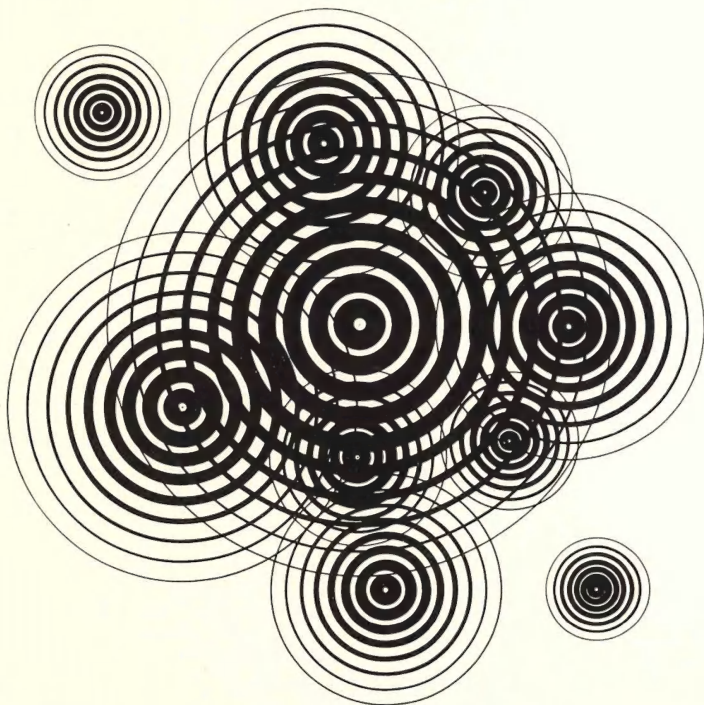


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programme

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Monday, December 6, 8:30 p.m.

1976

guest composers:

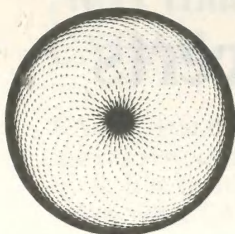
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DENIS SMALLEY (NEW ZEALAND)

Walter Hall

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program

COLLAGE '76(1976) - NORMA BEECROFT(Canada)
for tape & ensemble

Robert Aitken - flute/conductor
Douglas Stewart - flute
Lawrence Cherney - oboe
James MacDonald - horn
William Kuinka - mandolin
Peter Schenkman - cello
Erica Goodman - harp
Monica Gaylord - piano
Bob Becker - percussion
Robin Engelman - percussion
Russell Hartenberger - percussion

(electronics by the Canadian Electronic Ensemble)

* GRADUAL(1974) - DENIS SMALLEY(New Zealand)
for clarinet & electronics

James Campbell - soloist

(electronics by the Canadian Electronic Ensemble)

* FRAGMENTS OF ALICE(1976) - HARRY FREEDMAN(Canada)

Mary Morrison - soprano
Patricia Rideout - contralto
Gary Relyea - baritone
Douglas Stewart - flute
Lawrence Cherney - oboe
James MacDonald - horn
William Kuinka - guitar
Peter Schenkman - cello
Erica Goodman - harp
Monica Gaylord - organ
Eugene Plawutsky - piano
Bob Becker - percussion
Robin Engelman - percussion
Russell Hartenberger - percussion
Robert Aitken - conductor

INTERMISSION

****PSAPPHA(1975)** - IANNIS XENAKIS(Greece-France)
for solo percussion

Russell Hartenberger - soloist

*** N'SHIMA(1976)** - IANNIS XENAKIS(Greece-France)

Mary Morrison - soprano
Patricia Rideout - contralto
Peter Schenkman - cello
James MacDonald - horn
Brad Warnaar - horn
John Dowden - trombone
Ian McDougall - trombone
Robert Aitken - conductor

* North American premiere ** Canadian premiere

PROGRAM NOTES

NORMA BEECROFT

Born in Oshawa, Ontario in 1934, Norma Beecroft has had a wide and varied musical career as a composer, broadcaster and producer. She first studied composition in Toronto with John Weinzweig, then worked with Aaron Copland and Lukas Foss in Tanglewood. 1959 marked the beginning of a three-year period of studies in Europe, with Goffredo Petrassi in Rome, and Bruno Maderna in Germany and England. Acknowledged in her country as a pioneer in the use of electronic music in her compositions, many of her works include magnetic tape.

Miss Beecroft has been host and commentator for many years on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's weekly series "Music of Today", and is co-founder (with Robert Aitken) and President of New Music Concerts.

