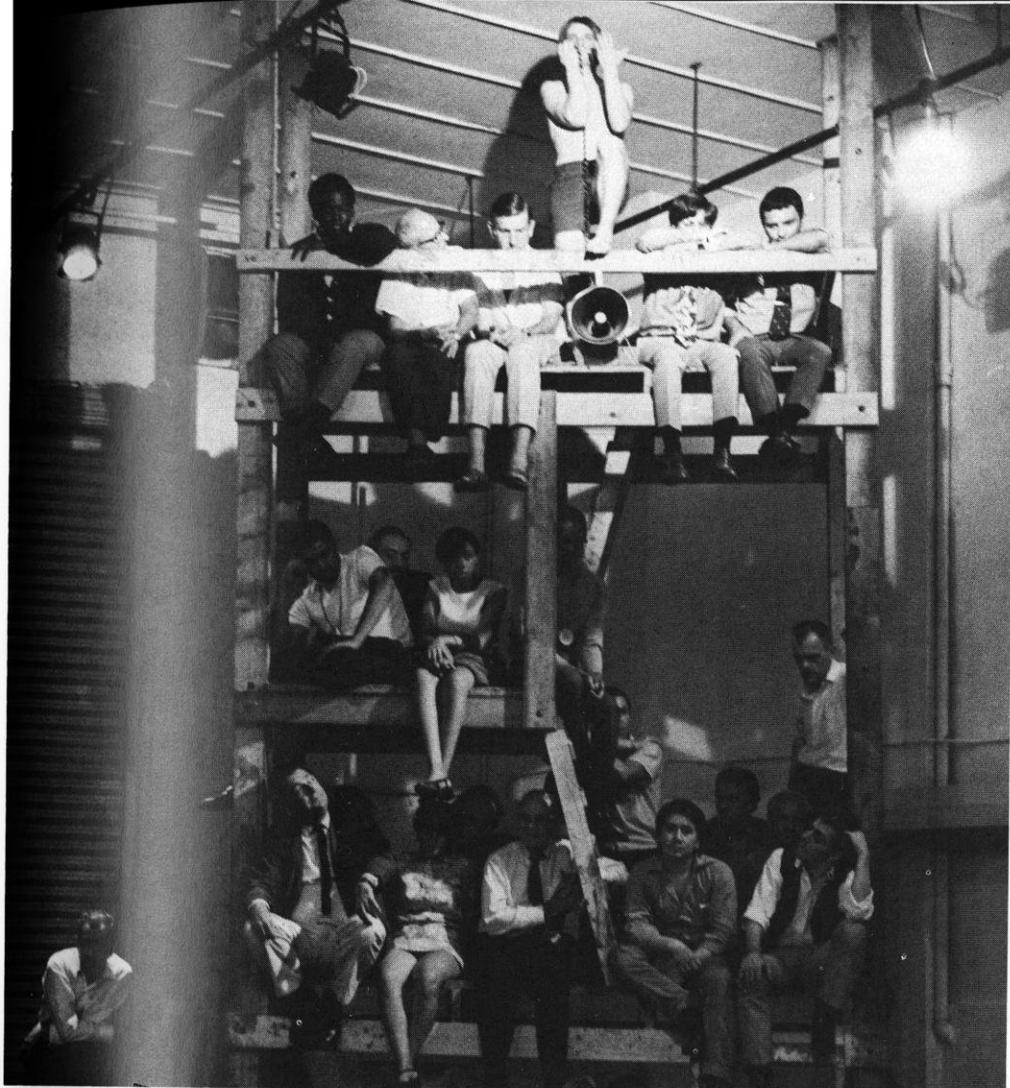
of course, killed, dismembered, then brought back to be pieced together in a finale of water-soluble red paint as Dionysus announces himself a candidate for political office and asks the audience to acknowledge it would like nothing better than to go right home and enjoy a little sex.

"What is the confusion [Dionysus] brings to Thebes?" Schechner asks in his book *Public Domain*. "First he drives the women to the hillside, entirely disrupting family life. Next he confronts the political authorities, mocking their procedures, destroying their jail, taunting their king. He claims, and then demonstrates that women are stronger than men, lust stronger than law, pleasure seeking better than work, night better than day, oneness better than plurality. . . . Love, suckling, dancing, anger, rage, terror, explosive sexual violence are all combined — and the Dionysian ecstasy transcends them all."

Most of these elements are present in some form in *Dionysus in 69*. But they have been given a new contemporaneity. In demonstrating the "politics of ecstasy" at full flowering, the play is as much a cautionary tale concerning its possible ultimate outcome — a new fascism — as it is an endorsement of sexual and other liberation. Hip-oriented though it is, it carries a reminder that total freedom may become no freedom at all, that it may bring with it the seeds of a new and even fiercer subjugation.

Regrettably, *Dionysus in 69* is deprived of much of its potential effect by its self-consciousness. Everyone tries very hard to be spontaneous, to open himself to new sensations and experiences, but there is no spontaneity, rather a playing at it. This is especially true in terms of the audience's participation, where the Performance Group experiences somewhat the same problems Grotowski encountered in some of his own group's early experimentation:

We did a lot of experiments. . . ; plays where the actors encircled the spectators, where they asked the spectators questions, where they touched the spectators. But we saw that there was always cheating and trickery on our side. On the one hand, we were looking for a kind of spontaneity from the audience that is



THE PERFORMANCE GROUP, *Dionysus in 69*

impossible in our society. We looked for common reactions which are possible only if people all have the same faith, if they know the liturgy well. Today there are many half-faiths — a Tower of Babel — so it is impossible to find this primordial ritual. One can stimulate external phenomena and make the audience sing with the actors — feeling a certain rhythm as when they are listening to jazz — but it's not a deep, authentic participation. It's only the participation of the common mask. . . .

The audience participation in *Dionysus in 69* — perfunctory talking to and being touched by the actors, occasional singing and dancing by some, hand-clapping — is of necessity embarrassed, largely passive and non-creative participation. Its effect, rather than liberating, is quite the opposite. For, of course, it is not among the initiate; it does not so

much participate as strive to appear to participate, strive to act. In a context in which to refuse to participate is to betray that one is uptight, refusal becomes the only truly free act.

Yet, for all their imperfections — and the imperfections of any number of less celebrated examples of ritual, ceremony and myth in the new theatre — *The Serpent* and *Dionysus in 69* remain the most stimulating current that theatre has thus far evolved. For they suggest the possibility that, as Grotowski has observed, "while retaining our private experiences, we can attempt to incarnate myth, putting on its ill-fitting skin to perceive the relativity of our problems, their connection to the 'roots,' and the relativity of the 'roots' in the light of today's experience . . . [which can return] us to a concrete mythical situation, an experience of common human truth."



Come In, Earth, Are You There?

Marcia Siegel

Somebody said it's okay now to hold your ears at a Merce Cunningham concert. I saw several people doing it during his spring season at Brooklyn Academy. In his good-natured way, Cunningham has always been in the forefront of the rape-the-audience crowd, and it is perhaps a measure of our acceptance of him that we no longer feel compelled to submit to all his brutalities. Certainly his choreography itself is no longer revolutionary. Without the music it would probably be either pure entertainment or pure boredom, depending on your degree of kinesthetic sophistication.

I don't know if the auditory documents of John Cage and his colleagues are becoming more violent, or if urban life has had a sensitizing effect on our hearing, but I find I have less tolerance for Cunningham's noise today than I had five years ago. Opening night at Brooklyn was performed in silence because of a dispute between the musicians' and the stagehands' unions as to who had jurisdiction over the indefinable activities in the pit. Several of Cunningham's most ardent admirers who were there remarked how lovely that concert was. And their impression of his new work, *Canfield*, was quite different from the one I got when the sound had been restored.

When you look at Merce Cunningham you can either separate the various events that take place—the dancing, decor, lighting, accompaniment—or you can see them as a whole unit. Separating a Cunningham dance into its component parts is perfectly valid because the parts are created separately, often coming together only in performance. Not only do the dancers not dance to the music, they don't know in advance what

the quality and sequence of the sounds will be. In some dances, sections of the choreography are shifted around from performance to performance, so that there can be no set narrative or dramatic line. Cunningham's dancers don't attempt to relate to the decor in which they move. When Andy Warhol's gently floating silver pillows get in their way in *RainForest*, they plow right through them. Or the visual imagery may change drastically from one performance to the next, as in *Scramble*, where Frank Stella's brightly-colored rectangles of cloth stretched at different levels on aluminum frames are moved around so that whole sections of the dance might be invisible to some of the audience. In *Variations V*, six projectors throw a cacophony of moving and still images onto the stage, but the dancers act as if nothing were happening. (Compare this with Robert Joffrey's popular but conventional mixed-media ballet *Astarte*, in which the music and the film/lighting sequence begin together and are precisely timed to coincide with and complement the dancing.)

Never to my knowledge has Merce Cunningham given an "interpretation" of any of his dances, nor do any of his associates. They will talk about the movement, what it is like, how it was made, what chance operations were used in putting it together, but they won't divulge the message or even the mood, as if it wasn't their business to be concerned with those things. Since I have no reason to believe that Cunningham and his people are either so naive as to be unaware that they are always creating some kind of theatre event, or so cagey as to pretend that they are not, I can only assume that they are deliberately maintaining their neutrality. There is in their attitude a certain fatalistic cheerfulness; they intend to do their job no matter what goes on around them. If every member of the audience has a different idea of what they're doing, or if the stage environment changes, still the integrity of their own task is constant. You can imagine them completing their appointed rounds in the dark, or if a dancer were injured or the theatre were in flames.

Nevertheless, a Cunningham dance is a theatrical entity, especially in contrast to the work of some younger choreographers



Merce Cunningham in *Canfield*: in and out of glare from a traveling light boom.



photo by James Klosty

who have distilled his theories into more austere and concentrated forms. Judith Dunn uses non-sequential movement, Yvonne Rainer stresses the simultaneous, anti-emotional quality of events, and Twyla Tharp turns chance operations into mathematical monotony. None of these choreographers uses other theatre elements to the extent Cunningham does, and where their work seems cold and abstract, his takes on a dramatic life that he apparently neither dictates nor denies. The audience does have to find its own specific metaphors and relationships, but each piece usually has an overall sensibility that is apparent to everyone.

For me, Cunningham's dark pieces have suggested more specific "meanings" than his brighter works. The latter, which include *Field Dances*, *Scramble*, *Walkaround Time* and others, are expansive, flooded with light and color, pervaded with a general air of good fellowship and the joy of movement. In the dark pieces the lighting and colors are somber, the movement is more restricted, the dancers seem more isolated from each other and at the same time more submissive to their environment. I feel in these works, especially *Winterbranch*, *Place*, *RainForest* and now *Canfield*, that Cunningham is responding — perhaps unconsciously — to the ugly demands of civilization, rather than ignoring them.

There seems to be a progression from *Winterbranch* (1964), where the dancers are crushed by merciless light and total darkness and a maniacally screeching sound track; to *Place* (1966), where they rush frantically at the boundaries of some nameless enclosure and finally break out of it into some other unknown darkness; through *RainForest* (1968), where they seem poised between their humanness and some non-human existence which could be either animalistic or artificial, and which they cannot attain in any case. Now, in *Canfield*, the dancers seem to have become resigned to a bland, computerized state in which both the joy and the rebellion have been diminished to faint emotions that can be easily countermanded by the more powerful hand of technology.

The dancers are in grey leotards against a white cyclorama and ungelled lights. The legs and the borders masking the

perimeter of the stage have been flown out; the space is enormous and the dancers look insignificant in it. A huge vertical boom travels constantly back and forth across the proscenium, with lights inside it projecting onto the cyc. Sometimes the dancers are pinned in its glare, like escaping convicts in a searchlight; sometimes they drift in the gloom beyond its reach.

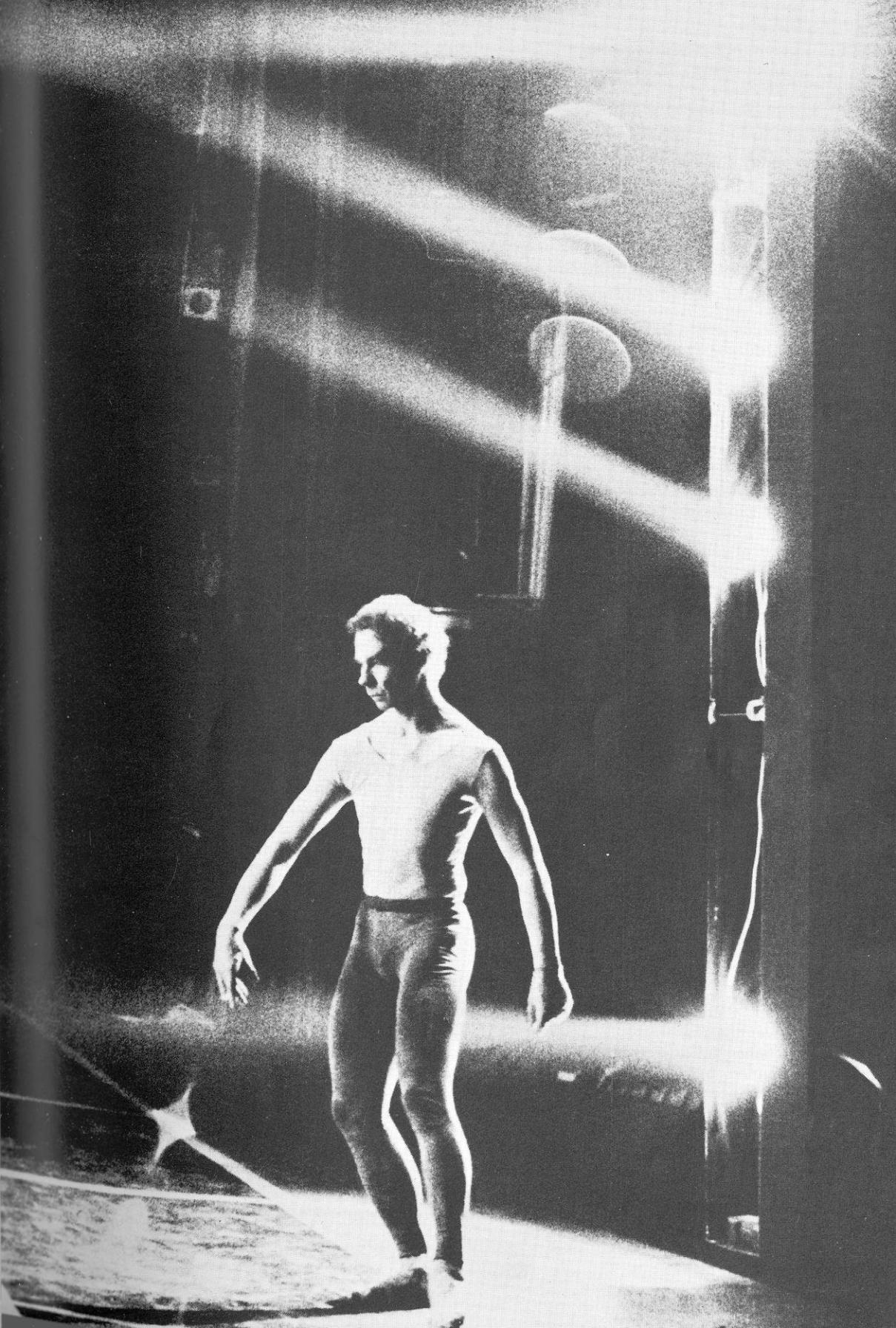
The movement seemed pale, the dynamics easy, without much thrust or conviction. There was rather more unison movement than in the average Cunningham dance, and an occasional theme of brushing past each other, making contact at the shoulder but without enough impact to upset each other's direction or momentum. Toward the end a huge bare Ieko bulb is projected on the cyc, then an indistinct man's face, then the lights in the boom begin to fade, looking somehow not like stage lights dimming but like the brown fatality of a power failure — and the curtain comes down on moving grey ciphers.

