

Disclaimer

Composers' Cafeteria audience members have no common ideological basis for their musical tastes, beyond the proposition that each listener be granted complete acoustic freedom, and that no attempt be made to determine a group ideology. However, even this proposition has been subject to debate, and the composers have therefore requested that it be made clear that "the opinions expressed by members of the audience do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Composers' Cafeteria, or any of its constituent composers."

Tonight's Cafeteria

Has anybody (besides the editorial We) noticed how many *vocal* pieces there are on tonight's program? *And*, furthermore, We note that at least three grapple with the subject of religion— *Stuffed Carrot* qualifying, perhaps, as a fourth... is this a fortuitous collision? Dr. S— is heard in the background muttering. We strain to catch his words. They are: "I have a weird feeling about this concert."

The hall in which you, the audience, and We, the editorial (and otherwise) musicians are gathered was once a Masons' Hall.

Is this coincidence? Is anything? *Is Anything?* Perhaps not.

You, and We, must bear the synchronistic repercussions, whatever they may turn out to have been (or be).

In conspiracies of fate, no preparations are ever quite adequate. So enjoy yourselves: no doubt We, as well as He, She, or They, will.

— *Mantra Ben-Ya'akov*
(an anonymous soothsayer
of Hebrew extraction)

Tonight's Composers

Improvisational mixed media music has been performed by various ensembles known as **The Fabulous Davitons** since 1982. Original members Phil Bewley and Bob Campbell named the group after a now defunct dry cleaners.

Ramón J. González writes of *Ciclo*:

I have visions of tomorrow: sometimes they're detailed and grand, at other times they're unspecific and simple. I hate it when things don't happen as planned.

When I wrote this piece last spring, I had no idea that my life would change as abruptly and dramatically as it has over the course of the past eight months. My lack of control over people and circumstances has left me dazed and stunned.

Dreams and visions can become problematic but aren't necessarily so. As with other things, I think that a successful dreamer must be able to understand the owner's manual and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

DESEO

O sweet desire
reaching out and grasping
for the ultimate union
with your God.

You see not the emptiness
of your dreams for perfection
and your flaws blind you
into death!

DESIRE

DESENGAÑO

Lo que tanto deseaba,
yo pensaba,
había por fin
encontrado a tu lado.

¡Pero tú, Señor maldito!
no oíste el grito...

Es que no he llegado
al barrio transformado
con mis llagas condenadas.

DESTINO

Oye y has.

DISILLUSIONMENT

What I had so desired,
I thought,
I had at last
found at your side.

But you, accursed Lord!
did not hear the outcry...

It is because I've not yet arrived
at the transformed barrio
with my wretchedness.

DESTINY

Listen and do.

Tom Statler and Randy Porter are playing by the seat of their pants tonight. We won't tolerate any literal interpretations of the program notes, but that still doesn't mean there's no danger involved: Tom and Randy can't agree on hardly anything about this piece, including the title. Tom says:

"Imagine that you're peeling a carrot, a normally refined and self-respecting vegetable, and inside you find, not the usual yellow-orange plant material, but soft and pliable foam rubber. Further imagine that, on turning it over, you discover that the carrot has been grinning at you the whole time. Would you eat it, or apologize to it? (More advanced audience members may choose to imagine that they *are* the carrot.)"

On the other hand, Randy has this to say:

"*Random Fractures* is exemplary of how two somewhat opposing forces can reach agreement in this universe. Compromise...? $1 + 1$ equals about $5\frac{1}{2}$ or whatever we want. Further nothing is dictated or even very predictable due to a lack of absolute idealogical polarization. Stuffed carrot? Whatever you say, Thom."

Johanna Johnson nervously explains her piece thus:

In 1984 I "gave" my mom a (then) unwritten composition called *Na Mu Myo Ho Renge Kyo / Dona Nobis Pacem*. I was poor, and trying to get through Christmas guilt-free. The aesthetics of the music arose from my mom's spiritual endeavors. She was raised in the Irish-Catholic tradition and of late has become involved with Nipponzan Myohoji, a sect of drum-toting Buddhist monks. I'd heard them drumming and chanting a few times and thought, "Wow! Rockin' monks! How great!" The monks are fully committed to a non-violent (but confrontational) pilgrimage for peace which takes them all over the world, and especially to areas of great suffering and/or political unrest. The chanting and drumming is an unceasing prayer for peace. Plus, it's terrific and unusual *music*.