COLLAGE '76

As the title implies, and at the whim of the composer, "Collage '76" is basically the superimposition of two of Miss Beecroft's works: "Piece for Bob" (for flute and tape), and "11+7 for 5+" (for brass quintet and tape). Both compositions were written in 1975 and commissioned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. To this combination is added fragments, or segments, from other of the composer's instrumental works of the past decade.

Although the players are divided into three groups, the flute plays a predominant and unifying role. The tape material contains mainly altered instrumental sounds and computer generated sequences, the latter using the "POD 6" program of Barry Truax (in operation at the Institute of Sonology at Utrecht, and at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia), and "OUTPERFORM", a sound synthesis program written by David Jaeger, operating at the University of Toronto Computer Center.

"Collage '76" was commissioned by New Music Concerts with the assistance of the Ontario Arts Council.

DENIS SMALLEY

Born in Nelson, New Zealand in 1946, Denis Smalley received his Bachelor of Music degree in organ performance from the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand in 1967 and then went on to do postgraduate studies in composition at the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. From 1968 to 1971 he was Head of Music at Wellington College, New Zealand.

During 1971-72, after being awarded a French Government grant, he studied in Paris with Olivier Messiaen and in the composition course of the Groupe de Recherches Musicales. In 1972 he received the Diplôme de Musique Electroacoustique et de Recherche Musicale from the Paris Conservatoire.

With the financial assistance of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts' Council of New Zealand, he worked on his Doctoral degree at the University of York, England where he was also a tutor in organ and piano. He is presently on the music faculty of the University of East Anglia in the School of Fine Arts and Music in Norwich, England.

GRADUAL

"Gradual", for tape and solo instrumentalist playing three amplified instruments (bass clarinet, clarinet in B flat and trombaphone - a trombone with saxophone or clarinet mouthpiece), was composed in 1974 and was the prizewinning work in the International Competition for Electronic Music Compositions organized by Fylkingen, Stockholm, in 1975.

The composer writes the following note: "The title has a double reference - to the Mass and to various types of musical progressions in the piece. The three-versed structure means that the listener will find sound materials in common among the verses as they progress and develop. "Gradual" explores a limited world of short sounds: impulsions, attacks with and without resonance, and iterations. The clarinetist's language for example uses a scale of short sounds: unvoiced vocal sounds, the reed used as a percussion instrument, the sounds of the instrument's key mechanism, air pushed into the body of the instrument by the fingers, impulsions or air which hardly articulate, and complex chord sounds, which move in progression toward the normal pitched clarinet sounds with which we are familiar.

The soloist performs strictly notated material, passages of improvisation (set within fairly strict boundaries of rhythmic groupings, tempi ranges and pitch regions) and graphically notated sounds (the trombaphone), all carefully integrated with the prepared tape. Source material for the tape came from four instrumental sounds highly transformed by both traditional tape techniques and electronic means."

HARRY FREEDMAN

Born in Lodz, Poland in 1922, Harry Freedman came to Canada with his family in 1925 where his musical education began at the age of eighteen. In 1974, after twenty-four years as English horn player with the Toronto Symphony, he left the orchestra in order to devote his full time to composition and other creative activities.

He has written a great deal of background music for radio, T.V. and films and composed the music for several Shakespearean dramas at Stratford Festival, Ontario. In 1970, he was recipient of a Canadian Film Award "Etrog" for the cantata "The Flame Within" composed for the Paul Almond-Genevieve Bujold film "Act of the Heart". He has written five ballets for choreographer Brian Macdonald, and many of his works have been performed by major orchestras and ensembles in Canada and Europe.

FRAGMENTS OF ALICE

Commissioned by New Music Concerts with the assistance of the Ontario Arts Council, "Fragments of Alice" was first performed in Stockholm, Sweden in May of 1976 by the New Music Concerts' touring ensemble.

The composer offers the following note:

"Fragments of Alice" was written especially for the New Music Concerts' touring ensemble. When approached to write a work for the group, I had just completed fifty minutes of music for a puppet show production of "Alice in Wonderland". Freed from the constraints of the previous piece, but still enamoured with the theme of 'Alice', the result was "Fragments of Alice", a piece which evokes all of the joys which one experiences on reading Lewis Carroll's book "Through the Looking Glass".

The text for the work is made up of short vignettes which have been extracted from the above mentioned book. They serve as short 'one liners' which will be received, it is hoped, with the same joy with which they are offered."

