

earplay

November 12, 2001 at 8:00PM
The Forum, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

In Memorium

Iannis Xenakis, à R. (hommage a Maurice Ravel) (1987)
Marja Mutru, piano

Henry Onderdonk, A Moment of Discussion
Terrie Baune, violin
Marja Mutru, piano

Yinam Leef, Yizkor (In Memoriam) (1995)
Tod Brody, flute

Donald Bruce Aird, A Moment of Farewell
Tod Brody, flute
Peter Josheff, clarinet
Tim Dent, marimba

INTERMISSION

Arnold Schoenberg, Pierrot Lunaire (1912)

Elise Ross, soprano
Tod Brody, flute and piccolo
Peter Josheff, clarinet and bass clarinet
Marja Mutru, piano
Terrie Baune, violin and viola
Dana Putnam Fonteneau, cello

Conducted by Mary Chun

Iannes Xenakis, à R. (hommage a Maurice Ravel)

Composed in 1987, *à R. (hommage a Maurice Ravel)* was commissioned by Radio France to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Ravel's death. *à R.* is both virtuosic and concise. The piece is characterized by rapid scalar passages interrupted by resonant, sustaining chords; impressive in virtuosity and power, arid in its intransigence, its frenzied gestures challenge both the performer and the listener.

Iannis Xenakis was born in 1922 into a Greek family residing in Braila, Romania. He studied civil engineering at the Athens Polytechnic, but the German invasion followed by the British occupation drew him into the Resistance, activities from which he would end up near fatally wounded, losing one eye, then later condemned to death. Forced to escape his country, Xenakis ended up in Paris, wanting to study music, but earning a living working as an engineering assistant for Le Corbusier.

His creative and intellectual intensity attracted the attention of both the renowned architect, who delegated architectural projects to him in spite of his lack of professional training, and the composer and pedagogue Olivier Messiaen, who saw in the music he was struggling to produce in isolation an originality deserving of encouragement.

Critical of other developments in contemporary music at the time, dominated by the serialists (Darmstadt school) such as Pierre Boulez, Luigi Nono, and Karlheinz Stockhausen, Xenakis followed his own path, aided by his background in mathematics, engineering and design, and by his interest in complex sonic phenomena (rainstorms, street demonstrations, etc.). He incorporated probability theory into his compositional approach, as a means of generating and controlling large-scale events composed of massive numbers of individual elements. He also adopted the sonic entity (texture) as the primary material for the construction of musical form (rather than themes, or pitch structures).

Iannis Xenakis was awarded the Kyoto Prize (Japan) in 1997, the UNESCO International Music Prize in 1998, and the Polar Prize (Sweden) in 1999. In December 2000, the world premiere of a couple of his very early works, from the *Anasteria* triptych based on an ancient Greek rite, took place in Germany, almost 50 years after they were composed (1952-53). He died on February 4, 2001, at age 78.

Henry Onderdonk, A Moment of Discussion

Henry Onderdonk taught composition and theory at the University of Michigan before coming to San Francisco in 1960 to work at SF State's Music Department. He spent 34 years at San Francisco State University where his inspirational mentoring of young composers and his intense devotion to their development as individuals became his hallmark that caused him to be beloved by colleagues and students alike. Most of his compositions are scored either for solo piano or chamber ensemble. His style is classified as both complex and lyrical. Dr. Onderdonk died this past summer while backpacking with close friends in the Sierras. He was 73.

Yinam Leef, Yizkor (In Memoriam)

Yizkor for flute alone was written in December, 1995, following the murder of Yizhak Rabin, and is dedicated to his memory. The piece began as if writing itself, after the disastrous murder. The paralyzing shock, the feeling of helplessness and the initial wave of emotions started to change into a kind of sustained sadness that refused to disappear.

Slowly, the preoccupation with the melodic line, through the voice of the single instrument, so exposed and vulnerable, turned into a desire to attempt and articulate the essence of pain.

Born in 1953, Yinam Leef grew up in a cultural melting pot, where East meets West, old and new coexist, and local and universal aesthetics are apparent at a change of a glance. While firmly rooted in Western musical tradition, Leef has combined in his music certain elements which are particular to Middle-Eastern sound-environment: melodic fragments, rhythmic or temporal aspects of music, or the relation to time and form. Thus in his works complex harmonies may live side by side next to long pedal tones, and irregular, jazzy rhythms next to timeless melismas.

