

WARREN
ZAPPA
LEKROX
WEBERNIK
100

“We, the Futurists, declare as invalid the concepts of consonance and dissonance.

From the innumerable combinations derived from the chromatic scale there must blossom forth a Futurist Melody . . . a synthesis of harmony, similar to an ideal line formed by the incessant flowering of thousands of ocean waves with unequal crests. We must break out of the narrow circle of pure musical sounds and conquer the infinite variety of noise-sounds. □ Let us therefore invite young musicians of genius and audacity to listen attentively to all noises. Out of this will come not merely an understanding of noises, but even a taste and enthusiasm for them.”

from *Manifestoes of Futurist Music* (1913)

THE SAN FRANCISCO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PLAYERS

JEAN-LOUIS LEROUX, MUSIC DIRECTOR
MARCELLA DE GRAY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
GUEST CONDUCTOR: FRANK ZAPPA

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1983 8:00 PM.
WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE
WITH INTRODUCTION BY GRACE SLICK

PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Grace Slick, Mistress of Ceremonies

IONISATION (1931)

for percussion ensemble of 13 players

Edgard Varèse

SIX LIEDER, Opus 14 (1917-21)

for soprano, clarinet, bass-clarinet, violin and cello

Anton Webern

VARIATIONS FOR PIANO, Opus 27 (1936)

Anton Webern

OFFRANDES (1921-22)

for soprano, piccolo, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, harp, two violins, viola, cello, contra-bass and six percussionists

Edgard Varèse

INTERMISSION

POEME ELECTRONIQUE (1957-58)

for magnetic tape

Edgard Varèse

THREE LIEDER, Opus 25 (1934)

for soprano and piano

Anton Webern

FUGA (RICECATA) a sei voci, No. 2 (1934-35)

from the "Musical Offering" by J.S. Bach for flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bass-clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, timpani, harp and string quintet

Anton Webern

INTEGRALES (1924-25)

for two piccolos, oboe, Eb clarinet, Bb clarinet, horn, trumpet in D, trumpet in C, tenor-trombone, bass-trombone, contrabass-trombone and four percussionists

Edgard Varèse

No photographic or recording equipment permitted.

All proceeds benefit the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players.

PLAYERS: Judith Cline, *soprano*; Marvin Tartak, *piano*; Roy Malan, Dan Smiley, *violins*; Ruth Freeman, *viola*; Bonnie Hampton, *cello*; Steven d'Amico, *bass*; Janet Lawrence, Barbara Chaffe, *flutes*; Deborah Henry, *oboe*; Marilyn Coyne, *English horn*; Jim Dukey, Tom Rose, *clarinets*; David Bartolotta, *bassoon*; Larry Ragent, *French horn*; Charles Metzger, Ralph Wagner, *trumpets*; Hall Gott, McDowell Kenley, John E. Williams, *trombones*; Marcella DeCray, *harp*; Danny Montoro, *timpani*; David Rosenthal, Todd Manley, Richard Krivstad, William Winant, Raymond Freulich, Perry Dreiman, Tyler Mack, Pat Scott, Ray Bachard, Kevin Neuhoff, Marvin Tartak, Jean-Louis Lhéroux, *percussion*.
Frank Zappa, Jean-Louis Lhéroux, *conductors*

NOTES ON THE COMPOSERS.

EDGARD VARÈSE (1883-1965)

Edgard Varèse said, "I do not write experimental music. My experimenting is done before I make the music. Afterward, it is the listener who must experiment."

For over half a century Edgard Varèse has been acknowledged a musical revolutionary of unusual daring and originality, and his influence continues to grow. Although born in Europe (in Paris in 1883), Varèse came to America in 1915 with an already fully-formed aesthetic so un-European that he repudiated his early European works. He purposefully titled his first new work *Amérique* (Americas). As a musical leader Varèse played an indispensable role in the history of contemporary music, particularly, of course, in America. He rejoiced in American city life, in its excitement, kaleidoscopic variety, and independence from the European burden of history.

The ancient Greeks believed that all human disciplines could be reduced to two in number: gymnastics for the body, and music for the mind. It was in this spirit that Varèse spoke of music as an "art-science." In fact, he disliked the term "music," and preferred that of "organized sound." His term for music has a parallel in the German word "Tonkunst," a synonym for music meaning "sound-art." Varèse's "organized sound" is both more objective in aesthetic and more primal in expression.

