

ALEA III
December 5, 1981

PROGRAM NOTES

Nicholas Thorne: FROM THE DYING EARTH

- I. Murmurs - murmuring breathlessly
Voices in the woods and air. The realization that
the end is coming.
- II. The Earth Speaks - Beyond sadness, beyond yearning, Very
slowly, Solemnly, with a sense of finality. Inevitability.
- III. The Wearer - with Joy. In Celebration. From the Heart.

Nicholas Thorne was born in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1953. He received his B.M. in composition at Berklee College of Music, and his M.M. in composition at the New England Conservatory. He is currently at the American Academy in Rome on a Prix de Rome fellowship and is composing a major work Symphony.

FROM THE DYING EARTH is a work in three large sections of which the Three Tales (performed this evening) are the first part. The Three Tales were composed while on a composition fellowship at Tanglewood in 1979, and it is for this work that he received the Koussevitzky Composition Prize.

"I conceived this work in response to the events of our time, in which it seems a reasonable possibility that we will blow ourselves up, and in which time it is a certainty that we are destroying our planet by misuse and abuse in many forms. This hurts me very deeply, and it is out of this hurt, out of the chaos of our time, that I have had a need to create this work. FROM THE DYING EARTH is a very personal, private vision; a fantasy in which, after the Earth is destroyed, as it seems it inevitably will, there will emerge a visionary new world, a world full of the deep beauty of our Earth, but without the crazy greed and power lust of our time."

-Nicholas Thorne

John Chowning: TURENAS

Born in 1934, John Chowning studied in Paris with Nadia Boulanger from 1959-1962. In 1962 he moved to Stanford University where he began his computer music work. He is currently professor of music and director of the computer music program at Stanford University, California.

Written in 1972, TURENAS was the first computer generated composition to make extensive use of two major developments in computer music pioneered and developed by Chowning, working at the Artificial Intelligence Center of Stanford University. The first . . . the synthesis of moving sound sources in a 360 degree sound-space which takes into account the effects of the Doppler shift. The second was a breakthrough in the synthesis of "natural" (as well as almost "supernatural") timbres in a simple but elegant way, using accurately controlled frequency modulation. This is the technical background, but the piece is not "about" that background.

The title TURENAS is an anagram of "Natures", evoking the way the sounds "tour" through the space, transparent and pure, produced by the most technologically sophisticated means yet tending to sound perfectly natural,

as if a dream could come true.

George Perle: CONCERTINO FOR PIANO, WINDS AND TIMPANI

Born in New Jersey in 1915, George Perle grew up in Wisconsin and Indiana, beginning his musical studies in Chicago and completing them at New York University. In the 1930's, in addition to writing his own music and analyzing that of others, Perle became director of the New Music Group of Chicago. He has taught at the Universities of Louisville and California (Davis), and currently teaches at CUNY's Queens College in New York. Perle is well known as a writer and musical analyst as well as composer, has published several works, and has done extensive research on Alban Berg.

Perle's 1974 CONCERTINO was commissioned by the Fromm Foundation and was premiered in Chicago. John Von Thein, of the Chicago Tribune, had this to say about the piece: "I have no hesitation in calling the 10-minute CONCERTINO a small Perle of great price. The wind scoring and general neoclassic flavor suggest a debt to Stravinsky's Piano Concerto and Capriccio for Piano, but throughout, the composer's language remains distinctly his own: clean and lively and invigorating, without an ounce of fat. Twelve-tone elements are involved, but they are shrewdly used to sustain a solidly tonal flavor."

Igor Stravinsky: 3 PIÈCES FACILES, 5 PIÈCES FACILES

Igor Stravinsky was born in Russia in 1917. He began his studies at St. Petersburg University where he read law and legal philosophy and studied composition with Rimsky-Korsakov. During 1909-29 he was associated with Serge Diaghilev and the Russian Ballet, and from 1928 he wrote for dance in association with George Ballanchine. During World War I he lived in Switzerland, during 1920-39 in France, and from 1939 in the U.S. He concertized extensively as pianist and conductor.