But it is the sound that dominates *Canfield*, a sound devised by Pauline Oliveros ("In Memoriam: Nikola Tesla, Cosmic Engineer") that by its literalness and its overriding force insistently calls attention to itself in an unequal competition with what is going on on the stage.

Ever since Merce Cunningham began choreographing in 1942, his musical activities have been directed by John Cage. The two work amiably yet quite independently together. Each pursues his own inventions; the moment of collaboration is the moment of performance; and it is either a recurring accident or a figment of the critic's orderly mind that the two disparate parts seem so frequently to be in consonance with each other. Cunningham seems to have no egotistical notions about the dance being more important than the music, and on occasion the musical event was so shocking that it drowned out the dance until we became accustomed to it. At first we hated the catastrophic din of *Winterbranch*, but now it's hard to imagine that dance without it.

For the past couple of years Cage and his colleagues David Tudor and Gordon Mumma have been experimenting ever

Merce Cunningham in *Canfield*. photo by James Klosty



more radically with sound, and Canfield once again pushes us beyond endurance. We may grow used to this too, but now we feel like the exasperated stranger who grumbled to me during intermission: "It's a secret pact to obliterate the dance."

What Cage and his cohorts are into now goes back, I think, to Place, when Gordon Mumma played around with distortion. That is, instead of distorting sound as Cage and many others before him had done via prepared piano, *musique concrete*, and other devices, the distortion became the sound. Radio feedback, hum, static, excessive amplification, and manipulation of other sounds generated by the equipment itself, not any sounds being fed into the equipment. Gradually the dial-twisting has become the primary concern; the original sounds, whether they are vocal, instrumental, or electronic, are important only as a medium for producing distortion, instead of the distortion being a means of modifying the original sound. In Cage's piano and orchestra score for *Antic Meet* (1958), there are now hardly any sounds left that even resemble a piano and orchestra.

In many ways this is a logical development. If you mike all the instruments and then ask the musicians to blow through the wrong end, put a trumpet mouthpiece on a bassoon, and bring along transistor radios and alarm clocks, as Cage did with *Antic Meet*, why not put the whole thing on tape and then reshape those distortions? Is there any difference between Cage climbing all over a theatre, rubbing the mike against different wall surfaces, chewing aluminum foil with a mike in his mouth, to find sounds for *Story* (1963) and sending people all over the theatre in Canfield with walkie-talkies to speak into the main sound system?

Well, there is some difference. More than ever the machine is in control. The chance activities that were produced by human beings doing unpredictable things have been submerged under the more powerful unpredictability of electronic equipment. The human input is simpler and less noticeable — all that's needed now is one long and two short blasts on a trumpet from the top of the balcony, or a voice-over test (testing one-two-three), or simply throwing the mike open. The tubes do the rest.

No matter how awful or boring or nerve-wracking it was to listen to an amplified belch or the squeaks of a stool being dragged along the floor, there was a certain childlike charm in the idea of Cage doing it. That kind of sound could often arouse one's curiosity as to how it was being produced, what kind of transformations were being worked on common objects or activities to make them come out sounding the way they did. The effects of the intervening circuitry never quite obscured the fact that somewhere at the beginning of it all there was a complex and original mind searching for new ways to make sound, notate it, and get others to produce it.

In *Variations V* there was an elaborate system of antennas set up on the stage that were supposed to be activated by the dancers moving near them. Though I've seen the dance at least three times, I've never been able to detect any relationship between where and how the dancers moved and what sounds occurred. I was always interested to see how it would work out — something like an electrocardiogram maybe — the radios or whatever the antennas were hooked up to would, I supposed, get louder when the dancers approached them — suddenly louder if suddenly approached, but how would other dynamic and shape changes affect the sound? Two dancers instead of one? What would happen if somebody bumped into one and it whipped back and forth? I never found out. Whatever the antennas picked up was swallowed and digested into all the other sounds that constituted that score, or it was so misshapen at the controls that it couldn't be connected with its initiation when it came out.

There was a certain pleasant cameraderie between the dancers and the presiding technicians in the first version of *Variations V*, at Philharmonic Hall in the summer of 1965. The technicians, though somewhat patronizing I felt, were always interested in what the subjects of their experiments would do next, sometimes consulting with them. On their platform behind the dancing space they presided but they also performed — they controlled the dance to some extent but it was the dance they were showing off.

Now, in *Canfield*, with the arrogant competence of Rocket Control, they are running the show. Their cool, anonymous engineers' talk dominates the dance for much of the time. No matter how I tried or how disinterested I was in their matter-of-fact voices talking about unimportant things (John, where are you now? I'm under the stage. Give me a reading. One. One. Hmmmm, we didn't have that buzz in rehearsal.), I couldn't focus on the dancing until about half way through, when the jargon subsided into squeals and static — I couldn't get free of that busy multitude of disembodied taxicab drivers and policemen and disk jockeys who kept floating in and out on the walkie-talkie band. (Lotta guys on the line tonight.) Like all true radio nuts, even after they have obtained their tunings and levels, Cage and Tudor and Mumma keep fiddling. No pattern satisfies them. Nothing is good enough, or loud or unusual enough, to keep and use for something — it only serves to be surpassed by the infinite capabilities of their electronic super-brain.

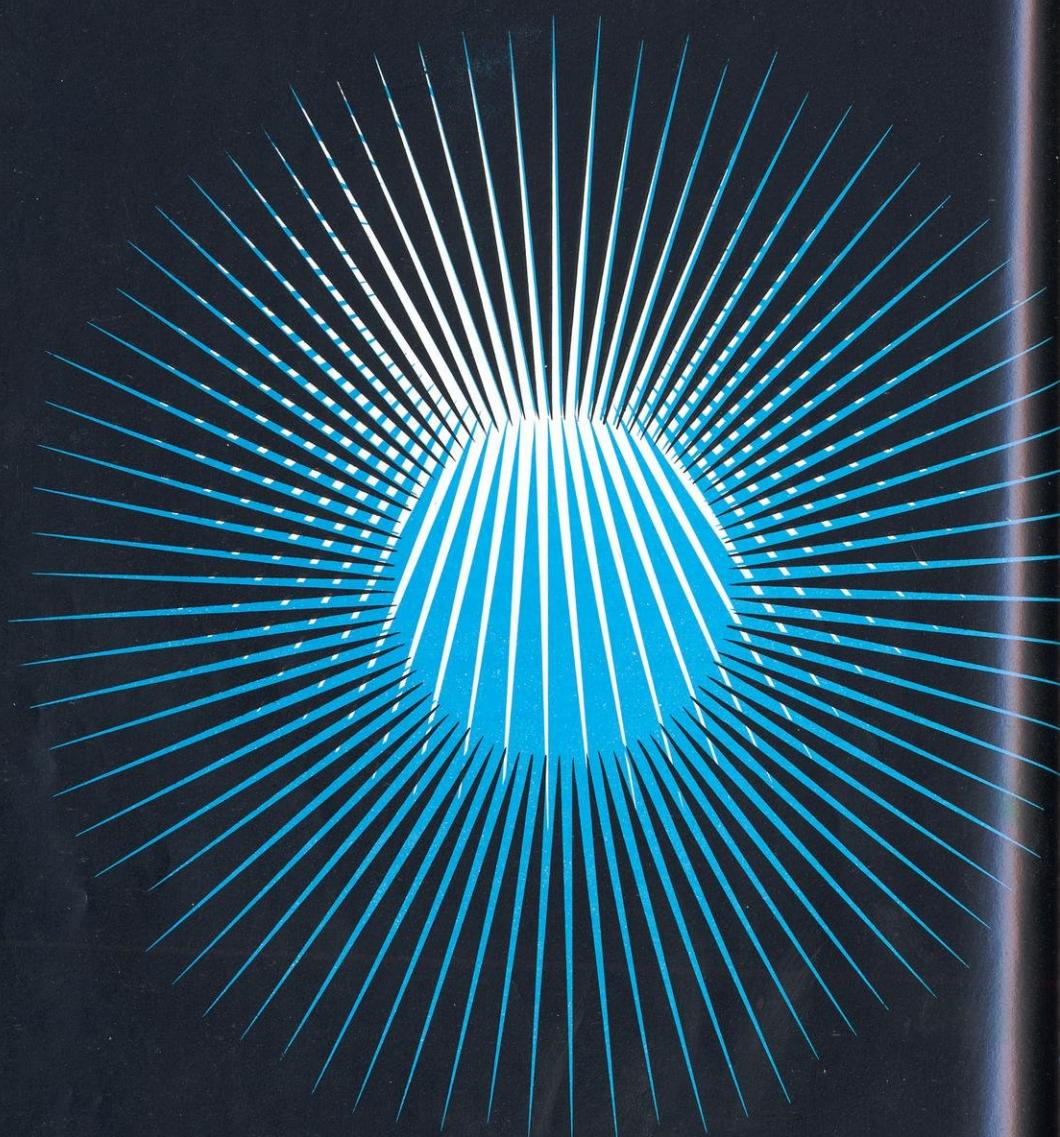
It has been said that the visual sense is stronger than the aural, and in most instances at dance concerts I'm not specifically conscious of the music, even when I'm making an effort to relate the structure and phrasing of what I see to what I hear. The visual takes over. But not in *Canfield*. If you've ever been on the BMT when it grinds into those curves near City Hall station, or driven past Kennedy Airport when a jet takes off over your head, you know that extreme noise can reduce or otherwise alter your perceptual powers. But even when it is not physically uncomfortable, the *Canfield* sound is literal, which can be even more distracting. What is it about words that makes us pay attention to them? There are ways of de-emphasizing a verbal dance accompaniment, as Cunningham does in *How to Pass, Kick, Fall and Run*, where Cage and David Vaughan read low-key selections from Cage's writings, sometimes overlapping each other. Then we can choose to listen to one or the other, or to neither, letting their combined flow of words make an abstract background for the dance. But in *Canfield* the drama behind those banal dialogues is inescapable. How could I be interested in those efficient, faceless men with their dreary talk of inputs and readings?

But I am, I'm fascinated, I strain to make out the words when the tuning drifts away. I hate myself and I hate the sound, because I'm missing the dance.

Well, maybe this is the dance.

A few days after the Brooklyn Academy season, The New York Times reported that an eminent biologist told Senator Muskie's committee investigating pollution that "In the process of creating new goods and services, technology is destroying the country's 'capital' of land, water and other resources as well as injuring people." In fact, scarcely a day goes by that we are not offered pronouncements, pamphlets, threats, warnings, and predictions of disaster resulting from the masochistic and perhaps irreversible course of technological exploitation. Intentionally or not, Merce Cunningham is going beyond the tracts and the vague dread. He is showing us post-millennial man — wired for sound, dissolving into his colorless backdrop, ineffectually, and without regrets, alive. The image is more vivid and more terrifying than all the dead fish in the Hudson and all the polemics in Congress. And our response is to cover our ears, as Merce Cunningham, wise as a stone, probably always knew we would.

Some time after this article was written, the astronauts landed on the moon. After watching their televised performance, Merce Cunningham's manager, Jean Rigg, told Merce Cunningham that the lighting effects on the moon were exactly what they had been trying for in *Canfield*. Merce Cunningham said "Yes! And the sound too."



But It's Not Shakespeare

Allan Lewis

A "pop-rock" Hamlet in boxer shorts prancing in the ghettos of New York and sitting affectionately on the ghost's knee, a mod Maharishi "Love's Labour's Lost" at Stratford, Connecticut, with the aristocratic ladies arriving on Hondas, an all-male "As You Like It" in London are but a few of the recent collisions with Shakespeare in the current vogue of directional dictatorship. And now Nicol Williamson as a querulous Hamlet with a Midland accent and a grizzled beard, snapping like a coiled spring at a sexy Ophelia. Startled scholars bemoan the irreverence; sociologists correlate the excess with the breakdown of authority, and advocates of Artaud shout with iconoclast Joseph Papp that "radio-active ididium 192" must be aimed at "the layers of reverential varnish."

What are the limits of distortion? How far can a director go? Is there no standard Shakespeare which repeated performance refines and polishes in the manner of Racine and the Comédie Française? The answer may well be that each age must discover its own Shakespeare, that his art, unlike that of Rembrandt or Michelangelo fixed in space, lives in changing time with each audience response. The present decade is notable for more productions than ever before and more conflicting interpretations of the plays. In 1966 the three Stratfords offered *Twelfth Night*, each with a different Malvolio. In Canada, he was the social climber, the petty bourgeois seeking to become lord of the manor, close to the present political climate of a nation resentful of its more powerful neighbor to the south. In England, diminutive Ian Holm, whose talent includes the smallest Henry V to conquer the French, lacking the gaunt Giacometti aridity of the traditional Malvolio, played a comic buffoon,

drawing laughs from situation, not content. At Stratford, Connecticut, Albert Hauser, an English director, insisted on Malvolio as the Puritan denial of "cakes and ale," worthy of punishment for his suppression of emotional vitality. The first two productions aimed at sympathy for the abused steward, the third laughed at Malvolio's discomfiture — his final "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you" a caustic reminder that Malvolio the Puritan may have eventually triumphed. Three interpretations, each consistent with the text, avoiding gimmickry, distortion, or rearrangement of scenes, took no liberties other than those of emphasis — a director's privilege.