Leef studied composition with Mark Kopytman at the Jerusalem Rubin Academy, Richard Wernick, George Crumb and George Rochberg at the University of Pennsylvania, where he received his doctorate, and with Luciano Berio at Tanglewood. He was a Composition Fellow at the Composers Conference in Johnson, Vermont (1980) and the Yale Composers Seminar at Norfolk (1981), and was the recipient of the America Israel Cultural Foundation Scholarships, CBS Foundation Fellowship, the Margaret Lee Crofts Fellowship at Tanglewood (1982), and a Residence Fellowship at the MacDowell Colony (1984). His song cycle *The Invisible Carmel*, set to texts by Zelda, won the Halstead Prize, and he is twice the recipient of the Hilda K. Nietzsche Prize in Music for his *Symphony No. 1* and *Cannanite Fantasy No. 1* for piano. His choral work *Sounds, Shadows...* received the Israel Composers League Prize, and his haunting vocal work *A Place of Fire* received a Citation of Honor from the City of Haifa. His *Violin Concerto* won the 1992 ACUM Prize for Publication Encouragement and in 1993 he received the Prime-Minister Prize for Israeli Composers.

Donald Bruce Aird, *A Moment of Farewell*

A Moment of Farewell is dedicated to Tom Nee, who was conductor of the New Hampshire Festival of Music and a great champion of new music. Beginning his career as principal assistant in Minneapolis in the 1940s, Nee taught at McAllister College and later UC San Diego, and continued to conduct the New Hampshire Festival for 26 seasons. *A Moment of Farewell* was written for his final performance with the Festival, and is built on a *soggetto cavato*, a musical theme derived from the letters of Thomas Nee's name. Originally scored for trumpet, oboe, and marimba, tonight's version represents a slightly different coloration: for flute, clarinet, and marimba. It was intended to capture the poignancy of Nee's farewell to his friends.

Donald Aird received his musical training at San Francisco State University and was the former director of the Berkeley Chamber Singers. His compositions have been performed by the Royal College of Music, the London Bach Society, the Hilliard Ensemble, Earplay, and the San Jose Symphony, among others. A long-time friend and supporter of Earplay, Mr. Aird died Aug. 7 of a heart attack at Dulles Airport near Washington, D. C. He was 77.

Arnold Schoenberg *Pierrot Lunaire*

Schoenberg's early music was clearly marked by the style of the late nineteenth century, and influences of Brahms, Mahler, and others can be seen in pieces such as his *Verklärte Nacht*. But as his compositional style developed, it became more concise and contrapuntally intricate. At the same time, Schoenberg's chromaticism intensified to the point that any strong tonal focus disappeared. Such works as *Pierrot Lunaire* are in a fully atonal style. The music of this period is also marked by a style that is referred to as expressionist, and Schoenberg had contact with, and a great deal of admiration for, the expressionist painters and writers (Schoenberg himself painted in an Expressionist style). These ideals can be seen in the dark and dreamlike atmosphere conveyed in *Pierrot Lunaire*, based on the expressionist poetry of Albert Giraud. The kinds of internal conflicts we associate with Freud and his school of psychoanalysis are played out in exquisite musical detail.

Arnold Schoenberg wrote *Pierrot Lunaire* in 1912 at the request of actress Albertine Zehme, whose acquaintance the composer had made soon after he moved from Vienna to Berlin in 1911. *Pierrot Lunaire* ("Pierrot in the Moonlight", or "Moonstruck Pierrot") consists of three groups of seven poems each, each poem being of two four-line verses followed by a five-line verse, and each begins and ends with the same line. Schoenberg composed *Pierrot* very quickly, all but two of the pieces were composed between March 12 and May 30, and fourteen of them were each written within a day.

