

ALEA III  
December 5, 1981

Probably Dec. 13, 1981

PROGRAM NOTES

Kevin Hanlon: VARIATIONS FOR SAXOPHONE AND TAPE DELAY

Kevin Hanlon was born in South Bend, Indiana in 1953. He has studied music with Barton McLean, Samuel Adler, Warren Benson, and Mario Davidovsky. He is currently finishing his doctorate at the University of Texas at Austin. During the past summer, he was a composition student at the Berkshire Music Center, where he was a recipient of the Koussevitsky Tanglewood Prize. Other awards that he has received include the Louis Lane Prize, the Amherst College Choral Competition, the Sonavera International Tape Music Competition, the Joseph Bearn's Prize, the EMI award to Student Composers, and an ASCAP fellowship.

"VARIATIONS for alto saxophone and tape delay is the first in a series of pieces involving live performers and tape delays. The tape delays are created by using a single tape which passes through two reel-to-reel stereo tape recorders, the first on 'record,' the second on 'play.' Feeding the live sound into the first tape deck will cause the signal to be played back on the second tape deck a short time later. As the first delay sounds, its signal may be rerouted back to the first tape deck and then to the second machine again, causing a second delay of the same material at twice the time distance from the initial sound. In this particular composition, the soloist is transformed into a trio which at times must be tightly coordinated rhythmically. The title VARIATIONS applies to this work not only for its use of conventional variation procedure, but also because the tape delay process itself has in its very essence the reiteration and variety that is a characteristic of variation form."

-Kevin Hanlon

Steve Reich: OCTET

Steve Reich was born in 1936 in New York. He studied piano briefly as a child and began studying Western rudimental drumming at the age of 14 with Roland Kohloff. He subsequently studied at Cornell University, Juilliard School of Music, and at Mills College in California, where he worked with Darius Milhaud and Luciano Berio. He has also studied African drumming and Balinese music. In 1966 he began his ensemble "Steve Reich and Musicians", with which he performs his own music.

"OCTET grows out of musical material for two pianos, four hands, that was suggested by the two piano writing in Music for a Large Ensemble (1978). This two piano writing is the most difficult I have written for individual performers, and basically transfers the interlocking rhythmic complexities I had previously discovered with multiples of marimbas and xylophones to two pianos. OCTET also reflects my ongoing interest in traditional Western acoustical instruments.

The piece is structured in five sections, of which the first and third resemble each other in the fast moving piano, cello and bass clarinet figures in the bass, while the second and fourth sections resemble each other in the longer held tones in the cello. The fifth and final section

combines these materials. However, perhaps more interesting is that the division between sections is as smooth as possible with some overlapping in the parts, so that it is sometimes hard to tell exactly when one section ends and the next begins."

-Steve Reich

Mario Davidovsky: SYNCHRONISMS NO. 6

Born March 4, 1934, Buenos Aires, and now living in New York City, Mario Davidovsky is presently Associate Director of the Electronic Music Center of Columbia and Princeton Universities and Associate Professor of Music at City College. He has received a number of prizes, fellowships and awards, including Guggenheim and Rockefeller fellowships, American Academy of Arts and Letters and Brandeis University Creative Art Awards.

"SYNCHRONISMS NO. 6 FOR PIANO AND ELECTRONIC SOUNDS was written for the pianist, Robert Miller, and was first performed at the Tanglewood Contemporary Music Festival in August 1970. This piece belongs to a series of compositions for electronically synthesized sounds in combination with conventional instruments. In this particular piece, the electronic sounds in many instances modulate the acoustical characteristics of the piano, by affecting its decay and attack characteristics. The electronic segment should perhaps not be viewed as an independent polyphonic line, but rather as if it were inlaid into the piano part."

-Mario Davidovsky

George Crumb: VOX BALAENAE

Born in 1929 in Charleston, West Virginia, George Crumb attended Mason College and University of Illinois. He entered University of Michigan in 1954, where he studied composition with Ross Lee Finney. During the summer of 1955 he studied with Boris Blacher at the Berkshire Music Center and continued with him at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik until 1956. After receiving a DMA from Michigan, he began teaching at the University of Colorado. In 1964-65 he was a Creative Associate at the Center of the Creative and Performing Arts in Buffalo, and in 1965 he moved to the University of Pennsylvania, where he currently teaches. He has received many commissions and prizes, including the 1968 Pulitzer Prize for Echoes of Time and the River, and the 1971 International Rostrum of Composers Award and the Koussevitsky International Recording Award for Ancient Voices of Children.

"VOX BALAENAE (Voice of the Whales) was composed in 1971 for the New York Camerata. The work was inspired by the singing of the humpback whale, a tape of which I had heard two or three years previously. Each of the three performers is required to wear a black half-mask. The masks, by effacing the sense of human projection, are intended to represent, symbolically, the powerful impersonal forces of nature (i.e. nature dehumanized). I have also suggested that the work be performed under a deep blue stage lighting. The form of VOX BALAENAE is a simple three-part design, consisting of a prologue, a set of variations named after geological eras, and an epilogue."

-George Crumb

ERRATA: Violin will be played by Sarah Reed rather than Martha Edwards in this performance.

There is no oboe in the orchestration for this evening's concert.

Technician for this evening's concert is John Newton.

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GARY WRIGHT is currently a Master student at Boston University School of Music. He has also studied at Harvard College, Cambridge, and at University of Maryland. His primary instrument is the clarinet, and he has studied with Harold Wright, Robert Genovese, Pasquale Cardillo, and Peter Hadcock. He has also studied saxophone with Don Sinta. He has played at the Berkshire Music Center, Blossom Festival School, Yale Summer School at Norfolk, Aspen Music Festival, and currently plays with the Vermont Symphony.

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.

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.