A year later the New York area witnessed two sharply contrasting productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Cyril Ritchard directing as well as playing Bottom and Oberon, had the stage aglitter with tinsel and shimmering weeds in a charming fairy tale for the entire family, the "pretty toy" style that culminated in the Beerbohm Tree and Max Reinhardt spectaculairs. John Hancock, a rebel outdoing Jan Kott, offered *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Off Broadway in which the opening scene set the tone. An old-fashioned juke box, lighted and bubbling, played the Mendelssohn music as a grim procession of corpses moved down a spiral ramp. Love was set against a city haunted by the plague. Hippolyta, brought back in captivity, robed in leopard skins, was caged and guarded — a fierce image of a hardly chaste Diana. Theseus and Oberon were played by the same actor, not for "the fun of it," as a personal tour de force, as Ritchard had done with his dual role, but to indicate that in a diseased monstrously demonic world, the magical and the courtly are equally corrupt.

Nor do the more aberrant productions bloom solely in the dark alleys of Greenwich Village. The same year, Stratford of Canada assailed critics with a *Richard III* who, triumphant in battle even without a horse, tossed a sword to unarmed Richmond and welcomed death; and an Antony, mighty triple pillar of the world, who cavorted with Cleopatra like a dazed businessman on an orgiastic weekend. King Lear, rarely done in the nineteenth century ever since Charles Lamb had written "it is essentially impossible to be represented on stage,"



Jane Farnal and Jerry Dodge in a scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
John Hancock Production, Circle in the Square, N.Y., N.Y.

has in recent years seen Morris Carnovsky, the emotional father figure, storming against a world in disruption; Paul Scofield, austere existentialist, pulling apart the seams with calculated analysis, and Solomon Mikhoels, of the Moscow State Jewish Theatre, the philosophic experimenter, searching for a reality he had failed to perceive. Each *Lear* ends on a different note — Scofield's recognition of the absurdity of man. Carnovsky's resignation to a meaningless death, and Mikhoel's triumphant release from subjective imprisonment.

Hamlet has always been fair game for novelty, ranging from Basil Sydney in modern dress, the brooding Gielgud in princely robes, the virile Burton in rehearsal outfit, Siobhan McKenna's repeat of Sarah Bernhardt's transvestite attire, to David Warner's disenchanted, noncommitted intellectual in slacks, and Nicol Williamson, a surly, snarling Hamlet in conscious opposition to the Olivier Gielgud style. When David Warner appeared as an awkward gangling Hamlet, rejecting an inheritance of false values and hypocrisy, the world's most experienced Shakespearean scholars gathered at Stratford-Upon-Avon for their biennial conference, greeted the production almost unanimously with the comment, "It's interesting, but not Shakespeare."

"Not Shakespeare" implies an interpretation of the play that "is Shakespeare" or at least closer to the playwright's intention. The production that would most faithfully fulfill this requirement is the one presented by the Lord Chamberlain's Company some time about 1601 and performed at the Globe Theatre by the company of which Shakespeare was a member. There is no record of this performance, the only one which had the advantage of the author's presence. Whatever the interpretation, it is forever lost in the experience of the spectator. The theatres of London were closed during the reign of Cromwell. With the admixture of Puritan restraint, the English spirit lost its Renaissance robustness and the theatre lost any continuity of style. The next Shakespeare productions date from the Restoration when prompt books and illustrations became available as well as critical comments. The court, returning from France, was influenced by the rigid French neo-classical rules,

hostile to Shakespeare's wildness. Voltaire's comment that Shakespeare was "a genius who was a barbarian . . . and sometimes a drunken one," encouraged D'Avenant, Dryden, Tate and others to rewrite the plays to meet the requirements of courtly grace and elegance. Nahum Tate, "who gave 'King Lear' fewer corpses and a happy ending" did so to polish "the jewel found in a garbage heap."

The eighteenth Century, under Samuel Johnson's more scholarly and rational leadership, returned to the original script, but this did not deter David Garrick from transposing scenes and making a few additions of his own. Productions were loosely organized, rehearsals were infrequent, ensemble acting non-existent, and the stars engaged in grandiloquent speeches for adoring crowds.

Bardolatry stems from the Romantic movement, highlighted by Coleridge's exclamation that Shakespeare "was the greatest genius that perhaps human nature has yet produced." Productions proliferated not only in England but in Germany and Russia as well. Lavish physical accoutrements became the style and from Charles Kean to Sir Beerbohm Tree and Max Reinhardt emphasis was less on internal drama than on pageantry and spectacle. In 1857 William Cooke, manager of Astley's, drew crowds from Charles Kean at the Princess Theatre when he staged "Macbeth" at the Circus as a hippodrama, and a century later, Max Reinhardt invaded Oxford with "A Midsummer Night's Dream" that had a bevy of Picadilly showgirls and live wolfhounds.

The history of production will not supply an answer to which is the "correct" Shakespeare. Productions have changed with changes in society and the dominant intellectual outlook. Performance by its very nature is an art which reaches for immediate social impact. The society upon which the impact is made, the audience of the moment, is endlessly changing, and therefore, so do performances and interpretations. What happened at the Globe Theatre can be explored, evidence of income uncovered, expenses for costumes or specific use of the stage brought to light. What can never be recaptured is the audience — the spirit of an age; above all, an audience whose attitude towards sex and love predates

Gloria Foster in a scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
John Hancock Production, Circle in the Square, N.Y., N.Y.



Puritan self-consciousness. To recreate a production of the past is to be concerned with history rather than art. What is emphasized or diminished, what exaggerated or distorted, fashions the interpretation within the same overall structure. But the emphasis varies with time. What one audience considers right is right for that age at a particular moment of history.

If production is ever changing, the advocates of correctness cry, "There is always the script," the play Shakespeare wrote. Here too the search for the absolute proves fruitless. The original script was handed to actors of Shakespeare's company who altered lines, improvised when necessary, and even though Ben Jonson could say, "Not for an age, but for all time" Shakespeare and his company had little thought of posterity. Some of the plays were printed in his own lifetime, but Shakespeare paid little attention to the published version. The first Folio which appeared after Shakespeare's death preserved the scripts and made them available for later performances, but excludes the visual, the oral, the physical, and the sensuous. It makes possible the study of the plays as literature with emphasis on structure, verbal imagery, and the held moment of poetic enjoyment. But reading is another form of performance. The words come alive, whether spoken aloud or read in one's own imagination but always within an interpretive framework.

Scholarly research in plot sources, or word meanings is a worthy venture but a completely separate activity. Critical analysis by literary minds may spark a director's insight, just as a production may influence a scholar's point of view. The two worlds of theatre and scholarship contribute to each other but both are products of a cultural heritage and an existing intellectual climate. Nicol Williamson says "to be or not to be" in anger, a Soviet actor implies a struggle for political power, a Gielgud intones the clause as a concern with suicide, and Jan Kott inspires Peter Brooke to offer "King Lear" as theatre of the Absurd. The reader, in the quiet of his study, responds to what he has seen or learned. Each age has read the plays differently just as the theatre has produced them differently. The personal freedom of private reading is bound by the necessity of

a philosophical outlook, an approach to art, or a sense of personal or social relationships.

If there is no "correct" production nor "correct" critical analysis, if both the history of the stage and of armchair reading supplies no answer, what remains? There remains Shakespeare's lines, ambivalent, evasive, an inexhaustible mine too rich to be explored fully by a single production or a literary analysis. The script is not a well defined chart of specific responses, but a storehouse of many leveled ambiguity, the interpenetration of opposites in which the comment lies "between the pass and fell incensed points of mighty opposites." Metaphor and symbol, image and suggestion are not subject to precise definition. There remains the endlessly possible, and all productions and interpretations are part of the still incomplete Shakespeare.

"It is interesting, but not Shakespeare" means that the interpretation did not agree with the critic's particular point of view or his personal cultural prejudices. The critic identifies his interpretation with all of Shakespeare. "Not Shakespeare" means that the spectator in the theatre imposes his own responses.

Is there no universal "Hamlet"? Each age, like rebellious students with non-negotiable demands, considers its insight universal. The Gielgud-Olivier "Hamlet" set the pattern for lesser actors. David Warner cut the intellectual knot with a dangling, lost, noncommitted youth unable to discover certainty and forced to become involved. Shakespeare indeed, but a Shakespeare closer to the present decade. Nicol Williamson, sardonic, tormented and tired, struck a contemporary note but failed to fulfill relationships with others. He remained separated, aloof and alone, unrelated to the King, the Queen, Ophelia or Laertes. A further breakthrough is imminent.

"Not Shakespeare" in condemning extreme interpretations ignores the possibility of valid new insights under changing conditions. Such efforts are often rash and ill-considered but may contribute to a later and more fully realized response. Strict adherence to the letter of the law as with Shylock or Angelo leads to disintegration and blindness.



Alvin Epstein and Gloria Foster in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
John Hancock Production, Circle in the Square, N.Y., N.Y.

A generation of hippies may engage in futile and totally private experiences, but their actions expose deep-rooted social failure and demonstrate the fragility of one's cherished criteria.

Vitality occurs when the old pattern is discarded, not out of whim, but out of social compulsion, when meaning, unsuspected, but hidden in the rich underpinning of Shakespeare's work glows with immediacy as did every important breakthrough in the past. Insistence on a single "correct" approach relies on criteria of another day. Defended as tradition, it can reduce production to reverential obedience and compliant acceptance and mummify Shakespeare. Each interpretation is "correct" if it captures some of the many leveled ambiguities in terms of its own historical

moment, which respects the text and brings the play to life with greater urgency. "Hamlet" speaks to each age on its own terms, but each age has to make those terms contemporary. Living with no absolutes may be disturbing and uncomfortable, but provides the excitement of discovery, the uncertainty of continuing revelation. Why worry about Shakespeare's day or an Elizabethan interpretation? Our age, like the Renaissance, is a period of transition. Doubt, despair, anxiety persist in the questioning of long held values. Productions need not be confined by rigid formula or established dogma. In our probing and experience we may be closer to our roots in the Renaissance. Shakespeare may be more alive today than in any preceding era.

Book Reviews

Chronicle of a Rear-Guard Action

Thomas Robischon

E. R. Hutchison, *Tropic of Cancer* on Trial, Grove Press, 1968. \$6.50

When someone decides to write a story like *Tropic of Cancer On Trial*, I suppose he does so because he thinks the story is interesting in its own right, or because it would be instructive to his readers, or both. While the story of what happened to *Cancer* from its publication in 1961 to its exoneration by the Supreme Court three years later has the potential for being both interesting and instructive, E. R. Hutchison's account of it is neither.

Hutchison says that his purpose is to give us more than a case study. It is to be "a report on a war that is constantly being waged in America." It is also to be a story about "a courageous author, a courageous publisher, and a book that had been for more than a quarter of a century the symbol of outlaw literature in America." And Hutchison was aided in telling his story by access to the Grove Press files and correspondence (presumably unlimited, though he does not say so), as well as interviews with and letters from principals involved, and his own familiarity with that part of the story that took place in Milwaukee and other parts of Wisconsin.

But there is little courage displayed by anyone connected with this story, at least as Hutchison tells it. And the deeper more disturbing implications and consequences of *Cancer*'s trials only begin to come out in a six-page concluding chapter. The rest of the book is a dry, factual, pedantic narrative. Perhaps the trouble lies in the fact that Hutchison wrote this book by revising a doctoral dissertation, and didn't revise it enough.

Putting aside what Hutchison did not do, it is questionable that he has accomplished what he set out to do. Despite his description of his story as a report on a war that is "constantly" being waged in America in which the aims and purposes of both sides remain essentially the same, Hutchison thinks his story has a "relatively happy ending." At the end of his book, he quotes with approval Henry Miller's view of the war:

This battle with negative forces will go on perpetually. You win here and lose there. After a few years it starts up again, on some other level.

But then Hutchison adds a note of hope: "What is heartening, however, as we have seen . . . is that the level is constantly being raised — at the expense of the censors." Now Hutchison never shows us where and how the level of the battle is constantly being raised, nor does he tell us what level is being raised. And there is abundant evidence in his story — as well as in what has happened since *Cancer* won its acquittal, some of which Hutchison himself notes — that if the expense for the censors has increased, so has it increased for the libertarian side.

I do not say there have been no changes. Court decisions favorable to the libertarian side, as well as a plethora of circulating obscene and pornographic material, a seemingly less uptight media, and even the reluctance of legislators and others to write new anti-obscenity legislation, all point to changes. But how deep are they? If the libertarians have raised the level of free expression, increased the cost to the censors, and won battles, the other side has had its victories too, and the war goes on. Increasingly the battles libertarians win begin to look like the battles the U.S. wins in Vietnam. And like the U.S. in Vietnam, libertarians may be fighting the wrong battles in the wrong places.

How free is sexual expression in this country today? What do we have going for us in the battle against those "negative forces"? Do we have a more libertarian police, judiciary, and legislature? Is the libertarian philosophy any more institutionalized since 1961 when the struggle over *Cancer* began? Hutchison says that the story of *Cancer* should

have been a "traumatic experience for freedom-loving Americans everywhere," but wasn't. And this he calls "an American disgrace," because he thinks that "the right to read is so ingrained in American life that to encroach upon it ever so slightly would be to shake the pillars of this democracy." But is it so ingrained? Hutchison quotes Commager saying that every generation has to win anew its right to freedom of expression. But could that be so if the right to read were ingrained in American life? And could it be so if this were, indeed, the democracy Hutchison refers to?

To be sure we no longer are confronted by the spectacle of the censorship of literary classics. Is this a sign of a new libertarian sophistication among censors? Or have the censors found bigger and better targets? To be sure you can find today, like never before, erotic, obscene, and pornographic expressions in print, on the stage, and in film. Is this a sign of a more pervasive libertarian attitude (perhaps one of Hutchison's raised levels)? Or is it one of those Vietnam-like victories resulting from a tactical, but only temporary, withdrawal of the enemy? To be sure we have a body of law we never had before that has been used to win victories for freedom in the courts. But how sure can we be that it will continue to keep the "negative forces" at bay?

Well, on the latter point, Ralph Ginzburg found that the law was a slender reed indeed. Not that a lot of others weren't fooled also. Since its *Roth* decision in 1957, the Supreme Court had been taking what looked like a more libertarian approach to sexual expression. Surely, we thought, Ginzburg's case would decide once and for all this obscenity question. Much to our dismay, poor Ralph got five years, and he got it for saying — or strongly implying — in his advertising that his material was obscene!

And it didn't help Lenny Bruce at all. In 1964, when *Cancer* was winning its battle in (with?) the Supreme Court, Lenny was found guilty of obscene performances. That managed to kill Lenny two years later. And it was still another two years before an Appellate Court decided that Lenny had not been obscene after all. And the man who as district attorney put Lenny away

smugly and arrogantly defends his actions, and is alive and well today.

