

August 14, 1983

Paul Alan Levi: *Elegy and Receptions*

Veronica Kulig, violin
Heather Porter, viola
Paul Kushious, cello

Janet Popesco, oboe
Curt Blood, clarinet
Mikal Hart, horn

Victor Sangiorgio, piano
Gustav Meier, conductor

Paul Levi was born in New York in 1941 and received his BA degree from Oberlin College, after which he studied at Juilliard, where he earned his D.M.A. in composition in 1978. His principal teachers were Hall Overton and Vincent Persichetti. He also studied in Darmstadt and in Munich. He has received numerous awards and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, American Music Center/Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, and others. He has also been active as a sound editor for film, a musical director for theaters, and a recital accompanist. From 1979 to 1982 he was President of the League of Composers-ISCM.

The composer has provided the following note for his work:

"Elegy and Receptions" was commissioned and premiered by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in 1980 and is scored for oboe, clarinet, French horn, string trio and piano. The oboe and horn are special instruments to me; I was glad to have the opportunity to include them in a relatively large ensemble where I could afford to save them for special moments.

I composed "Elegy and Receptions" in memory of Hall Overton, who was my composition teacher during my formative years, and who died in 1972 at the age of only 50. The first movement is a straightforward elegy, long overdue from me. The movement grows out of the rising major sixths heard in the opening measures, and features long romantic melodic lines and a harmony that flirts with but skirts tonality. In its combination of lyricism and constantly evolving, restless harmony, this movement could be perceived as a kind of twentieth-century successor to Franck and Mahler. The movement can be divided into three sections that flow into each other, the first featuring the winds (especially) and the strings, the second beginning with a piano solo and featuring the piano as an equal to the rest of the ensemble, while the third is a coda of reminiscence, in which piano arpeggios accompany sweet lyric lines in the clarinet and muted violin. The first movement is also dedicated to my father-in-law, Lloyd Mergentime, who died while I was composing it.

The "Receptions" of the title refers to the second movement and to its spirit of playfulness, impulsiveness, passion and occasional relaxation. The movement is in several ways a tribute to Overton, who was a man who took play very seriously. The tribute extends to the basic melodic material of the movement, which is loosely based on a theme from Overton's Second String Quartet, so that the music is not merely a remembrance, but a literal re-Creation. This movement divides into two large sections, the first of which contains several different kinds of fast, quirky music, followed by a slow lyric passage. The second section uses the fast music from the first section as a background to a series of instrumental cadenzas for each player in turn, first the strings, then winds, then piano. The slow music returns, music from the first movement is quoted, and a brief fast coda concludes the work.

Erich Urbanner: *Piano Concerto '76*

Dean Franke, violin
Cynthia Stutt, violin
Paul Cortese, viola
Benjamin Katz, cello
Chris Hanulik, bass

Diane Alancraig, flute
James Bulger, oboe
Lisa Wuriu, clarinet
Curt Blood, bass clarinet
Jean Bennett, horn

Torsten Edvar, trombone
Gwendolyn Mok, piano
Gunther Schuller, conductor

Erich Urbanner was born in Innsbruck, Austria, on 26 March 1936. He studied composition with Karl Schiske and Hanns Jelinek at the Vienna Academy of Music from 1955 to 1961, and then joined the faculty to teach score-reading and composition. Since 1969 he has been Professor of Composition at the Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna. He has received awards and prizes from the Viennese publisher Doblinger, from the Oesterreichische Musikzeitschrift (Austrian Music Journal), as well as the City of Vienna Prize (1962), the Festival of St. Hubert Prize (Belgium, 1966), and the City of Innsbruck Prize (1980).

He composed his piano concerto in 1976 for the well-known Viennese new music ensemble *die reihe*, which gave the world premiere under the direction of the composer in Innsbruck in 1977. The following discussion is derived from material supplied by Doblinger-Verlag.