"I wrote the Polka first. It is a caricature of Diaghilev whom I had seen as a circus animal trainer cracking a long whip. The idea of the four hand duet was part of the caricature because Diaghilev used to play four hand piano music with his closest friend. I promised to write a little piece for Alfredo Casella too. This was the March, composed immediately on my return to Morges. A little later I added a Valse in homage to Erik Satie, a souvenir of a visit with him in Paris. It too, like the Polka and March, is a caricature. The remaining five pieces were composed as a music lesson for my son and daughter, Theodore and Mika. I taught them music, as well as piano playing, by the simple device of composing one very easy part for the beginner, and a more difficult part for myself. The children enjoyed a real sense of performance participation, and they suffered no pedagogy."

-Igor Stravinsky

David Del Tredici: VINTAGE ALICE

Born in 1937, David Del Tredici attended the University of California at Berkeley and Princeton University. He was active as a pianist on the West Coast, making five solo appearances with the San Francisco Symphony. In 1958 while attending the Aspen School of Music, he attended classes of Darius Milhaud, who encouraged him to compose. Del Tredici was a Fromm pianist at

Tanglewood, resident composer at the Marlboro Festival, and has taught in the Music Department at Harvard University until his recent move to New York.

"VINTAGE ALICE is the third of four pieces which together comprise the complete verse, and many of the scenes from Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll. The scene is A Mad Tea-Party and the characters, all sung/spoken by the Soprano, are Alice, the Mad Hatter, March Hare, and Dormouse. While not actually there, the Queen of Hearts is an important element in the story and I have tried to evoke her presence with characteristic music.

The action begins with the Hatter singing for Alice a song he had sung previously at a great concert for the Queen:

"Twinkle, twinkle little bat!
How I wonder what you're at!
Up above the world you fly,
Like a tea-tray in the sky."

This verse, of course parodies the opening of Jane Taylor's well-known poem, The Star ("Twinkle, twinkle, little star..."). To emphasize the parodistic aspect of the Hatter's Song, I use with it, twining in and out of the texture, that very famous tune always associated with the Taylor poem. In my setting, too, I have taken as an inspiration, the words of the Queen to the Hatter after his eccentric performance at the 'great concert'---"He's murdering the time! Off with his head!"

'Murdering the time,' in fact, becomes a creative image throughout the entire piece. As the different episodes that follow the Hatter's Song unfold, all are treated to, and affected by, this idea of distortion and scrambling."

-David Del Tredici

JANICE WEBER graduated from the Eastman School of Music summa cum laude. She has performed as a soloist with the New Jersey Symphony, Chautauqua Symphony, Bergen Philharmonic and Boston Pops Orchestra. In 1974 she won first prize in the National Guild of Piano Teachers REcording Competition, and she has twice received fellowships to the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, where she received the C.D. Jackson Award. Ms. Weber has performed with the New York Philharmonic, Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, and the American Composers Orchestra.

MARTIN AMLIN holds the degree Doctor of Musical Arts as well as the Performer's Certificate from the Eastman School of Music. His teachers have included Frank Glazer and Nadia Boulanger. He has received fellowships for four summers to the Berkshire Music Center and twice at the Macdowell Colony. An active performer in the Boston area, Mr. Amlin also teaches at the Phillips Exeter Academy and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

JUDITH KELLOCK has studied with Wilma Thompson, Jan De Gaetani, and Phyllis Curtin. She has performed with the St. Louis Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra. She was finalist in the 1980 Washington International Competition for Singers, and has recorded for Sine Qua Non records the music of Stephen Foster. Ms. Kellock presented the first complete performance of David Del Tredici's Final Alice.

THEODORE ANTONIOU was born in Athens, where he studied violin, voice and composition at the National Conservatory and Hellenic Conservatory. Conducting and further studies in composition were taken at the Hochschule for Musik, Munich, and at the International Music Courses, Darmstadt. His many prizes and awards include the Richard Strauss Prize by the city of Munich, First Prize from the city of Stuttgart for Violinkonzert, "Premio Ondas" from Radio-Television Barcelona, commissions from the Fromm and Koussevitsky Foundations, and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation. He has conducted many orchestras and ensembles, including the Orchestra of Paris, Berkshire Music Center Orchestra, National Opera of Greece, and American Composers Orchestra of New York. He is co-director of contemporary activities at the Berkshire Music Center, Tanglewood, where he also serves on the faculty. Since 1979, he has been professor of composition at the Boston University School of Music.