Hutchison does suggest what a slender reed we have in the Supreme Court when he notes that it took two years after its *Cancer* decision to settle other legal actions against the book. He likens this to what has happened since the Supreme Court's *Brown* decision on school integration in 1954. And, as Hutchison points out, the *Cancer* decision by no means held the censors back. *Ginzburg* was a backward step. And the post-*Ginzburg* period has been marked by increased censorship on every level of government, as well as among private groups. This does not lead Hutchison to question the nature of the victory in the *Cancer* battle, however. He could have noted that between 1955 and 1965 obscenity arrests and convictions increased more than four times, and — most notably — they almost doubled during the liberal administration of the Kennedys. The trend continued, of course, in the liberal administration of L.B.J., and there is no reason to believe it will do less in the Nixon administration.

Furthermore, all of the law that we might expect to hold back censorship has been made by the courts; almost all of it by the Supreme Court. Its present state can be best described as confusion compounded, but we have also learned that we cannot even expect *stare decisis* always to prevail. And with a new Nixon Chief Justice, plus the likely retirement soon of justices like Black and Douglas, what hope do we have that the Supreme Court will take a libertarian attitude toward sexual expression? (Indeed, given these probabilities, it might be better for libertarians not to fight their battles in the courts now so that anti-libertarian decisions will not become the law of the land.)

It is equally difficult to be optimistic about the level and costs of the war against obscenity censorship. Grove Press reportedly spent something like \$250,000 in well over 70 cases. Putnam's spent \$25,000 defending *Fanny Hill* in Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey alone, and thousands more in defending *Candy*. Hutchison devotes two chapters to the re-election of a Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice who had voted to free *Cancer* and as a result had to face

a McCarthyite opponent who fought him on that point and that point alone. (In this case the Wisconsin press did come to the rescue, but only after it realized that its own ox was in danger of being gored.)

Hutchison focuses almost half of his book on Wisconsin and Milwaukee, because, he says, he believes Wisconsin is more free of censorship than the majority of states, and "for this very reason, Wisconsin makes an excellent example of how censors can threaten even a liberal state." And indeed they can, and they did. (And they still do: witness the current plight of *Kaleidoscope* and *The Cardinal*.) Hutchison documents in detail the anti-obscenity, anti-sexual forces (they are related). But if this can happen in a liberal state like Wisconsin, what can we expect in other less liberal states (which is to say almost all of the others)?

Hutchison documents the cop-outs of the press, publishers, and libraries, including university libraries. But almost as bad are the critics and other friends of free sexual expression. They are the white liberals of the obscenity censorship war. They have come to it late, and suffer from their own unliberated, unradical stances. In the end, they are not so different from that person of average community standards who (supposedly) is the legal measure of pruriency, who is attracted to the pornographic, but who at the same time cooperates with the "negative forces" in thinking it "dirty" and therefore in need of social redemption. Hutchison does not draw this out, for he never goes behind the theory and practice of the liberal defenders of books. (This is not to say that some liberals have not recently moved into more libertarian if not more radical positions.)

The common element in obscenity and pornography, and in the erotic as well, is the portrayal or disclosure of a tabooed and forbidden reality. (It was bad logic that supported the liberal myth that pornography cannot be defined.) Sex has been treated in middle-class Christian milieus as something dirty that cannot be openly expressed or referred to. But with the deliberate repression of sexual expression, there arose a whole genre of expression that dares to express the forbidden. Unfortunately, this genre

was also characterized by feelings of guilty pleasure, or pleasurable guilt. This is the pornographic element in pornography and obscenity. But this pornographic element has not been confined to sexual expression, as Gorer has pointed out. There is pornography of death stemming from the same kind of schizoid attitudes that we have toward sex: both fear and attraction. And Lionel Rubinoff writes lately of "The Pornography of Power." What characterizes all of them is both a flight from, and a tantalizing attraction toward, a forbidden reality. Thus the mixture of pleasure and guilt or shame. And the hang-ups. But, as Rubinoff says, the repressed returns in the form of clandestine fantasies, and hence there grows up a business that caters to the need for the expression of these fantasies.

I do not mean to paint liberals and non-liberals with the same brush. The liberal does try to break out of this flight from reality. But up to now in defending obscene books he has resorted to the dishonest device of pretending that the obscene reality isn't what it is. If censors of obscene books (curiously) never have prurient responses to them, while everyone around them (supposedly) have, the liberal defenders of obscene books (curiously) never report prurient responses. This deception occurs in the courts where critics and others pretend that somehow the tabooed and forbidden becomes transubstantiated at the hands of the artist — especially if he is a "great artist" (another myth) — and that as a result no one — well, no one of literary maturity, let us say — gets to feeling horny from it. (Of course we must acknowledge that they are forced by trial procedures and the mentality of judges and lawyers to play this game. But should we continue to let the courts, including the lawyers, set the terms of our battles?)

This liberal, but nonetheless dishonest, ploy has been used time and again in defending Henry Miller's books. And it has been done in the face of the fact that Miller himself, in an essay in *Remember to Remember*, candidly admitted that he used obscenity, and used it precisely because it awakened, aroused, shocked, and tore away the hypocritical fig-leaves from sexual reality. That is, that it **does** have a prurient effect, and that is why he used it.

But this has all been noted before. What I want to suggest here are some parallels between sexual pornography and still another kind of pornography: racial pornography. The parallels may instruct us in how deep are those "negative forces" Miller spoke of.

The "racial" characteristics of the black, e.g., his color, his nappy, kinky hair and all, has in white societies been treated as part of a dark forbidden reality (even our words betray the connection in our thinking between things dark, and black, with things forbidden and tabooed!) And, as in the case of sex, the liberal has more or less gone along with this. Even in our better moments, say, for example, when we are attempting some sort of compensatory education for blacks and other pariahs in our midst, our attitude has been to treat the black as a reality that is either something other than what he is, or as something other than what we would like. We adopt the attitude that we can let him in if he will only change and become more like us. This is known as making him "qualified." Run down the special programs for blacks and others and see how much change is demanded of them, and how little change is demanded of their sponsoring institutions. And there is at least a tone of this in Hutchison's first chapter titled "That Obscene Henry Miller." It is not a defense of Miller's use of obscenity, but rather a cleaning up of Miller; the same kind of cleaning up so obvious in the elaborate rituals Grove Press went through prior to publishing *Cancer*. Miller is legitimized, he is made "qualified," by pointing out his status as an artist, playing up the critical acclaim he has received (noticeably less warm in this country than in Europe), and especially the suffering Miller has gone through at the hands of the "negative forces."

In both the pornography of sex and the pornography of race, something has been made forbidden, dark, shameful, dirty. But there are also fantasies about them as the repressed returns (the big cocks on the blacks, for example). And then we have the resulting guilty but pleasurable experiences (ask the white liberal, especially the white liberal chick; but also ask the black who digs white chicks).

I haven't come up with any answers to the questions posed earlier. I have tried to suggest that the war against obscenity censorship (i.e., sexual censorship), like the war against racism, has deeper roots in our social and cultural fabric than Hutchison suggests. In failing to see those roots in our own thinking and attitudes, the friends of censored and suppressed works have not been nearly as radical as they have to be. I have tried to suggest a point of view that might be a beginning for a less "liberal" more radical war against the "negative forces;" that would save us from mistaking a won battle for a won war; and that would turn us away from fighting the wrong wars in the wrong places. The libertarian cause of free expression would have profited from a study of a celebrated battle like the *Cancer* battle had it more radically examined both the censorship and anti-censorship sides, instead of seeing it simply as a good guys-bad guys struggle.

Survival of Art in the New Industrial State: An Optimistic View

J.J. Jehring

Arnold Gingrich, *Business and The Arts: An Answer to Tomorrow*, New York: Paul S. Eriksson, 1969.

John R. Pierce, *Science, Art, and Communication*, New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1968.

Although *Business and The Arts* by Arnold Gingrich and *Science, Art, and Communication* by John R. Pierce both, in a sense, treat the future role of business in the arts, they are worlds apart in the points from which the authors view their subject. Arnold Gingrich, publisher of *Esquire* magazine, perhaps may be best characterized as "the salesman" out to "push the product" — to motivate, stimulate, or somehow force the business community into making a much greater contribution to the arts than they are doing or have done in the past. John Pierce, on the other hand, is a leading scientist who has close ties with the business community through serving as director of the Research Communications Sciences Division of the Bell Telephone Laboratories. His concern is entirely with discussing some possible contributions the new technology being developed by scientists working in business laboratories might make to the future development of the arts.

If one were seeking a spokesman to present a picture of "The Role of Business in Art in the United States" Arnold Gingrich undoubtedly would qualify best for that role. He has long been a champion of the arts. *Esquire* magazine has had an active program of promoting business involvement in the arts during recent years. Prizes have been presented annually to corporations for outstanding

art projects they have instituted. Mr. Gingrich also played a key role in the formation of a number of groups devoted to the promotion of the arts in society.

That the book is a "labor of love" is attested to by the fact that the original draft was written while he was ostensibly "on a vacation." Therefore, it is not especially difficult to understand how Mr. Gingrich reaches the optimistic conclusion that the future role of U.S. business in the arts will be expanding.

Historically speaking, corporations have contributed very little to the arts until recent years. Only a few decades ago Walter Paepcke, who Mr. Gingrich cites as the founder of the movement, took the first steps to commit the Container Corporation of America which he was organizing to a program of extensive and continuing support for the arts. Since that time a growing number of corporations have developed a variety of programs to support the arts in different ways. Some business executives have discovered they can "use" the arts to obtain desirable goals for their companies if they simply take time to develop imaginative programs in terms of their corporate objectives. For example, the main reason for my visiting the Dayton Department Store in St. Paul several years ago was to view a work of sculpture by Henry Moore, and for many years a constant stream of people have been taking daily tours through the Johnson Wax Company in Racine, Wisconsin to view the world-famous Frank Lloyd Wright Administration Building.

The list of activities documented in the book which are currently being supported by various corporations cover the full range of the arts from painting and sculpture through music and drama. In a very real sense, *Business and The Arts* can be looked upon as a "how to do it" book addressed to the heads of large or small corporations. Mr. Gingrich presents a whole range of ideas the businessman could consider if he is contemplating giving encouragement or support to the arts, including how to take advantage of tax benefits which are connected with grants and gifts.

The most common avenue open to corporations for supporting the arts is,

of course, through financial gifts. However, unless this is accompanied by some real interest in art for its own sake, it may not lead to any kind of continuing relationship. Mr. Gingrich thinks that corporate contributions to the arts are best when some member or members of the corporation hierarchy takes a strong personal interest in the projects to be supported. He cites the case of the Rockefeller family where contributions are closely tied to an active participation on boards of art museums, orchestras, etc.

The author indicates that studies which have been made concerning the possibility of increased future contributions to the arts by corporations have been somewhat pessimistic. However, he feels this conclusion is a mistake and the future is going to show increasing financial grants to the arts from the business world. I tend to agree with this latter conclusion because if one were able to draw a trend line starting with Walter Paepcke to indicate the increasing support which has taken place since that time, the projected curve into the future no doubt should show a continuing steep climb.

Another reason which favors an optimistic prediction is some of the most recent developments regarding art and technology. One, especially, is the recent success of E.A.T. which is an association of scientists (mostly from business) and artists who are working together on experiments in art and technology. The growth of these groups around the country in just a few short years has been spectacular.

Another omen which has favorable connotation is taking place at the Graduate School of Business at The University of Wisconsin where a special master's program is being drafted in arts administration. The purpose of the program is to provide individuals who will be qualified to fill administrative positions in museums and for orchestra and theatre groups, etc. This in itself should lead to a strengthening of the ties between the business world and the arts.

Although his book does present bits and pieces of programs in the arts scattered across the business horizon from Sears Roebuck to the Chase Manhattan Bank, Gingrich has not included an in-depth

study of all of the arts activities of any single company. If a comprehensive picture of the total art activities of several leading corporations which have had a broad-based, long-term interest in the arts had been presented, it undoubtedly would have added much to the impact of the book. But perhaps it is better that this should remain as a thesis topic for some enterprising graduate student.

Anyone in the business world cannot help but be impressed by the names of the many top businessmen mentioned in this book. Especially impressive is the list of the 100 selected members of the Business Committee for the Arts, all of whom hold top positions in some of the country's largest and most important enterprises. In his concluding paragraphs, the author treats of the possibility of increased government support for the arts. Only at one period has the government been able to put together a meaningful program in the arts and that was during the Great Depression. There undoubtedly is considerable individual support for the arts in the United States today but the corporations stand the best chance to play the leading role in the growth and development of the arts in the coming generation. As Mr. Gingrich points out, there are still too many "yahoo congressmen" to expect much meaningful support to be forthcoming from that segment of society. The businessman is without a doubt becoming more and more of a savant in the field of the arts and especially in its relevance to the society of tomorrow.

Although all of the book *Science, Art, and Communication* is interesting and those parts devoted to science and technology especially well worth reading, the only part I will be reporting on here is a section titled "But Is It Art?" Being a scientist and working with computers and problems of communication and sound, Dr. Pierce gives us some interesting examples of the application of the computers to various projects in the arts.

In one chapter called "Chance Remarks" he tells of some unique experiments in literary composition which were conducted using a specially programmed computer. Certain key words were fed into the system and when mathematical techniques were used to control word use sequences, it was possible for the computer to

compose short paragraphs. The author presents several examples and is of the opinion they are similar to some of the paragraphs in *Finnegan's Wake*.

In another essay he describes some experiences he had in using a computer to write music. Basically the scientists programmed a computer to write some sound sequences which resulted in pieces of music he felt were "interesting." Dr. Pierce's reaction to the enjoyment of such music was ". . . I am capable of liking almost anything that is surprising if it only has some order or recognizable feature." Yet another section discusses the various advantages that the computer has to offer for the music composer who can learn to use it properly.