The work is in a single movement, the basic compositional idea of which contains a dramatic character. In spite of lyrical portions, major triads and dissonances of every sort create two contrasting strata of sonority which are continually brought into opposition. The many possibilities of this seeking contact--and occasionally finding it--produces a developmental character in the musical design. Its course runs as follows:

1. An introductory passage in a kind of shorthand presents within a few measures the two opposing strata of sound: the piano's vehement A-flat triads are immediately followed by the freely tonal answer of the ensemble.
2. A short transition beginning in the piano in quasi-improvisatory style leads to a *Grazioso*, in which the piano unfolds its virtuosity still in an improvisatory manner over a rhythmic pattern in the strings, which provides unity in this section.
3. A contrasted lyrical passage is played by the orchestra; the piano superimposes arabesques which revert ever more constantly to the realm of the major triad.
4. In the following developmental section, piano and orchestra share equally. The orchestra remains freely tonal, while the piano keeps trying to establish the consonant material.
5. Over a metrically free iridescent background of woodwinds and strings, horn and trombone assert the triadic stratum and lead to
6. piano cadenza beginning in the triadic realm but gradually becoming more and more extended tonally, so that at the end a sort of compromise has been achieved.
7. The orchestra undertakes a short, lyric continuation of the cadenza.
8. The following fast part is divided into two planes: the piano part conceived in wide-ranging extended tonality, while the orchestra intones blocks of sound that revolve around central tones. Accordingly, this passage has a rather hovering, uncertain and indecisive effect.
9. Orchestral recitative.
10. This very lively part is substantially a counterpart to the second section. The triadic stratum is emphasized.
11. The rhythmic pattern of the second section is extended. Over it piano and winds build up a *stretto*. After a general pause, which interrupts the constantly more urgent activity, there follows
12. the coda, with an enlargement of the opening shorthand figure; thus the arch from beginning to end is closed, achieving through this overall conception a powerful sense of unity.

Donal Fox: *Refutation and Hypothesis II* (1983)

Cynthia Stout, violin
Bo Chao, violin
Paul Cortese, viola
Allen Whear, cello
Chris Hanulik, bass
Bryan Pezzone, piano

Aaron Brask, horn
Daryl Robbins, trumpet
Paul Welcomer, trombone
Torsten Edvar, trombone
Edward Harrison, percussion
Beth Eisenberg, piano

George Hanson, conductor

Donal Fox was born in Boston, Mass., on 17 July 1952. He studied piano with Jeannette Giguere, and his principal composition teachers were Avram David, T.J. Anderson, and Gunther Schuller.

The composers has provided the following philosophical statements about his work:

Refutation and Hypothesis II for Chamber Orchestra and Conductor, as with its precursor, Refutation and Hypothesis I for solo piano, is the continual affirmation of human struggle and development. The conceptual premise of this work is the expression of the dialectic between man's emotions and intellect.

To explain the title, "Refutation" stands for the act of refuting the pre-conceived notions and conventional prejudices that surround us and tend to fetter our creative minds. "Hypothesis" is the suggestion of new forms of expression, new concepts of structural development, and experiments in compositional thought and sound. The composer considers this work not a negation of tradition but

rather an evolutionary extension of the creation of organized sound.

Only Movement I of the projected three movement work will be presented for this premiere performance.

John Melby: *Concerto for Violoncello and Computer-Synthesized Tape*

Scott Tisdell, violoncello

John Newton, engineer

John Melby was born in 1941 in Whitehall, Wisconsin. He studied at the Curtis Institute of Music, University of Pennsylvania, and Princeton University; his teachers included Vincent Persichetti, Henry Weinberg, George Crumb, Peter Westergaard, J.K. Randall, and Milton Babbitt. He is Associate Professor of Composition and Theory at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is presently on a Guggenheim Fellowship. He has won many awards including first prize at the 1979 International Electroacoustic Music Awards, Bourges, France, for a computer synthesized tape piece "Chor der Steine." Commissions include National Endowment for the Arts, the 1981 Venice Biennale, and a commission from the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center for a work for *Speculum Musicae*, which he has just completed. He has been working in computer-synthesized music since 1968, and several works are available on commercial recordings.

The composer has provided the following comment:

The *Concerto for Violoncello and Computer-Synthesized Tape* is one of a series of four such works involving string instruments. The others are for violin, viola, and a projected double concerto for violin, English horn, and tape. The piece is in one extended movement, which possesses both the formal characteristics of a more-or-less traditional 19th-century string concerto first movement and those of the overall three-movement concerto form. The tape, which was synthesized on an IBM 4341 digital computer at the University of Illinois, using the Music 360 language for digital sound synthesis, acts both as accompaniment and as a co-equal with the cello. The present performance is the world premiere.