Schoenberg here plays puppeteer, presenting through Pierrot (a traditionally love-sick and petulant character from European theatre) an array of contradictions: the instrumentalists are soloists and orchestra at the same time. Pierrot is both hero and fool, acting in a drama that is also a concert piece, performing cabaret as high art and vice versa, and doing it with song that is also speech. The latter is one of the most famous things about *Pierrot Lunaire*: the use of *sprechgesang* (literally 'speech-song', a means of dramatic declamation first used in German opera at the end of the 19th century) allows Schoenberg to veer freely from song and speech.

Earplayers

Particularly interested in opera as well as new music, **Mary Chun** conducted the Canadian and European premieres of John Adams's earthquake romance, *I Was Looking at the Ceiling and Then I Saw the Sky* at the *Festival de Theatre des Ameriques* in Montreal, the *Festival d'Automne* in Paris, and the Thalia Theater in Hamburg, with the Finnish contemporary ensemble AVANTI. She was invited by the East Slovakian State Opera to conduct the European premiere of American composer Martin Kalmanoff's *Insect Comedy* and American Stage Director Peter Sellars and composer Tan Dun asked for her musical assistance with Dun's latest opera, *Peony Pavilion*. This season she conducted sold-out performances of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* in Honolulu with the Hawaii Opera Theater and has been asked by the composer to conduct the world premiere of Carla Lucero's opera, *Wuornos*, in San Francisco in 2001. She was the Music Director for the Texas Shakespeare Festival 2000 where she conducted the world premiere performances of Mort Garson's *Revoco*. She has been a member of the conducting staffs of notable opera companies in the United States and France including the San Francisco Opera, the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, The Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, the Chatelet Theatre in Paris and the Opera de Lyon, where she was also the Director of Musical Studies for Music Director Kent Nagano. Her recording credits include music direction for two CDs of orchestra works by American composer Peter Allen and a 30 second commercial for Disney.

Elise Ross is widely acclaimed throughout Europe for her interpretations of 20th century music. She began her career singing the music of Luciano Berio, premiering his music-theatre piece *Passaggio* in Rome, and touring his chamber music with the London Sinfonietta. She went on to appear as a soloist in major European festivals, such as Warsaw, the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Venice's Biennale, and the Holland Festival. Among her most notable interpretations are the role of Marie in *Wozzeck*, Melisande in *Pelleas et Melisande*, and *Pierrot Lunaire*. Ms. Ross has recorded Kurt Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins* for EMI records and for BBC Television, as well as staged performances in the Royal Festival Hall in London.

Terrie Baune is the Concertmaster of the Women's Philharmonic, Associate Concertmaster of the Oakland-East Bay Symphony, and a member of the Empyrean Ensemble at UC Davis. She has also been a member of the National Symphony Orchestra, Santa Cruz County Symphony, Fresno Philharmonic, Auckland Philharmonic, New Zealand Chamber Orchestra, among several others. She has recorded for the Newport Classic label. She has served as a faculty member at Sonoma State University, California State Univ (Stanislaus), and UC Davis. She is a graduate of Oberlin Conservatory.

Tod Brody, flutist, has enjoyed a career of great variety. His early flute studies were with Marie Moulton (Chicago Lyric Opera) and Walfrid Kujala (Chicago Symphony). He later studied with Paul Renzi at San Francisco State University, and also with Merrill Jordan and Lloyd Gowen. He was a member of the Sacramento Symphony for many years, where he was a frequent soloist on both flute and piccolo. Mr. Brody currently teaches flute and chamber music at the University of California, Davis, where he also performs with the faculty wind quintet and with the Empyrean Ensemble, a contemporary chamber ensemble in residence at UCD. With the Empyrean, and also in recent years with EARPLAY and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Mr. Brody has participated in many world premieres, and has been recorded on the CRI, Centaur, Arabesque, and Magnon labels. When not performing contemporary music, he will often be found in the orchestras of the San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Ballet, and in other chamber and orchestral settings throughout northern California.

Tim Dent is a Bay Area freelance percussionist. Since earning his Masters degree from the San Francisco Conservatory in 1999 he has played with many of the orchestras and chamber ensembles in the area including the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Berkeley Symphony, Marin Symphony, The Sprocket Ensemble, Santa Rosa Symphony, California Symphony among others.