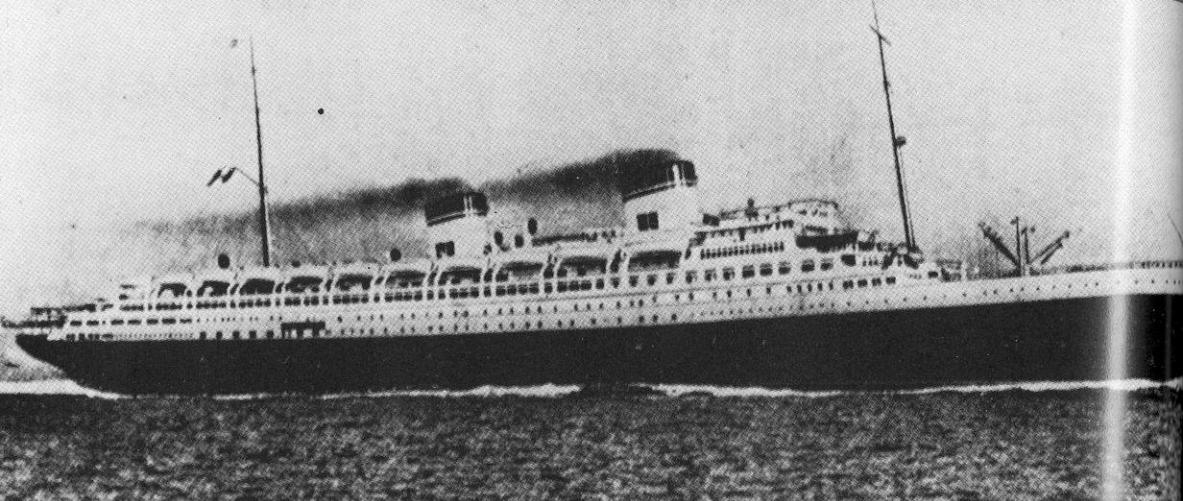
The author also tells us about a picture he has hanging in his office which was painted by a machine designed by Jean Tinguely and comments about the possibility of using a computer to produce designs and even make animated pictures. He describes an experiment in which a computer was programmed to produce a drawing in the style of Piet Mondrian and when given the choice, a majority of people preferred the computer drawing to a Mondrian original.

In this book, the various descriptions of projects in the arts which have involved the use of the computer reveal the great extent to which the new technology has opened up new vistas in all branches of the arts for the coming generation of artists. Dr. Pierce states the message of science and technology to the arts is "use us opportunistically." He adds, however, that the artist should "keep the successful but turn away from blind alleys before he gets lost."

Although both of these books emphasize aspects of business and the arts, they in no way overlap. Each of the authors has firsthand experience with his subject matter and would be considered as among the best qualified to present the subject from his particular point of view. The result is two stimulating and provocative contributions which point the way to lucrative areas of further development and exploration for the artist as well as the scientist and businessman.

Gerard Malanga Notes in Place of a Poem





"You little know

A poet's life, dear mother: I must write poems,
The most fatiguing of occupations."

— Delmore Schwartz

NOTES IN PLACE OF A POEM

vitalie rimbaud emma malanga grace crane
memories absorbing distance in the field
by open space composition

the poet trying to explain

himself to his mother

cannot be heard in the twentieth century

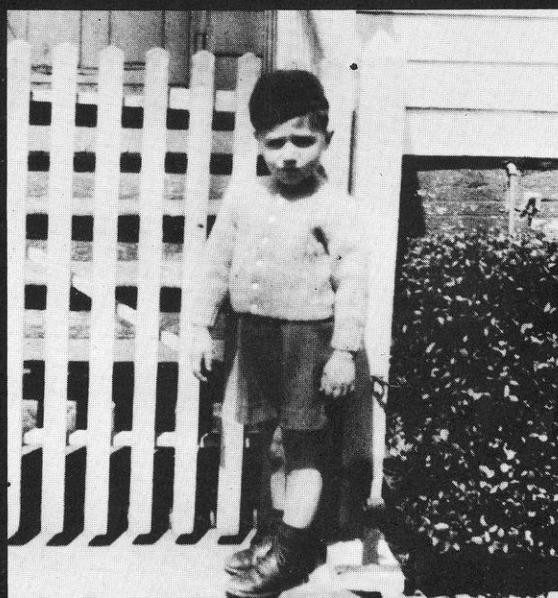
how long have i been waiting
for my father to make his return
appearance

unaware of the mere existence
of becoming immortal after

the death of the physical body

he unconsciously casts my fate at age four
standing beside the closed gate
at poe cottage

in the black and white photo



he disappears into the spiral
white page of a brief inspiration

i carry with me
his life whose words become my poems
in the twentieth century

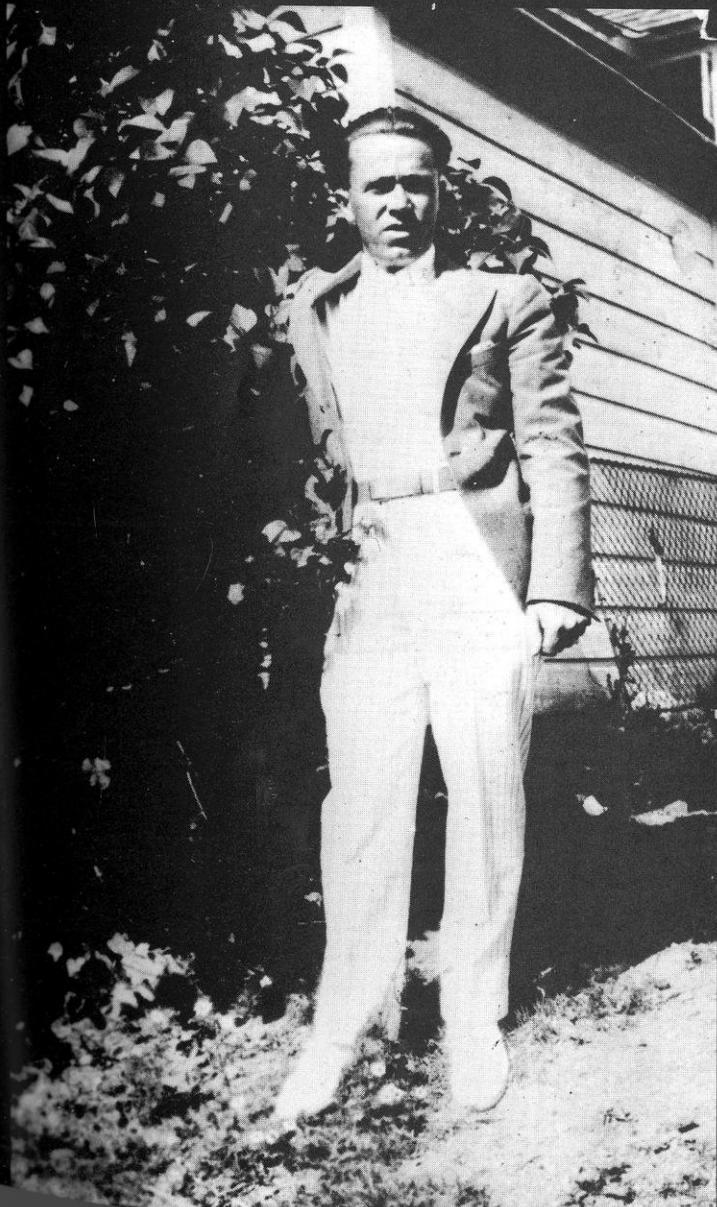
refined looks in all his ancestral clarity
before i was born

what notebook receives poems
he struggles to work out in his head
ache without proper knowledge of english

what strange woman shelters his loneliness
in the township of holly hill
florida

pop 3232 on sea level
still capable of intimacy

at seventythree my fathers life is slipping away



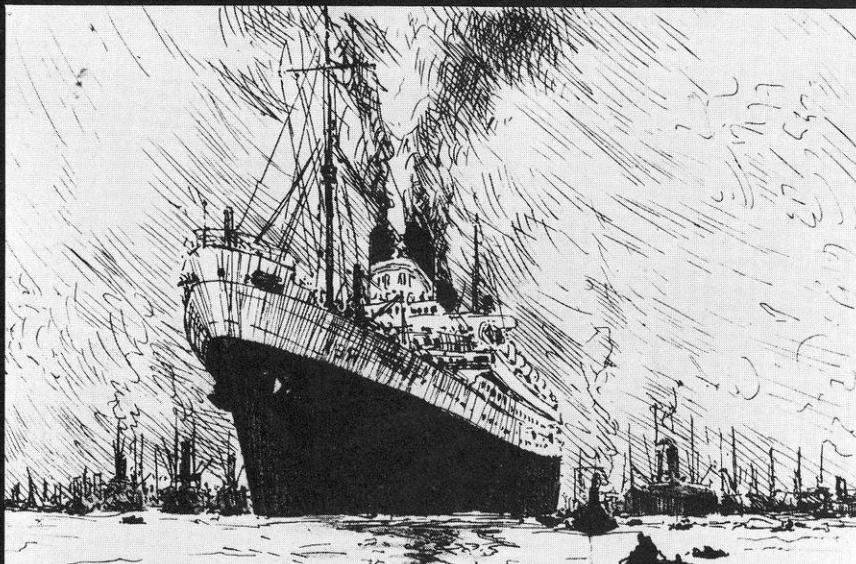
The *Rex* came first, being launched in the presence of the King and Queen of Italy. A bomb, apparently aimed at these royal personages, had exploded in Genoa a few hours before the event, doing no harm.

i am alive in my fathers memory
of me as a child holding his hand
on the hudson river
day line steamer taking us upstream
to bear mountain
on sundays
years later releasing himself from the universal family
responsibility of financial support
i was nineteen a pisces like him
growing up in a world foreign to poetry

The beautiful liner, holder of the Blue Ribbon for several years, was in German hands. Italy had surrendered, and Allied forces were marching steadily up the Italian boot. Trieste, where the *Rex* had lain during most of the war, was endangered. The Nazi strategists, playing a delaying game, decided to put the *Rex* to good use. Being nearly 900 feet long, she would make an ideal barrier to the harbor if sunk across the entrance. In this way an important supply port would be denied the Allies.

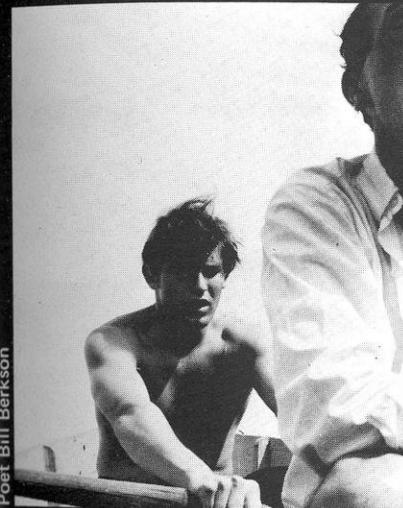
British reconnaissance planes noted activity on the long-dormant liner, and she was kept constantly under watch. Allied strategists planned how best to prevent the Germans from using her to block the harbor. No one wanted to sink the *Rex*, for her capture might be effected in a matter of weeks. It was, however, finally determined that she must be sacrificed. On the morning of September 8, 1944, several groups of Beaufighters from the Coastal and Balkan Air Forces were dispatched to do the job.

When they arrived, the huge bulk of the vessel was seen steaming slowly in Capodistria Bay in the Gulf of Muggia, south of Trieste, hugging the shore as if vainly seeking concealment. Breaking formation, the British planes dove to the attack. Fifty-nine rockets scored direct hits on the *Rex*, stopping her in her own wake and setting fires wherever they struck. The liner took on a slow list to port, away from the shore line, only a hundred yards distant. Once again that afternoon, more Allied planes bore down on the *Rex*. This time the rocket fighters scored sixty-four hits, leaving the vessel capsized with a column of smoke more than 500 feet high rising from her blistered hull.



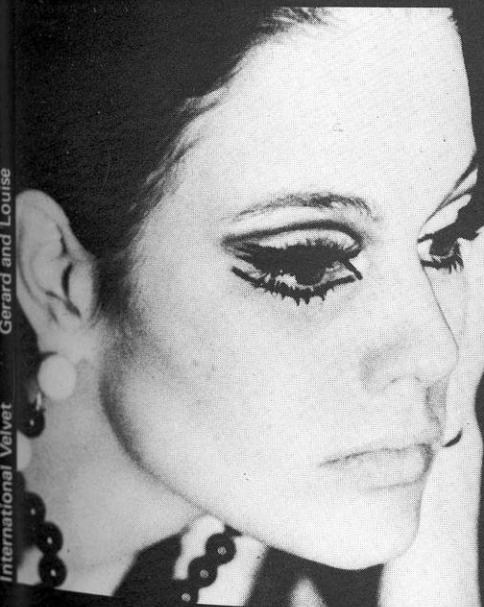
i meant to make peace with
to break bread with the young
poets of my time

Berkson the first poet of my generation
whose work i read and admired
and from whom i expected advice
at kenwards 1960 loyalty day party
without sense of rivalry



Poet Bill Berkson

my whole life becoming a poem
names rise like a hot foot
note of smoke international velvet benedetta barzini
donna patrizia ruspoli louise de la falaise

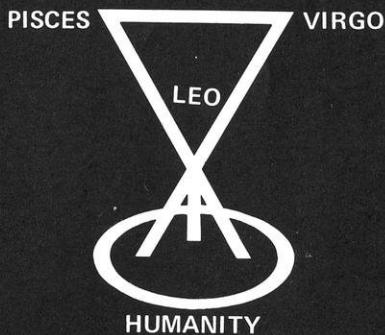


Gerard and Louise

International Velvet



my way to be indiscrete about human loss
the history of a life
style in fragments



the piscean aspect in me
in its highest expression
demonstrated by sensitivity
to immediate and unbroken context with
god initiated into states of consciousness
of which the third initiation was but the beginning

it is hard to explicate the value of words
i am not a poet who can read these poems

all that i call my life as a byproduct
existing without me
in the wind stinging my face
as i rush across streets of new york
like a waif

The sun was setting on the Atlantic, and the ship's clocks had just struck three bells. My father was finishing a game of shuffleboard and returning to his first-class cabin to prepare for dinner.

it is content that matters
notes in place of the poem
I was going to write

about the excitement of the late frank ohara
writing as he decides to include
all that comes into his life
in a day or a week for instance
i write the title

We Are Honored By Your Presence Fred Hughes
which begins



Fred Hughes and Andy Warhol

It's 3:30 in New York a Saturday

afternoon, five days

after the beginning of the new year.

I buy a third copy of THE SELECTED POEMS OF LEONARD COHEN

to give as a gift to a friend

and swipe a copy of Duncan's BENDING THE BOW

filled with references of a mind
at work. I visit Anne Waldman,
wife of Lewis Warsh; inquire about
the contemporaries MacAdams & Clark,
my friends living in Frisco; not their poems
but their personal lives.

Today

have notion about

The Poets Foundation because

I have faith. Poetry is a difficult business
world to contend with, anyway.

Then go back where I came
from Hotel Albert to the tobacconist
at Sheridan Square buy
carton of Rothman's King Size
filters because it reminds me of
my six-month residence at Rome
smoking Peter Hartman's Rothman's,
and spend my last \$3.00 on the first
AMERICAN LITERARY ANTHOLOGY of poets
in the money

absent of any reprints
of my poems; the editors having their reasons.

i don't know who will feed me today.