It has taken me almost four years to get it together and various travels around the planet with Mom, the nuns, and monks to marry the chant with the Catholic *Dona Nobis Pacem*.

Here's some things to think about as the movements progress (sort of a "Wanna see my vacation photos?" in writing).

I. and V. August 6 is Hiroshima day, this Buddhist sect's founder's birthday, *and* the Day of the Transfiguration of our Lord J. C. (That synchronistic enough for ya?) I've chosen two possibly appropriate plainchants from the Liber Usualis to open and close the piece.

II. Mom and I went on an interfaith pilgrimage with the monks from Canterbury to London. Miraculously, in an obscure little village, Morris dancers materialized to greet us. It was Mom's 61st birthday.

Naturally, a minor bacchanale ensued.

(continued)

III. Near another tiny village named Chillum, our drums fall into counterpoint with the chapel bells as we come out of the glen and over the hill. At this point, East meets West (as they are wont to do), and the less impressionistic and more purely compositional elements assert themselves. Out of the chorus rises the soprano voice, at first expressing a tender wish for peace, then mounting to a desperate plea.

IV. In Japan we awoke to the bustle of the temple, the monks' rapid-fire cheerfulness mirroring Tokyo's neon intensity. As they settled into chanting, their discipline transformed them, and the sincerity of their dedication took shape in a sombre beauty.

H. deKomposition writes:

Where do etc. etc. etc. are three short excerpts from an unfinished opera-length music theater work.

a) is based on the famous philosophical writings by the late Chairman (Mr. Mao) seen from a socio-anarchistic point of view where form becomes content and content becomes form in dialectical unity.

b) is a bit of television absurdity... an example of the great American social experiment... could this be your life?

c) was written during my stint as an office worker shuffling meaningless memos and transferring useless data. Copying huge lists of numbers from computer print-outs while answering the ever chattering neurotic telephones drove me to write this little comic nightmare. In the film version a gang of telephones takes over an office complex and smashes the dollar to bits.

David Weiss provides this listener's guide to *The Snail*:

Before the opera begins, Don Parnaldo is engaged in a circuitous conversation with his friend from work, wherein they are discussing, in terms sometimes awkwardly self-referential, the nature of human interaction in and out of the work environment.

He then takes leave of his friend, and resolves never again to engage in human discourse. He walks out of the town, and up into the mountains. As the opera begins, he falls to wanton anthropomorphism: The birds, with their flitty and sing-song nature, seem to be mocking humanity, while the bugs, with their apparent sense of gravity and purpose, seem to be disdaining it.

Presently his eyes fall upon a little snail, and in particular, on its tentacles, gently receiving vibrations from the air. "What would happen," he thought, "if I were to sing directly on top of its tentacles, with all the volume I can muster? Could it hear those frequencies? But still, you can't just ignore a being more than 1,000 times your size, who is singing directly at you, or can you?"

Kyle Granger writes:

I have wanted to do *Foveal Landscapes* for a long time. It is an experiment, the first in a possible series of sound/light explorations. The film was shot with a Canon 514 super 8 camera off of an Amiga 1000 and Sony Multiscan monitor. *Foveal Landscapes* is an improvisational composition, following up some of my questions regarding improvisation with constraints. The piece could not exist without the collective musical experience of the ensemble. Thanks to the ensemble, Bob Campbell for the use of a DX7, and the staff at Adolph Gasser's.

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MORE???

Expectations are that The Composers' Cafeteria's next public manifestation will occur March 31 at the Eighth Street Studio in Berkeley. But, like earthquakes, these things are hard to predict. Even experts (and we know lots of them) are hard pressed to pin down exactly where the first acoustic tremors will appear. They advise, however, that concerned citizens should watch for signs of musical stress in the local press and the U.S. Mail.