

Nino Rota (1911-1979)
Concerto per Archi

Nino Rota was born in Milan in 1911. Rota began composing when he was eight and in 1923 had an oratorio for soli, chorus, and orchestra performed. He began studying piano in 1919 with his mother pianist Ernesta Rinaldi. In 1923 he began studying at the Milan Conservatory with Selachi, Orfice, Bas, and Ildebrando Pizzetti. He continued composition studies with Alfredo Casella in Rome and graduated from the St. Cecilia Academy in 1930.

In 1931, Rota attended the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and studied composition with Rosario Scalero and conducting with Fritz Reiner. Rota returned to Italy and began a distinguished academic career, ending up as director of the Conservatory of Bari.

Rota's music took a very different direction from his contemporaries. He remained faithful to the supremacy of melody, to clear-cut tonalities free of harmonic complications, to the most traditional sort of rhythmic and structural symmetry, and believed that music was a naive and spontaneous form of expression. He believed in the direct reality of emotion and avoided the sort of ambiguity apparent in almost all modern art. In Italy, Rota is considered one of the most important Italian composers of his generation even though some find his work paradoxical and anachronistic. He composed music in all genres: operas, oratorios, instrumental works, chamber music, and music for the cinema. He wrote all the music for Fellini's films and is perhaps best known in America for the music from *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Godfather*.

Ivan Tcherepnin (1943-)
Solstice (1983)

Of *Solstice* the composer writes:
"Solstice: the moment when the sun seems to stand still in its yearly north-south peregrination: the peak, the nadir, the point in time when the limit

is reached, when forwards meets backwards, an ephemeral balance is reached, the point when things begin to turn around.

Solstice: composition commissioned by Boston University for Theodore Antoniou and ALEA III was completed on June 21st, 1983, the summer solstice. It is dedicated to my wife Anne. A single chord threads its way through the entire piece stretching out, as it were, a single moment - the Solstice. In this extended moment are held the events of the past; the triumphs, joys, defeats, despair, and points in between. Seeds of the past sown in the present, these contribute to the meaning of the solstice and propel it towards the next cycle, the next solstice.

The music is like a slice of the present, taken to give a chance for the potential richness of each passing moment to blossom. (Other analogies would be to the geologist's taking of core samples of the earth, or to the study of tree rings by botanists, or tortoise shells by the ancient practitioners of divination with the I-Ching.) Perhaps it would be too much to ask for a piece of music to make a magical moment 'hold still for a minute' but that is what I asked as composer, and not just for one minute, but for eleven."

Pierre Boulez (1925-)

Eclat

Pierre Boulez was born in Montbrison, France on March 26, 1925. His principal composition teachers were Olivier Messiaen and Rene Leibowitz, who introduced him to the principles of serial writing. Boulez began his career as a conductor, a profession which he still vigorously pursues to this day. In Paris in 1954 he founded the *Domaine Musical*, a continuing concert series that presented the best of contemporary music to the Parisian audiences. Boulez is no stranger to the United States; he was a guest lecturer at Harvard in 1963, and later held the post of guest conductor of the Cleveland

Orchestra. From 1971 to 1977 he was music director of the New York Philharmonic; he has since conducted a critically acclaimed production of Wagner's *Ring of the Nebelungs* at the Bayreuth Festival.

Boulez has always been concerned with achieving maximum thought and logic in his music, and his style is both complex and cerebral. *Eclat* was premiered in Los Angeles in 1965 and was later re-scored for full orchestra under the title *Eclat/Multiples*.

James Drew

Open/Closed Forms

James Drew was raised in New York City where he studied music composition with Wallingford Riegger and Edgard Varese. He received his Master of Arts degree from Tulane University in 1964 and did his doctoral work at Washington University the following year. Mr. Drew has been on the faculties of a number of American universities including Yale and UCLA, and has been the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and the Panamericana Prize. Of his *Open/Closed Forms* the composer writes the following: "The title of the work simply describes the process by which the various segments are formed. Some segments can be realized in different ways and are therefore 'open;' some, however, cannot be modified and are therefore 'closed.' I completed the work in the winter of 1982."

Hanns Eisler (1898-1962)

Nonett Nr. 2

Hanns Eisler was born in Leipzig on July 6, 1898. He was a pupil of Arnold Schoenberg, and a very good one - winning the Music Prize of the City of Vienna in 1924. In 1926, however, he quarreled with his mentor and turned his back on the dodecaphonic style; he joined the German communist party at about the same time. He visited the United

States several times from 1933 on, teaching at the New School for Social Research in New York in 1939. In 1942 he went to California to teach at USC; he also began a career in film music, even assisting Charlie Chaplin during these years. In 1948 he was forced to return to Germany due to his political views. In esatern Europe, Eisler's music is so ubiquitous as to almost fall into the category of folk music. He is the composer of the national anthem of the DDR (East Germany) and many other pieces of nationalistic and ceremonial music. He also composed the scores to over forty motion pictures in the United States and Germany.

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