I walk across Union Square Park

in my clutchcoat

to The Factory to meet Andy
who will arrive at 4:00 PM
and I am thinking a lot by now of
Fred Hughes, 3rd cousin to
Howard Hughes, the perennial
loveliness in his dreams
coming to life,

asking are there
people here,

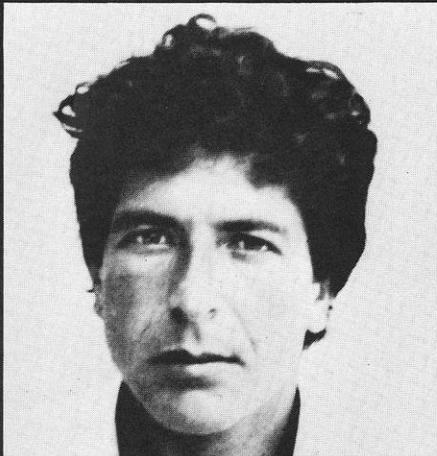
remaining only a mirror
reflecting the surface of what
the beautiful people look like to him.

The *Rex* arrived in New York on October 7, 1932, being given
the usual tumultuous reception granted new sea leviathans. Some
2,000 Italian Americans in dozens of small craft, escorted her to
her pier. Shipping men among the 50,000 persons who crowded aboard
while she remained in the city agreed that the new vessel would cut
deeply into the cream of the North Atlantic trade.

today modifications of service to improve
the efficiency of our rapid transit system
has become effective

today leonard cohen
checks out of the hotel chelsea

without forwarding address



today make notes towards an eventual essay
about the shapiro & padgett "sparklers" anthology of
"new yorkish poets"

in terms of the narrowest possible
definition for a dining room
table of contents

today make a date with hadley haden-guest
whom ive never met

today i desire to earn what i want
today i am busy about the documentation of the lives that surround me
today i dont hear from bernadette mayer

her spiritual remoteness
her willingness to listen to me



today i am crashing
today i am censored by attorneys
at law for the use of the free
association of names in my work

today i feel a total 4-wall experience of loneliness
at the hotel albert at \$25.00 per week.

today i apply for an Ingram merrill foundation grant
knowing i will not receive one

why do i have this optimism about being so pessimistic
why is it we dont always get what we ask for

A year after the *Rex*'s debut, she broke the *Europa*'s speed record, with a passage from Gibralter to Ambrose Light in four days, thirteen hours and fifty-eight minutes. Her average speed was 28.92 knots, exactly a knot better than the German liner. Soon afterward, she won the eastbound record with an average speed of 27.63 knots. Prevailing winds and currents always make this the more difficult of the two passages.

the day delmore schwartz got off
on the wrong floor at the hotel dixie
with the realization that he was going
to die

the condition of suffering
caused by being alone



i speak as one whose life is like his own
a spirit eager for death which was his only recognition

soon i am sure i will run out of money
i will have to sell my post card collection
i will have to salvage my correspondence
from my mothers clothing
closet to install at carnegie library

how shall i read those letters

of mine

from five years ago under air
tight glass alphabetically filed
by my friend jack ericson the archivist
how shall i look at my past

falling away

shortly after my friend donatella died
at bologna

never to be just a life for some curious scholar
to piece together the facts

to dissect the working drafts
the marginal notes
the telephone numbers

what will the poet looking into his heart discover

the world of the american
intellectual establishment
the world of the harvard stockyard
the world of cerebral poetry as a byproduct of the imagination
the world of the new york
review of books
the academy of american poets
"to reward financially those poets
whom it deems worthy, and who,
for practical reasons,
cannot otherwise devote to the writing
of poetry their entire energies and talents"
refuse to admit to or acknowledge
the feelings which in this lifetime
i know i possess

i do not pretend to be someone
else in the twentieth century
i am a young man of letters
i am the recording zone operator
or that line from duncan
about "a field of ratios" in which
"events appear in language" holds true



i do not set my life against falling

in love

my parents lives become mine

in my documentation of them

so that

my life becomes theirs

photographs

illustrating the poems

i write for my friends

my running buddies

ondine 1962 ny the lower east side

harry fainlight piero heliczer 1963 ny chinatown

allen ginsberg 1964 ny the lower east side

denis deegan 1964 ny paris

dan cassidy 1965 ny ithaca cornell

albert rene ricard 1966 ny boston cambridge ny

donyale luna 1967 rome

neal phillips tony kinna as drakos 1968 rome

L. to R. top row
Neal Phillips, Gerard Malanga, Jan Pugh, Tony Kinna, Daniela Ripetti Rome, Spring 1968



susan hoffman alias viva ny 1968

andy warhol forever

i strain my eyes to see

on the white paper
proofs establishing space

the words appear

in the open

space of a breath

to go down on me was not such a project
after all

at least somethings going on

then what will the youth of america learn
from jim morrison long after he is gone

today i dial-a-poem 6280400

and hear sheylas voice simultaneously thru an echo
chamber where many poets of goodwill meet in a spirit
of cooperation

today sunlight is piercing
the left hand of god
thru the clouds
in the late afternoon

i make the sign of the cross
passing before a church
whose saints name i forgot

my mother making dinner for me
reminding herself watching over me
as a child

the world of my books
room atmosphere

and photographs surrounding her living

THE FILMS OF
PIERO HELICZER



SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER 1961

Galerie Jacqueline Rainsford
4 rue de Fürstenberg - Paris 6
Tel. 326 1780

***** ADMISSION 50 *****

Piero Heliczer was born in Rome in 1937. It was the hottest and longest day of the year, midsummer's eve, June 20th, and nearly died. From the ages of four to six he was a child star with the title "Il Piccolo Pucci." Educated by English nuns he knew English by the age of nine. From six to eight years of age he was in the underground fighting the Germans — "I mean — hiding from the Germans. After the war he was offered a role in SHOE SHINE but his mother did not want him to act with dirty kids from the streets, in neo-realismo style. He became a poet after learning the alphabet and reading pinocchio. From the ages of nine to sixteen he was a scientist, having promised his father to become one. Was always interested in science, sex and religion. Wanted to find out how boys were different from girls. Came to America at the age of ten, same age as Columbus' cabin boy. Got a hundred in the English regents, and a hundred in the biology regents at Forest Hills High School. Became a poet again in the golden age of Harvard when the whole drama thing started in Cambridge and the folksinging. But he was the only one to wear a beard at that time. Before it became ivy league fashion and before the beat generation. Heliczer became an ex-patriate in Paris and not sure from which country. Then from watching movies he became aware of his Polish blood, ancestry and started thinking arabesque polonaises and Levi Strauss, Marlon Brando, Byzantium. He made his first 8mm film, THE AUTUMN FEAST, in Brighton, England, center of art nouveau, birthplace of Aubrey Beardsley. Also a place where they get more inches of sunlight than anywhere else in England per annum. That was 1960. He then came back when the maker's coop. was starting at the Charles Theatre, the golden age of the Charles Theatre. Heliczer loves Suomi and Africa, is still interested in what makes girls different from boys.



i am a poet because of how
"everything happens" around me

for what is an island but the sea around us
in the garden of sunlight i am closing my eyes

one day i am thinking of my father
where he is and how he'll get back

i write a line about how
i remember him

he walks with me
in the shadow
box of the 3rd ave el

where sunlight illuminates cobblestones
he has several secrets to tell me

he has only one likeness
and has love in his heart

as i grow older i realize
that i will never be a boy
will probably always be criticized for writing too much
existing without me

years later
remaining traces of a notebook
clusters of shaking leaves
in a rainstorm

lightning bounces off the dry fields of corn
flakes and shredded wheat

at maxs kansas city
patti d'arbanville interrupts my train
load of thoughts my story
with her interest for duncans poem

"SUCH IS THE SICKNESS OF MANY A GOOD THING"

which makes me wonder

if shes putting me on

or really does understand what im showing her

exclaiming "it's so true"



Superstar Patti D'Arbinville

and i am reminded of what ouspensky
remarked: "one doesn't know what the truth is
until one knows what the lies are first."

god relieve me of my hunger and thirst
god grant me words which are inexhaustible in the universe
form intruding on freedom of thought expanding in line
breaks the inspiration of the heart choked by a tourniquet

my father i see with me in my dreams of a car
crash on the *autostrada* in the late afternoon
donatella manganotti burroughs official translator
my sole literary support
in italy dead of heart failure at 32

as i walk up university place
to *the factory*
i think of my mother alone
in her lifetime

the enveloping dusk
in the music of charles edward ives
the face of a sunset in tears



i think of you emma malanga
trying to explain myself to you
remembering when you were so young
watching over me at the botanical gardens
the warm meal the bath afterwards
cleaning my ears the imagination
which my fear of the dark
imposed on the space of my bedroom
my dreams interrupted by waking
in nightsweat

the toys of my childhood
fixed in my memory
box have all disappeared.

but its 1969 its almost my birthday again

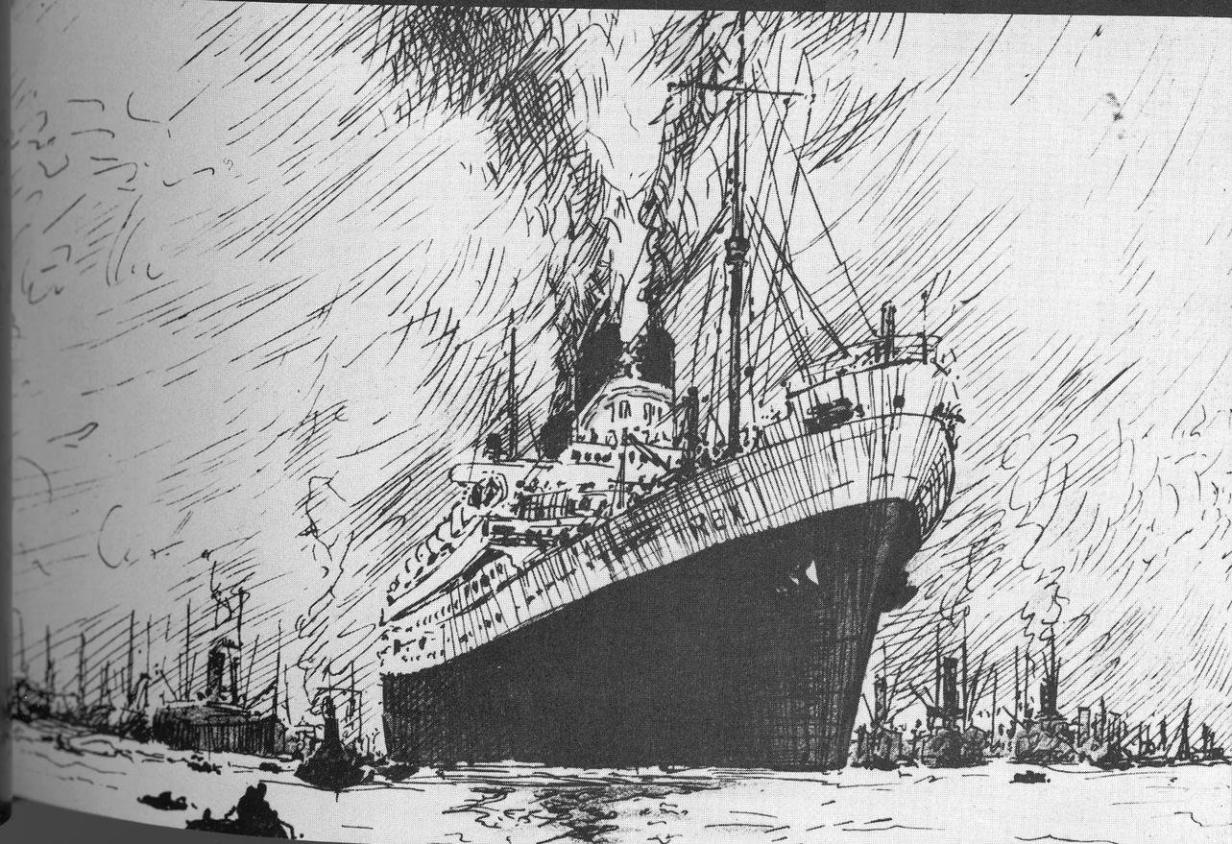
where is your husband my father gerardo malanga
the man you loved when i was so young
where is the world of poetry
that once solved the whole business of being
in love

where is the Rex
that brought my father to new york
in record time of four days

i can see nothing
before i was born
but my life existing without me
the crashing of the waves

8-26-1969 nyc

from THE NOTEBOOKS



Notes and Discussion

The Aesthetics of a Black Choreographer

Eleo Pomare

America, the fruit of Western Civilization's culture, at this present time has a popular sense of aesthetics which is typified by Marilyn Monroe, a blonde, blue-eyed, over made-up, superstar illusion with halfed closed eyes and a semi opened mouth whispering death.

America is the land which has made an unnatural adoption of European culture despite and at the expense of its own native arts — jazz and Modern Dance.

America is the land in which the cultural establishment worships the millionth performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony while musical geniuses like Charles Ives and Thelonius Monk are neglected and completely overlooked, where the White overlords feign aristocratic nobility in dance and watch season after season of Swan Lake and Nutcracker Suite while Modern Dance the living art of its own womb goes begging for an audience.

And before I get into the aesthetics, I'd like to clarify one thing. **Ballet is not dance.** Ballet is not dance in the sense that Baroque music is not music. The unfortunate thing about mass communication and mass education is that at certain points too many people are misinformed.

Western civilization, or White civilization has been a very bigoted one. It has been ethnocentric to the extent of thinking that the perfection of art came during its renaissance and the perfection of its dance came during the golden years of ballet. **This is just not true.** What Western Civilization has deigned to call "primitive art" is more correctly art, or vital art. These critics also judge all other art by what went on during art history's brief period of realism and they are sadly in error.

So-called primitive art suggests to the Western Civilized gentlemen crudeness, incompetence and ignorant groping, and yet a close examination of this art indicates that this is not the case. This art's most striking quality is its intense vitality. It is something made by people with a direct and immediate response to life. People whose art was a channel for expressing powerful beliefs, hopes and fears. As the great sculptor Henry Moore said, "It is art before it got smothered in trimmings and surface decorations, before inspiration had flagged into technical tricks and intellectual conceits."

All art has its roots in the so-called primitive and most of our great world artists today have been influenced and redirected by so-called primitive art. Some of the names — Picasso, Gauguin, Henry Moore, Jacob Epstein, Giacometti, Stravinsky and many, many more. In a sense primitive art could be called a people's experience with the forces around them. With this broad definition such things as the Greek classical plays could also be called primitive.

What then is the other art? The other art, which does not concern itself with life, is decadent art. It does not react to the elemental forces of life which surround us. It is the art of a people removed from the basics of life. Through luxury the aristocrats created a decadent art of dance, ballet, for the select few who did not have to worry about hunger, disease or destitution. Very few ballets were performed for the "man with the hoe" who had those fields to plow. Swan Lake and white ballet slippers had little meaning to this man.