This brings us to a feature of Varèse's music that is evident to the ear but which is, as Eric Salzman writes, "an aspect of Varèse's work not often discussed: his exploration of very deep-seated and elemental areas of the human psyche." Varèse had an acoustical-sculptural-experiential approach to writing music; works such as *Océanade*, *Offrandes*, and *Intégrales* each begin with a (different in each case) musical idea that is not so much an introduction as it is a ritualistic "summons." Varèse thought of music in terms of "moving bodies of sound in space . . . the movement of sound-masses, of shifting planes, will be clearly perceived. When these sound-masses collide the phenomena of penetration or repulsion will seem to occur." In the music of Edgard Varèse, "sound-masses" appear to proceed as responses to ritualistic summons, sonic entities in a state of activity, converging and colliding in an organized wildness of sound.

Varèse produced most of his works in the 1920's and 30's. But after failed ventures in form-

ing composers' unions, after the conductor Leopold Stokowski ceased to champion his works, and after years of frustrated efforts to interest technologically-based industry in helping him to develop sound synthesis, Edgard Varèse fell into a fifteen-year depression during which he wrote no new works. Then, when the post-World War II generation of composers showed musical interests that provided a warmer climate for his productivity, Varèse began to create again. After a lifetime of the solitude of the contemporary American composer, Edgard Varèse received some solace from the honor and reknown of his later years. He died in his beloved New York City in 1965.

ANTON WEBERN (1883-1945)

During the 1920's and 1930's, and again at the end of his life, Edgard Varèse enjoyed the honor of being influential. Not so for the Austrian composer Anton Webern. During his lifetime Webern was regarded as a fine teacher and as a choral and orchestral conductor of the highest artistic merit. He made several successful tours as a conductor and was esteemed as an interpreter of the composers of the Classical era. The current popularity of the works of Gustav Mahler is due in part to Webern's superlative performances of Mahler's symphonies.

But Webern had a quiet confidence in his gifts as a composer. On one of the very special and rare occasions that Webern himself played one of his works on the piano for a small circle of friends, one member of his tiny audience remarked that Webern's time would come, perhaps not then, but eventually. Webern seemed to already know this. Just as Varèse's sound-world is one of adventurous extroversion, Anton Webern's is one of refined, crystalline introversion. In his music, he continually mined, as Igor Stravinsky said, ". . . those perfect diamonds, about which he knew so much." And although he was not alive to see it happen, after the War his time did come; today hundreds, perhaps thousands of composers and other musicians regard him as one of the composers of genius whose work enriches or simply makes possible their own.

Anton Webern was born in Mittersill, a small mining town in Austria. His father, a mining engineer, wanted his son to also enter the engineering profession, but Young Anton steadfastly remained with his piano and cello. His studies at the University of Vienna were not in composition, but in musicology, and in 1906 Webern received a Ph.D. for a dissertation on the Renaissance com-

poser Heinrich Isaac. After leaving the University, however, Webern abandoned the academic study of music to pursue his first love, composition. While still at the University, Webern studied composition privately with Arnold Schoenberg, becoming, with his teacher and with Alban Berg (another Schoenberg pupil), part of a trio of modernist composers later to be known as the "First Viennese School" (The reference is to a "Second Viennese School" consisting of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven; however, unlike the latter three, these earlier composers were neither Viennese, nor did they belong to a "school").

Webern began his career conducting operettas in provincial towns. An important experience for him was participation in Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performances, an organization prophetic of almost all later groups performing contemporary music, including the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. Webern conducted the Vienna Worker's Symphony Concerts for many years as well as an amateur choral society, *Kunststelle*, which he himself founded. His name as a composer became better known, but just when success seemed within reach the Nazi Party branded his music, as it branded all modernist music, as "Cultural Bolshevism," forbidding performances of his works and forbidding him to conduct the Worker's Symphony. Left with little means of support, Webern passed the war years with great difficulty. Only days after the War's end, Webern was tragically shot and killed when he was out of doors after curfew and mistaken for a smuggler. He was never to enjoy the enormous esteem he earned for his legacy of musical compositions, his compact gems of genius.

ANTON WEBERN SIX LIEDER AFTER POEMS OF GEORGE TRAKL (1917-21) op. 14

With his colleagues Schoenberg and Berg, Webern changed the nature of the traditional German Art Song, or Lied, from a homophonic piece for voice and piano to a polyphonic piece for voice and mixed instrumental ensemble. Typical also is the composer's fondness for the elastic and luxurious sound of clarinets in combination with the voice. When composing, Webern preferred to write each movement as an independent cameo, only later grouping them into collections. This collection, Stravinsky's favorite of Webern's works, was written with great care at an average of one per year over a six-year period.