Peter Josheff (clarinet/bass clarinet) is a founding member of EARPLAY. He is also a member of the Empyrean Ensemble and has performed with many of the new music groups in the Bay Area, including the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players, the Left Coast Ensemble, and Composers, Inc. He has performed at the *Centro Nacional de las Artes* in Mexico City, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Pacific Rim Festival in Santa Cruz and the Sacramento Festival of New Music. In August 2000 he performed music of Hi Kyung Kim as part of Asian Music Week 2000 in Yokohama, Japan. In the past year he has played in the ODC Theater production of Erling Wold's opera *A Little Girl Dreams of Taking the Veil* and with the Lawrence Pech Dance Company.

Josheff has an active interest in popular and improvised music. He has performed and recorded with Club Foot Orchestra and Beth Custer's Clarinet Thing, and has collaborated with many artists, poets and dancers. His playing can be heard on recordings by EARPLAY, the Empyrean Ensemble, the Club Foot Orchestra, Beth Custer, Hi Kyung Kim, Richard Festinger, and others on the Elektra, CRI, Centaur, Arhoolie and Rastascan record labels. He has works dedicated to him by David Rakowski, Ross Bauer, Allen Shearer, Mark Wings, Michiko Kawagoe, and others. Also a composer, Josheff is currently writing a work commissioned for the Empyrean Ensemble to be performed in February 2001. His song cycle, *Remembering*, will be performed in November in the Bay Area by Schwungvoll. Josheff teaches clarinet privately and at San Francisco State University.

Marja Mutru received her Master's degree in piano performance from Sibelius Academy in her native Finland. During her studies and after graduating she worked as a staff accompanist at the Academy, and she also frequently worked in association with the leading Finnish symphony orchestras and the Finnish National Opera. Focusing on ensemble music and opera led her to participate in the European premiere of John Adams' opera *I Was Looking At The Ceiling And Then I Saw The Sky* which toured festivals in Scotland, Finland, Germany and France. She later recorded the piece with the ensemble Avanti! on Nonesuch Records. After moving to the San Francisco Bay Area she has been working with local ensembles including Kronos Quartet, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players and California Symphony performing and recording mostly contemporary repertoire. She regularly plays with Paul Drescher Ensemble premiering new pieces by composers such as Terry Riley, Anthony Davis, John Luther Adams, Paul Drescher, Lois Vierk, Martin Bresnick, Mark Grey, Randall Wolfe and Steve Mackey, whose opera Ravenshead she has toured extensively with in U.S. She recently performed and recorded two chamber operas by Erling Wold, *A Little Girl Dreams of Taking The Veil* and *Queer*, as well as his piece *Albrecht's Flügel* for solo piano. She also plays harmonium with Kronos Quartet on their album *Early Music*.

After studying at the Oberlin Conservatory, **Dana Putnam** ('cello) received her Bachelors and Masters Degrees from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Her main teachers include Bonnie Hampton, Ronald Leonard and Peter Rejto. As a member of the Round Top Festival String Quartet, Ms. Putnam performed concerts all over the United States and England, including a prize performance in the National Portrait Gallery, as well as having live performances broadcast on National Public Radio. Ms Putnam has soloed with the Galveston Symphony, the Pacific Palisades Symphony, the Crossroads Chamber Orchestra, the Round Festival Orchestra and the Sewanee Festival Orchestra. Featured appearances include live performances with Robert Mann, Joel Krosnick, Jorja Fleezanis, Ian Swensen, and Andrew Jennings. Ms. Putnam has appeared as a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, the La Jolla Summer Fest, and the Amadeus String Quartet's Summer Course. Dana is active in the Bay Area and has appeared on the Noontime Concerts Series, was a former member of the Sacramento Chamber Orchestra, and worked with the Lawrence Peck Dance Company. As a former member of the San Francisco Conservatory's New Music Ensemble, Dana was part of the west coast concert premiere and the premiere recording of Andrew Imbrie's *Spring Fever*. She also participated in the premiere recording of David Conte's *Gift of the Magi*. As an educator, Ms. Putnam has taught for the Oberlin Preparatory Program and currently is a member of the cello faculty for the Preparatory and Adult Extension Division of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Last Fall, Ms. Putnam was invited by the American School of San Salvador, El Salvador to perform and give master classes.