In our present situation we have both arts present. But the facts are still true. Live people produce a vital or primitive art. Dead people acclimate themselves to a decadent art or live on the carrion of another age's art which is vomited forth time after time after time after time. Learning to love something that is essentially dead requires lots of conditioning.

*This article is based on a speech delivered by the author at The Afro-American Society Seminar, Wesleyan University, March 28, 1969.

Eleo Pomare in *Over Here.*



Eleo Pomare in *Narcissus Rising*.



Although the French enjoyed a revolution — a political revolution — they did not carry this completely through to all the arts. The same thing happened in Russia. The aristocratic dance — ballet — was taken on by the nouveau riche or bourgeoisie who controlled the new French Republics, and the Soviets took on the impossible task of reconciling ballet (with all its unnatural, non-life related movements) with the philosophy of Soviet Realism. Can you imagine a ballet about day to day life operations in a shoe factory?

But this is Western civilization, and its love for the past, and its ethnocentrism, and its absurdity. I hope that all my revolutionist friends here to take note of this and when they do their "thing," they do a good job of it. For the post-revolutionary French and Russian "man with the hoe" the entertainment of the aristocrats was at last available. One overlooked fact though was that this ballet art did not come from their life. The citizens and comrades moved into the castles and palaces and in a sense aped their former masters.

The American artists have answered the plea for a democratic and vital dance art in Modern Dance. I could mention names like Isadora Duncan and other early pioneers who experimented in the new free form which returned dance from palace entertainment to the vital or primitive freedom it enjoyed when it was done by the Greeks centuries ago, or as it has always been done by certain so-called primitive societies — who don't destroy themselves with nuclear bombs.

It seemed almost natural that America should create the new arts. Cut off as it was from European culture and direct influence. And it also seems natural that the enslaved Black man should develop a music, a dance so vital that it would affect the total world culture.

From the mysterious sufferings in a foreign land has come the jazz which has revitalized all Western music, and I think we are only on the verge of an artistic revolution which will be pivoted by the American Black Artists. Yes, I think we will show what's left of Western Civilization culture how to leave their sterile castles and palaces, their boring bourgeois compulsion of Beethoven Fifth Symphony listening. We will show them

as we have in popular dance, how to use their bodies again naturally, how to make their own art and not live on the carrion of the past.

In a sense I think our role is to break the ethnocentric thinking patterns which has lead these people — drunk with power — to believe that theirs, although dead, is a superior art to judge others by. The Black Artist could lead Western Civilization art out of its ivory tower and back into contact with its own life, the life it must have to be valid and vital. A basic truth we must repeat a million times if we do not know it now is that art does not come from history or scholasticism or feelings of superiority, but from life itself.

The Black Artists in America can show the Philistines that Marilyn Monroe whispering death is only an illusion of a bored isolated dream and beauty which has little to do with pleasing the senses. Beauty — aesthetics — has to do with the power of expression and goes deeper than visual appearance. Our moving experiences with life here in America has surrounded us, loomed menacingly in front of us, beaten us, given us little to hope for, beaten us again, and then lynched us. We've paid our dues. The nobility of our survival is a testament to basic humanity. It has made us men.

Knowing the reality of all this, in America, circa 1969, every American should be able to say truthfully — Black is Beautiful.

Saga of Clayton Bailey: Beyond Criticism and the Nose-Pot Aesthetic

David Zack

... a show that is tasteless, obscene and barely above the level of bathroom humor. Dismembered and disfigured fingers, lips and other portions of the human anatomy make up a large part of the objects presented. Even the titles are unpleasant — "Nite Pot," "Ritual Pot," "Kissing Pot," and "Standup Ritual Pot." The pieces are crudely and grotesquely done, carefully painted to point up their lewdity.

From a review of Clayton Bailey's exhibit at Craft Alliance Gallery, St. Louis *Globe Democrat*, September 19th, 1965.

Does Clayton Bailey see art and life as some sado-masochistic jumble, cloacally reeking new ennui? Is lewd ugliness this artist's rebellion against mass society? Does he see himself as history's greatest john-wall writer, raising grafitti to some sculptural peak?

Not likely at all. Clayton is friendly, open, cheerful, lovable and very Midwestern.

How many California ceramic sculptors will fire their friends' clay pipes, house-plaques and tea sets in their kiln? For that matter, how many of the new breed of artists have their own kiln?

Dave Gilhooly drives a hundred fifty miles to fire his great hippos, his speckled orange mating frogs and wonderful leering warthogs in a room-size kiln at the University of California in Davis. Davis, of course, is where Bob Arneson, the group's mentor, teaches and works.

Peter Van Den Berge sticks his rich rutabagas and bulging carrots, his flower-shirted Dutch boys and ethereally painted picture plates in the kiln at San Francisco State College where he professes.

Clayton Bailey, newly arrived in California, built his kiln in a small-town store front and it seems that he has come to stay. Bailey wandered the American midlands for years between early graduation from the University of Wisconsin and his current mature 30. He left Wisconsin briefly for St. Louis, where his early nose-pots and toilet pieces were so thoroughly appreciated, returning again to teach at the State University in Whitewater. Here, a small fan group got good notices for him in arts and crafts magazines. A writer (with Ph.D.) named Bernie Pyron published an ebullient legend describing a god named Claythong, who rode huge motorcycles (one on each foot) in Wisconsin midwinter nights and blessed the salty firings of his emulators.

Before he was 25 his work was shown in a one-man exhibition in New York at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts.

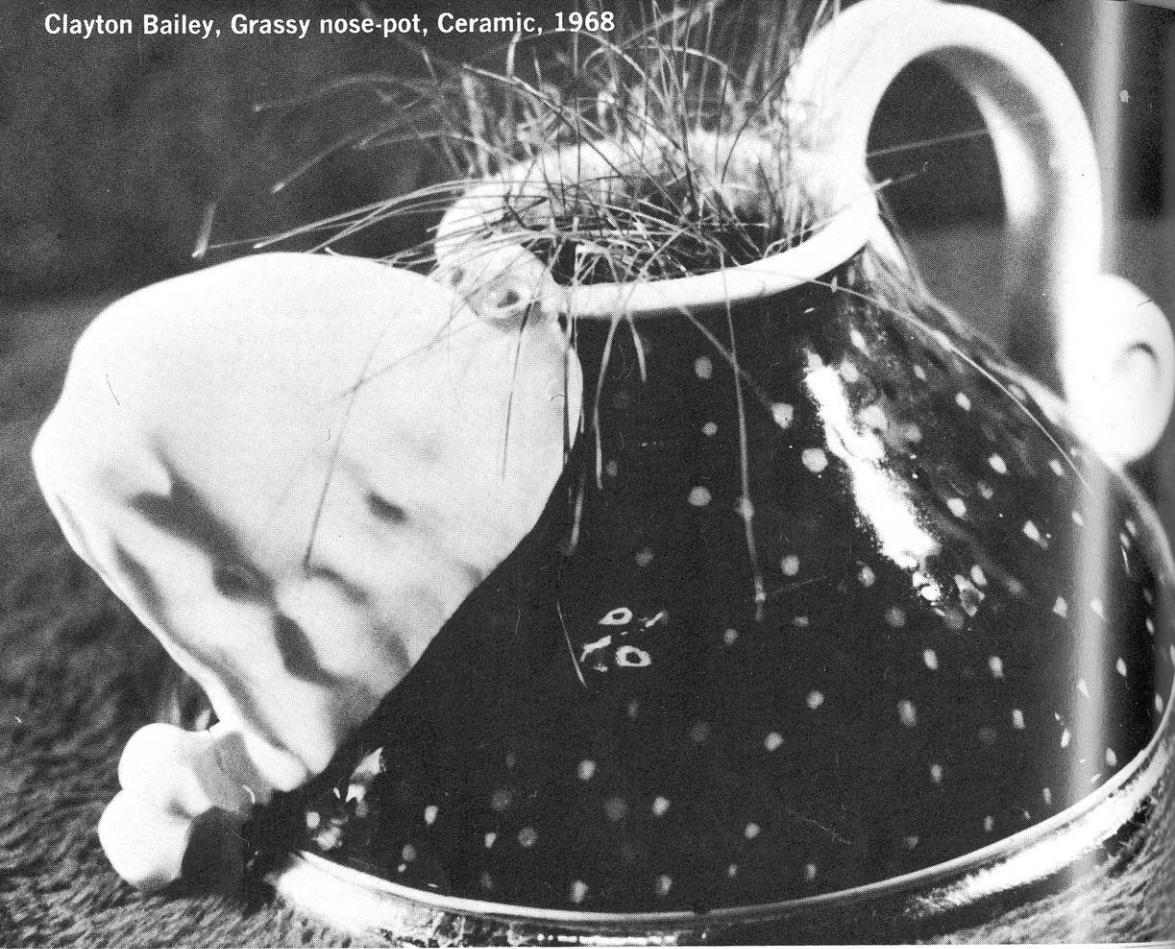
Moving on, Bailey spent a year or so in South Dakota in one of those radical education experiments that briefly sprang up in the hinterlands. He worked like the devil in a rich ceramic studio he had practically to himself. Students wandered in once in a while. They made police helicopters out of clay, talked with Clayton, and got academic credit when they felt they deserved it.

In the middle of the South Dakota period Clayton spent a semester as guest artist at the University of California in Davis, heartland of Funk. The Davis Art faculty includes Bill Allen, noted for his famous series of famous mountains painted on lima beans, the classical fantastic painter Roy De Forest, Robert Arneson of ceramic urinal and decal bouquet fame, and, incongruously but influentially, the world's most respected painter of pop pies, Wayne Thiebaud.

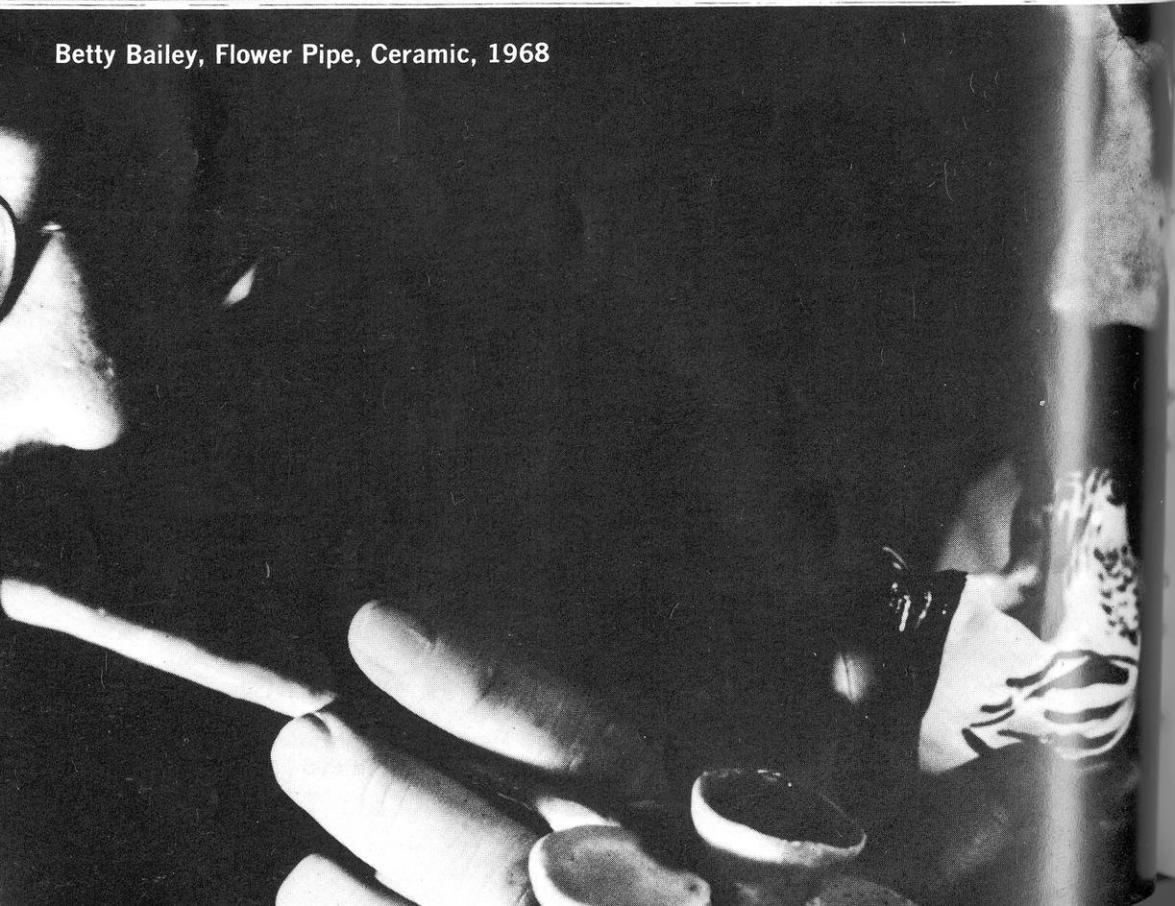
At Davis Clayton felt at home, and so he decided to move West and enjoy it to the full.

He auctioned his old nose-pots made uggy by colorless coats of latex, his four foot inflatable rubber grubs and full-sized Hell's Angel and Breasty Gorilla mask-busts, his 900 cc Harley sportster and assorted midwestern antiques, including surplus sniper-scopes, and he packed what was left in a Ford van with his wife Betty and the two kids, Robin and Kurt. They took off for sunny California, land of Funk.

Clayton Bailey, Grassy nose-pot, Ceramic, 1968



Betty Bailey, Flower Pipe, Ceramic, 1968



According to legend there was a large baggie of Vermillion Velvet curing in the engine compartment.

While Clayton was picking the Velvet, which grows wild throughout America's great heartland, a covey of Genuine Hell's Angels roared by on ass-dragging hogs painted metallic maroon, pursued by three squads of state troopers flashing red and yellow. Clayton flattened himself into a furrow planted with Funk Feed Corn. He lay there thanking his stars Vermillion Velvet is so impotent it would hardly qualify as marijuana should the law decide to finger an artist in transit.

Anyway, Clayton Bailey, late of Wisconsin's pastureland, set up his studio thirty miles from San Francisco, fifty from Davis, in a concrete building with huge rooms and twenty foot ceilings in the half-live town of Crockett. The Bailey Castle used to be a milk bar. It still has booths with laminated curved benches, still has revolvable stainless steel stools along a long counter.

It also has room for Bailey to construct four inflatable rubber phalluses, the largest eight feet high. They were made by painting latex on hulking papier-mâché and fibreglass molds.

It has room to hide away the electrical sculptures Bailey engineered in South Dakota, which shock the man who touches them depending on how much light touches the photo-electric cell.