ANTON WEBERN VARIATIONS FOR PIANO (1936) op. 27

The *Variations for Piano* is one of Webern's best-known works, and his only composition for solo piano. This three-movement set of variations is usually performed very mechanically and dryly, in the belief that Webern's music, being so technically well-wrought, must somehow lack spontaneity. Nothing could be further from Webern's intentions. For this evening's performance, a newly published edition of the *Variations* is being used. This edition was prepared by Peter Stadlen, who gave the work its first performance and who worked very closely with Webern to determine its proper expressive nature. Webern wanted it to be played with tremendous attention to melodic shaping, rubato, and much more sustaining pedal than the piece is usually accorded; in short, Webern preferred his Modernist Variations to be played romantically.

EDGARD VARÈSE OFFRANDES (1921-22)

Varèse wrote as few vocal works as Webern wrote many. These two songs, or "offerings" are dedicated, respectively, to the composer's wife, the well-known translator Louise, and to Carlos Salzedo, the remarkable harpist and composer with whom Varèse worked in the 1920's in New York. The harp part contains some of the special sounds developed for the instrument by Salzedo. The work was first performed at a concert of the International Composers' Guild, an organization for the promotion of new music founded by Varèse.

EDGARD VARÈSE PEMÈE ELECTRONIQUE (1957-58)

As early as 1917 Varèse wrote: "I have a dream of instruments obedient to my thought, and which with their contribution of a blossoming of unsus-

pecting timbres will . . . blend to the demands of my inner rhythm." After years of trying to develop the sounds of such instruments from those of the orchestra, Varèse fell into an unproductive, depressed decade and a half. Then, in 1953, the anonymous gift of an Ampex tape recorder inspired him to create again. Five years later he completed what is universally acknowledged to be the first masterpiece in the electronic medium, the *Pemèe électronique*, which was broadcast over a "dream instrument" of 425 loudspeakers to thousands of listeners at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair. The version heard this evening is of the original 3-track tape.

ANTON WEBERN THREE LIEDER AFTER POEMS OF HILDEGARD JONE (1934) op. 25

All of the poetry Webern used for his late works is by his friend, the poet, artist and mystic Hildegard Jone. This set of *Lieder*, Webern's last work for voice and piano, was completed in November 1934, immediately before work on the Bach transcription was begun. They contain some of the composer's most serene and flowing music; the second song is marked with one of Webern's favorite interpretation marks, "flowing." Like most of Webern's melodies, these are elegant yet disjunct. Such melodies have melodies within them: the highest, middle, and lowest registers of the vocal line each forms its own melodic pattern.

J. S. BACH/ANTON WEBERN FUGA (RICERCATA) 6 VOCE, No. 2 from the "Musical Offering" (1834-35)

During a visit to Frederick the Great, J.S. Bach was asked by his royal host to improvise on a theme he (the King) provided. Bach did so, and upon returning home wrote out a set of polyphonic pieces all based upon this theme. This work was then presented to the King as a "*Musical Offering*." In 1935 Webern completed a transcription for chamber orchestra of the most substantial of these pieces. Webern made no attempt to simply "dress up" the Bach composition. Instead, he rethought Bach's polyphony in contemporary terms: "my orchestration attempts . . . to reveal the interpretation of motives. This was not always easy. It seeks of course in addition to show how I see the character of the work." Webern's transcription is probably the perfect way to demonstrate the stylistic differences between tonal and contemporary polyphony.

EDGARD VARÈSE INTEGRALES (1924-25)

The last work on tonight's program, *Intégrales*, is the first composition by Edgard Varèse that

Frank Zappa heard: it was band one, side one of that beaten-up record Zappa found in the record store in La Mesa, California. *Intégrales* is one of Varèse's most remarkable compositions. In it one can hear clarion calls, ever-present "sound-masses" moving in sonic space, the composer's remarkable percussion orchestra, and instrumental harmonies coordinated with percussion instruments in such a way that the sound of some hitherto unimagined instrument can be heard: Edgard Varèse's "dream instrument." Bare, unaccompanied melodic calls alternate with dense colorful chords; gradually these interact with one another. At times the texture is alive with the vitality of a primitive tribe, at other times the instruments engage in agreeable discourse on a few tones. *Intégrales*, the largest of Varèse's ensemble works, was first performed in 1925 with Leopold Stokowski conducting.

