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Earplay Concert Puts Convention In Modern Mix

By Marilyn Tucker
Chronicle Staff Critic

In their last program of the current season, members of the Earplay composers' cooperative took note of the presence of computers and electronics in music in lively fashion.

Monday's concert at the First Unitarian Church, to be repeated tonight at Stanford, began with four short works, followed in the second half by Berkeley composer Edwin Dugger's *A Chamber Symphony*, an Earplay commission.

The Dugger work, scored for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, string bass, piano and pre-recorded electronic tape, all neatly conducted by Jonathan Khuner, is an audacious work that tickled the fancy throughout its 25-minute duration. Dugger took the four classical movements of *Lento*, *Scherzo*, *Presto* and an *Andante-Lento*, weaving them together in a seamless interdependent whole. Admirable in concept, the music moved inexorably toward what seemed its inevitable conclusion, pulling a listener along with the current.

The conventional instruments have fairly conventional — though unabashedly contemporary — stuff to play. The fully participatory tape gave the music its kick, functioning like the party guest who simply will not shut up, always getting the last word. The *Scherzo* was thus quite brash, and the presence of the jocular tape raised an amusing din to the *Presto*.

The first half consisted of music of Arthur Kreiger, Drake Mabry, Sheila Silver and Curt Veeneman — music that was all new to me. Kreiger's "In Short Crystal Moments," for electronic tape, began with the chiming of carillon sound and continued with a varied palette of colors and timbres.

The three movements for solo clarinet that composer Drake Mabry calls "11.10.83," doubtlessly because of the date of its composition, were performed by Peter Josheff, to remarkable effect. The point of each movement, each with a differing intensity, was that more than one note sounded at the same time. The music had an eerie beauty, and Josheff's playing was admirable for its obvious clarity and subtlety.

Soprano Anna Carol Dudley sang Sheila Silver's "Chariessa," a cycle of six songs on fragments of poetry by Sappho, luxuriating in their dramatic and sensual essence. Alas, the room was kept at pitch-black, making it impossible to follow the texts that were provided. As the pianist, Karen Rosenak made an emphatic contribution.

The first half was completed with two electronic pieces of Berkeley composer Curt Veeneman's, the first entitled "River (Ordeal by Water)," the second "Mr. Toad's Shiny New Motorcar."