Room for gross green clay stools, goggling yellow gargoyles, leopard mugs with a purple sheen, nose pitchers designed to spread pools of tea on an otherwise neatly dull table. Creeping rubber rocks. Large latex eyes and grubs.

Room to make ceramic fountains four feet high, which tend to urinate rather than play.

Room for hundreds of pipes shaped like sunny-side up eggs, like ducks, like fallopian tubes.

Betty Bailey, also a ceramist, made a pipe like those in souvenir shops. A girl in a green bikini has a bowl on top and a smoking hole in each breast. Smokers can share the way kids back in the midwest share sodas sipping through two straws.

The Baileys don't live in a sales gallery. Once in a while someone takes the milk bar sign seriously. If Clayton or Betty feel so disposed they'll serve him a restaurant meal. There's one enigmatic window filled with old Bailey pots. Just the way the lady from St. Louis described them, right there in plain view on a side street in the town of Crockett.

Is such stuff worth dwelling on in a serious evaluation of an artist and his work? Perhaps not, except for the benefit of people who might have difficulty transferring their appreciative powers to Funk or Kitsch or whatever you care to label the relaxed, fanciful, grotesque work now so natural around the Bay Area.

Smoke a bright orange salamander pipe. Suspend your learned perception of art history, of style and structure. Dismiss rhetoric for the afternoon. Then look at the wonderful conical nose pot with its superb iridescent ivory glaze and the long gold brain that hangs inward from the cone's peak.

Look at Bailey's inflatable latex neckties — baroque design in murky green, the wide red one with the yellow rising sun that blarts when you let go of the inflating tube.

Look at Bailey's beast masks. They have large jagged yellow teeth, slimy-looking green scales, red swastikas on their brute black chests, arch orange combs on their tops, maroon chin testicles.

Forget possible associations with goblins and Freudian texts. Look at the beasts and the grosser "lewdities" (to borrow a word from the St. Louis critic). Forget symbolism, comment, protest. Bit by bit the objects can become reasonably cheerful and humorous — with familiarity, quite comfortably beautiful.

Ten of us tramped San Francisco a few months ago wearing Bailey masks. We stopped at an art show, at a Negro nationalist center called the Black Man's Free Store, at Fisherman's Wharf and the top of Telegraph Hill where Coit Tower, modeled in the name of a rich old lady after an antique fire nozzle, rivals any recent sculpture.

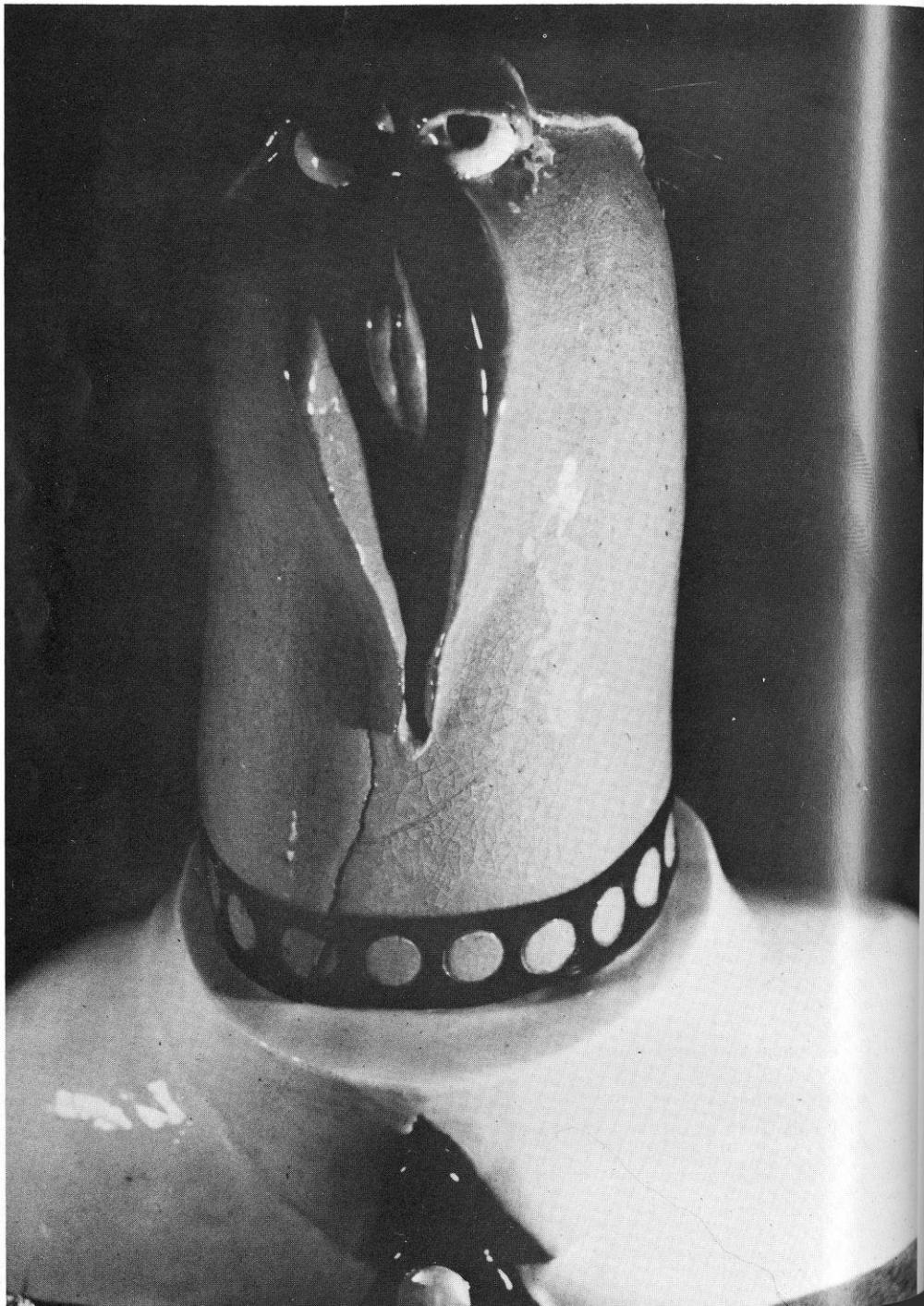
Most rubbernecks took the latex masks for granted, just as they do the copper police dogs on their aunt's mantel or the raccoon tail on the radio antenna of a pink Olds convertible. They saw them as objects that fit into their environment.

This is what Clayton and similar ceramic sculptors such as Gilhooly, Van Den Berge and Arneson seem to be after. Not

assertion. Not making an ideological stand. Certainly not trying to make some kind of powerful comment about the ugliness of the modern world. Rather, accepting the world as not so ugly. As a place that *is*. Intensifying an environment. Making it richer, more absorbing.

California welcomes Clayton Bailey.

Clayton Bailey, White-collar Nose-pot, Ceramic





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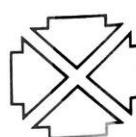
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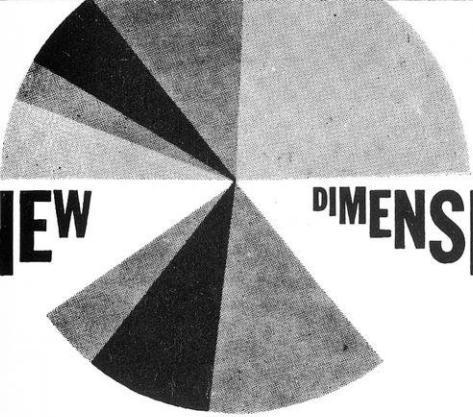
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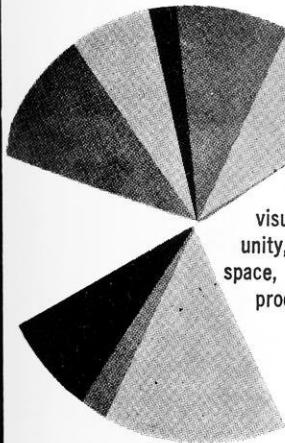




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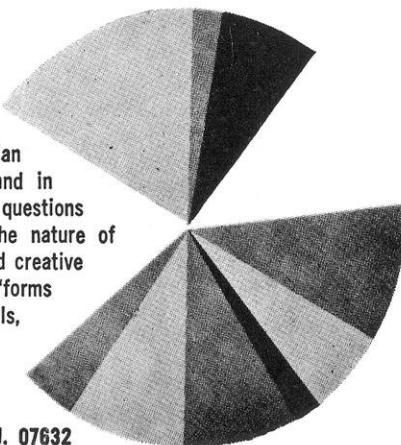
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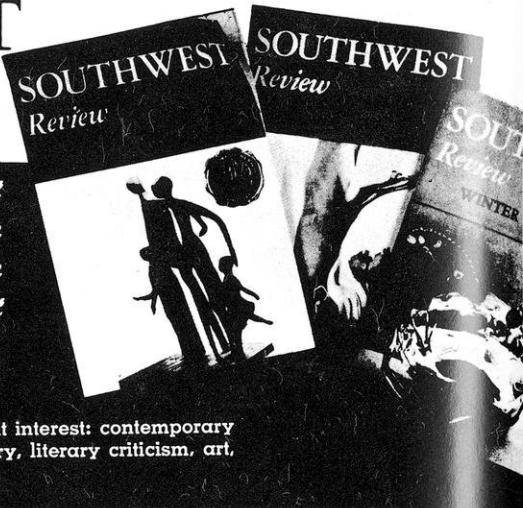
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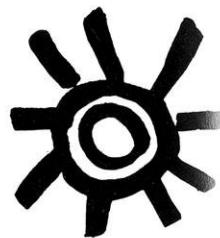
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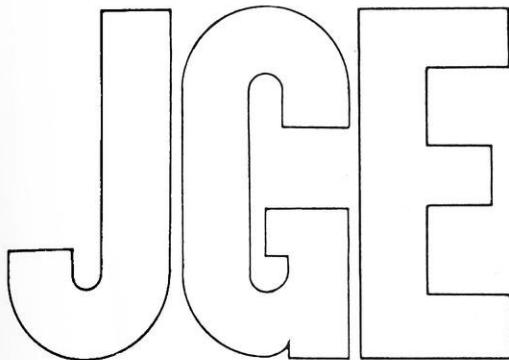
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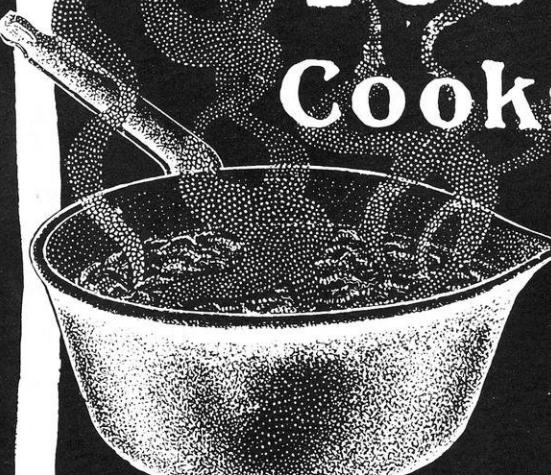
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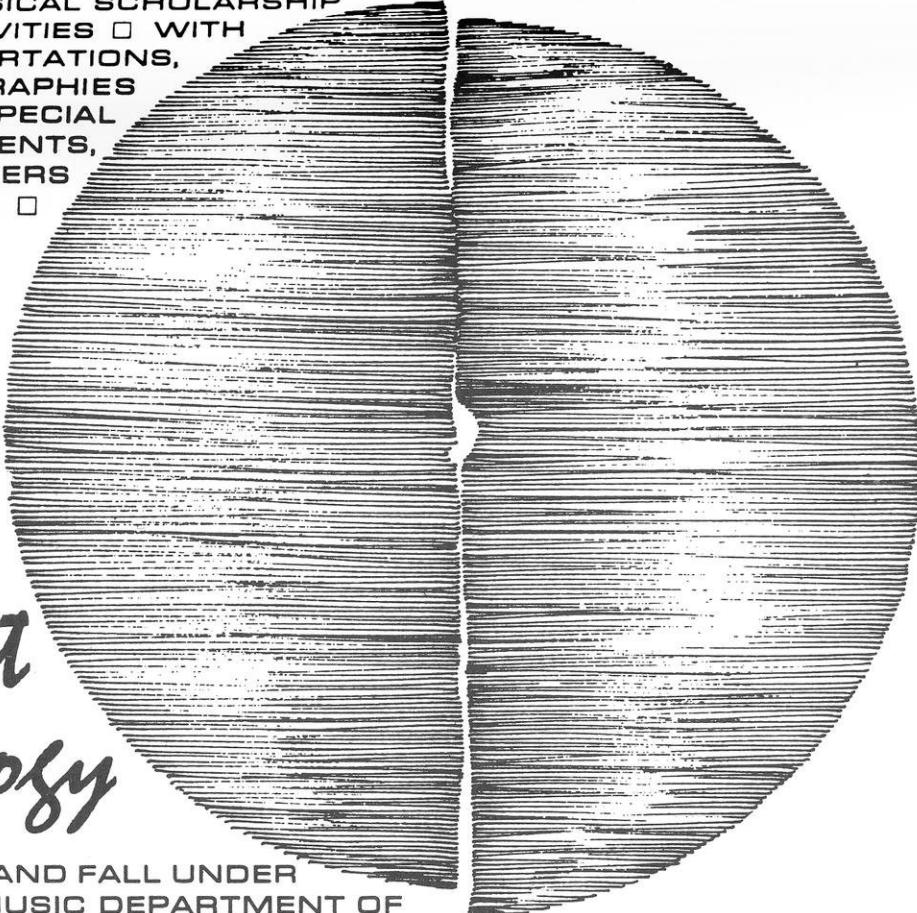
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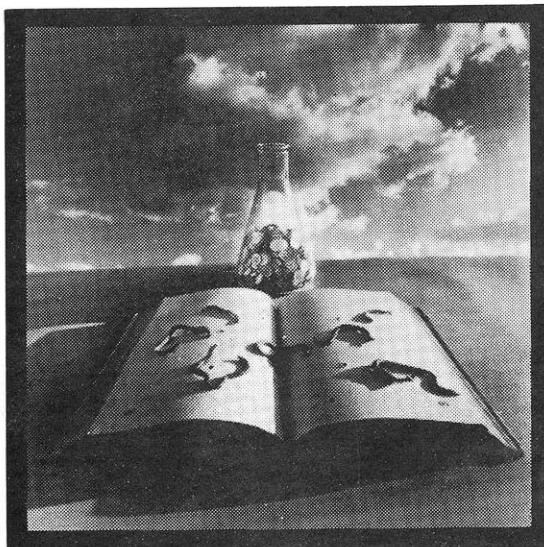
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