

Adventurous Program From Earplay

BY MARILYN TUCKER

Earplay, an energetic ensemble comprised of prominent Bay Area composers and performers and dedicated to professional performances of 20th century music, gave its third concert of the season Monday at First Unitarian Church.

Tamar Diesendruck's Clarinet Quartet was the opening music, followed by Walter Winslow's "Four Kauai Studies" for solo piano, Sheila Silver's song cycle "Chariessa" and the late Seymour Shifrin's final work, "The Nick of Time."

Diesendruck's Quartet, in its United States premiere, was an adventurous treatment of melodic music in thoroughly modern dress. The work contains long and ebullient, sometimes thoughtful, stretches of melody for solo and ensemble instruments. These melodies are banded about from instrument to instrument in fetching hopscotch manner. The long solo for

piano near the end of the work, performed as bravura cadenza, was especially fine.

As in all the pieces that followed, the quartet's performers were first class: clarinetist Peter Josheff, violinist George Thomson, cellist Sal Di Giunta and pianist Eric Moe.

Having returned from 10 exhilarating and sun-filled days in the Hawaiian Islands the day before this concert, I was perhaps the wrong person to make any analytical judgment of Winslow's "Four Kauai Studies," a musical commemoration of a trip to Kauai, with its "numerous tinkling streams," "lush tropical valleys," "sheer fluted cliffs," "magnificent beach," etc.

Program notes aside, Winslow's Kauai Studies struck me as little more than playful noodling, despite the fastidious playing of Jerry Kuderma, who made a valiant attempt to bring challenge into its constant flow, ephemeral drift and spaced

out sound effects.

The uncompromising angular style of Silver's vocal writing never will put the "Chariessa" song cycle on anyone's hit parade, although there were many interesting elements at work. The performance of the songs, based on fragments of love poetry by Sappho, was outstanding in the cool professionalism of soprano Anna Carol Dudley and pianist Karen Rosenak.

Michael Senturia conducted a good ensemble of seven performers in Shifrin's "The Nick of Time," composed the year before the former Berkeley professor's untimely death in 1979.

Written for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, contrabass, percussion and piano, the work had the formal clarity, luminous textures, dramatic structure and beauty of sound that distinguish Shifrin's compositions in general. What was particularly striking was how "The Nick of Time" goes to the heart, beautiful music, beautifully played.