IANNIS XENAKIS

Iannis Xenakis was born in Braila, Roumania, of Greek parents. Already as a child he hoped eventually to devote himself to the study of Science and Music. His secondary and higher educational studies were pursued in Greece where he graduated with an Engineering diploma. In 1947 he took up residence in Paris where he soon began to work with the architect Le Corbusier with whom he collaborated on a number of projects both in France and in other countries. While working as an architect he continued to study music - composition with Arthur Honegger and Darius Milhaud, and aesthetics and analysis with Olivier Messiaen at the Paris Conservatoire. He also attended the courses of Herman Scherchen at the Gravesano Studio.

It was in 1953 that his public career as a composer began. His very first works, conducted either by Hans Rosbaud or by Herman Scherchen, caused such a sensation, notably at the Donaueschingen Festival, that Xenakis immediately acquired an international reputation in the world of music. In 1960, he left Le Corbusier, but not before having been solely responsible for the design of the Phillips Pavillion at the Brussels World Fair of 1958.

From this period onwards, the story of Xenakis' life has been the story of his musical production which has continued to grow unceasingly with the years and in response to commissions for his works.

The following is taken from Editions Salabert's brochure on Xenakis, written by Claude Rostand: "Xenakis' work spoke with a voice which was so irresistibly of our time that in spite of some early outcry his art was rapidly understood by vast numbers of music lovers. It was also immediately imitated. As soon as his first compositions appeared they were literally plundered, plagiarised in countries as diverse as Poland, Japan and the United States. But this kind of pioneering creativity, this highly personal art could not be really imitated. It has scarcely been possible to do more than borrow some of its external techniques, and no one has managed either to recapture the genesis of this humanist speculation (which transcends the simple creative act of musical

composition), or even to engage in this meditation on the plain to which Xenakis has elevated the essential problem of the relationship between Science and Art, between Mathematics and Intuition. Xenakis has defined (determined) a new human function for music and revealed to us the perspectives of a new and singularly heightened sensibility."

PSAPPHA

Written for solo percussion, "Psappa" was commissioned by the English Bach Festival with funds made available by the Gulbenkian Foundation. It was first performed at the Round House in London, England in May of 1976 by Sylvio Gualda to whom it is dedicated.

The score calls for six groups of sounding instruments, three of skin and wood, and three of metal. None is specifically pitched although each group of three is roughly defined by its range: high, medium and low (or in the case of the metal instruments, very high, average and neutral). The pulse is steady and constant, although not necessarily always perceived; the effect is one of great simplicity, concentration and energy - a fireball in black and white, an abstract etching of force-lines and contrasts, a machine-consciousness at once alive and inert.

Mr. Xenakis writes the following: "This work is concerned with pure rhythm. That is to say that sound is totally subordinated to rhythm and is only there to bring a greater clarity to the poly-rhythms. No part is improvised. "Psappa" (archaic version of the name Sappho) is a tribute to the poetess of antiquity (7th century) who introduced the abstract principle of (metabolic) variations of the rhythmic cells of the feet and metres known as Sapphic."

N' SHIMA

Commissioned by the Testimonium of Jerusalem, and dedicated to Recha Freier, the work was first performed in Jerusalem in February of 1976 under conductor Juan Pablo Izquierdo.

The following was written by Dominic Gill on March 2, 1976 in the Financial Times: "The Hebrew title means "souffle" (nearly, but not quite, "breath" or "exhalation"). The text from which the music springs, but which it does not explicitly set, is a parable by Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlaw called "Emperor's Daughter and King's Son." Syllables only of the Hebrew words are used - as purely musical material, absorbed entirely into an abstract texture, at no point directly narrative or programmatic. More precise meanings are left for the listener to decide: Rabbi Nachman's story tells of the children of two families, destined by history to be united, but divided by the cruelty and meanness of the world.

It is an odd, exciting and very difficult score. There is constant use of glissandi meshed in complex rhythms, of stochastic random sequences, and as ever in Xenakis' music, of extremes of contrast - brass against gut against flesh and breath. There is a hardness and a great sadness to the sound. Rather as the recent "Phlegra" was of the family of "Empreintes", so this "N'shima" is a cousin of "Cendrées" - only that the colour of "N'shima" is not ashen but vibrant with vivid shades, blood-red hues. Horn and trombone and voice alternate a tragic battle and tragic commentary; the cello, set apart like a desert voice, seemingly the only optimistic note, sings a lonely 'sul pont' song. Towards the end, urgent cries and morse-like messages - echoes here of "Empreintes" - are flung from player to player; but the last word is given to the cello, barely audible in half-voice, a muted benediction. The rest is silence."



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