Robert Xavier Rodriguez: *Estampie*

David Wright, violin
Darrow White, violin
Sarah Briggs, violin
Danielle Maddon, violin
Keiko Takahashi, violin
Julie Leven, violin
Ohtani Muneko, violin
Beth Nussbaum, violin
Katie Fletcher, violin
Lori Ashikawa, violin
Valerie Dimond, viola
Heidi von Bernewitz, viola
Helen Reich, viola
Marlene Segelstein, viola
Jan Pfeiffer, cello
Joan Harrison, cello
Paul Kushious, cello
Michael Wais, bass
Todd Seeber, bass

Helen Campo, flute
Richard Sherman, flute
William Wielgus, oboe
Janet Popesco, oboe
Marta Schworm, clarinet
Lisa Wuriu, clarinet
Katherine Thompson, bassoon
David Shern, bassoon
Aaron Brask, horn
Jean Bennett, horn
Klancy Martin, trumpet
Daryl Robbins, trumpet
Torsten Edvar, trombone
Gaute Vikdal, trombone
Will Hudgins, percussion
Randall Max, percussion
Brian Prechtel, percussion
Edward Harrison, percussion
Emily Halpern, harp

Bryan Pezzone, piano

Theodore Antoniou, conductor

Robert Xavier Rodriguez was born in San Antonio, Texas, in 1946. He received his early musical education at the University of Texas and the University of Southern California. He was also a 1972 composition Fellow at the Berkshire Music Center, and he studied at the Conservatoire American in Fontainebleau and in Paris. His teachers have included Nadia Boulanger, Jacob Druckman, Bruno Maderna, and Elliott Carter. He has taught at the University of Southern California and has held composer-in-residence appointments from the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Rockefeller Foundation's Villa Serbelloni, and the Camargo Foundation. His *Piano Trio I* was awarded the 1971 Prix de Composition Musicale Prince Pierre de Monaco; other awards include the Prix Lili Boulanger, judged under the auspices of Harvard University, by Elliott Carter, Walter Piston, and Aaron Copland, as well as Rockefeller grants for Dallas Symphony premieres, and awards from ASCAP, the NEA, the Ditson Fund, the Mobil and Guggenheim Foundations, and the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. He has written in all vocal and instrumental genres, including chamber and orchestral

forms, the cantata, ballet, opera, and music for the theater.

The composer has provided the following note:

Rodriguez' orchestral ballet Estampie (1981) was commissioned by the Dallas Ballet. It was completed in Dallas in October 1981 and premiered the following month with choreography by Gustavo Mollajoli. The strong percussive element in the instrumentation is reinforced by the use of a Medieval estampie, which is quoted literally in most of the eight sections and developed throughout the work:

- I. Istanpitta Ghaetta The estampie is announced.
- II. In The Reversible Rag the Medieval rhythm dissolves into a four-note bass figure which expands into a 12-note row, then shrinks back to the original four notes in mirror fashion. Over this accompaniment a lopsided atonal rag appears (in two halves, each half containing its own mirror image) slightly out of phase with the bass. The first movement is then repeated.
- III. In the Intermezzo (Adagio), the estampie is embellished with lyrical interludes while the ragtime mirror bass (this time in the treble) remains serenely in the background.
- IV. In the Scherzo (the heart of the ballet) the regular rhythm of the estampie is sharply juxtaposed with disjunct atonal writing. Ragtime rhythms (with irregular accents in a regular context) are employed as a bridge between the two styles. As all the forces interact, the estampie appears to be swallowed up as contemporary rhythms and sonorities prevail. The Medieval element continues, however, disguised by the use of such Ars Nova techniques as the layering of countermelodies (discant) and the repetition of rhythmic units that function independently of the original melody (isorhythm). A synthesis of styles is thus reached, after which the estampie reappears in its original form.
- V. The Slow Sleazy Rag, with a pompously Wagnerian beginning and ending, is based on the arpeggiated accompaniment of the first Adagio (III). This movement is a companion piece to the
- VI. Couple Action Rag in that the two are slow/fast versions of the same material, as in traditional pavane/gaillard pairings. Here the cabaret, rather than the court, is strongly suggested.
- VII. Rimbombo, or resonance, is a vigorous toccata with an angular discant again disguising the estampie. When the movement reaches its peak, the Medieval tune quietly emerges.
- VIII. The finale, The Reversible Rag Reversed, is a grand quodlibet in which The Reversible Rag, The Couple Action Rag and the estampie are played simultaneously.

A recent review from the Los Angeles Times described Estampie as "a delightful interplay of rollicking rhythms and dissonant fragmentation that drew upon a Medieval refrain, ragtime colorings and a chilly serial melancholy. Strains of Scott Joplin were filtered through the jazzy Berlin sleaze of Kurt Weill or the eccentric whimsy of Erik Satie to create a poetic drama that teetered over the brink into a frenzied jamboree."