Program Notes: © Christopher Fulkerson

TEXTS

Webern: Six Lieder, Opus 14

Texts by George Trakl

I. Die Sonne

Täglich kommt die gelbe Sonne über den Hügel,
Schön ist der Wald, das dunkle Tier, der Mensch
Jäger oder Hirte.

Rötlich steigt im grünen Weize, der Fisch,
Unter dem runden Himmel fährt der Fischer leise
im blauen Kahn.

Langsam reift die Traube, das Korn,
Wenn sich stille der Tag neigt.

Wenn ein Gütes und Besses bereitet,
Ist ein Gütes und Besses bereitet.

Wenn es Nacht wird,
hebt der Wanderer leise die schweren Lider;
Somme aus finsterner Schlucht bricht.

II. Abendland I

Mond, als träte ein totes aus brauer Höhle,
und es fällt der Blüten viele über den Felsengrad.
Silbern weint ein Krankes am Abendweibel,
auf schwarzem Kahn hinüberstarben Liebende.

Oder es lauten die Schritte Eils
durch den Hain den hyazinthenen
wieder verhallend unter Eichen.

O des Knaben Gestalt
geformt aus kristallinen Tränen,
nächtigen Schatten.

Zackige Blitze erhellten die Schäfte
die immerkühle,
wenn am umherden Hügel
Frühlingsgewitter ertönt

III. Abendland II

So leise sind die grünen Wälder unsrer Heimat,
die kristalline Woge

hinstehend an verfallener Mauer
und wir haben im Schlaf gewieht:
wandern mit zögernden Schritten
an der dorrigen Hecke hin
Singende im Abendsonnen,
in heiliger Ruh des fern verstrahlenden
Weinbergs:
Schatten nun im kühlen Schoss der Nacht,
trauende Adler:
So leise schliesst ein mondener Strahl
die purpurnen Male der Schwermut.

IV. Abendland III
Ihr grossen Städte
steinern aufgebaut in der Ebenel
So sprachlos folgt der Heimtlose
mit dunkler Stirne dem Wind,
kahlen Bäumen am Hügel:
Ihr weithin dämmernden Ströme!
Gewaltig ängstet schaurige Abendröte
im Sturmgewölk, ihr sterbenden Völker!
Blaiche Woge zerschellend am Strande der
Nacht, fallende Sterne.

V. Nachts
Die Bläue meiner Augen
ist erloschen in dieser Nacht,
das rote Gold meines Herzens:
O! wie stille brannte das Licht:
Dein blauer Mantel umringt den Sinkenden,
dein roter Mund besiegelte
des Freundes Umnachtung.

VI. Gesang einer gefangenen Amsel
Dunkler Odem im grünen Gezweig,
Bläue Blüncchen umschweben das Antlitz des
Einsamen, den goldenen Schritt
ersterbend unter dem Gelbbaum,
Aufflattert mit trunkenem Flügel die Nacht,
So leise blutet Demut,
Tau, der langsam tropft
vom blühenden Dorn.
Strahlender Arme Erbarmen
umfängt ein brechendes Herz.

I. The Sun
Every day the yellow sun comes over the hill,
beautiful is the forest, the black beast, man
hunter or shepherd.
With a reddish glow the fish rises in the green
pond.

Beneath the rounded vault of heaven the
fisherman glides softly by in a blue boat.
Slowly the grapes ripens and the grain.
When the day comes quietly to an end
both good and evil have been begun.

When night falls
the wanderer slowly lifts his heavy eyelids:
sunlight bursts from a dark ravine.

II. Occident I
Moon, as if something dead stepped out

of a blue grotto,
and a multitude of blossoms falls
across the rocky path.
Something ill weeps silvery tears
beside the evening pool;

ferried deathward in a black boat are lovers.
Or Eris' footfalls ring
in the grove, the hyacinthine,
to die away again beneath the oaks
O the figure of the boy,
formed of crystalline tears,
nocturnal shadows:

Zigzag lightning illuminates the temples,
the always cool ones,
when on the burgeoning hills
spring storms resound.

III. Occident II
So quiet are the green forests of our homeland,
the crystalline wave
spending itself at the crumbling wall,
And in sleep we cried:
with hesitant steps we wonder
along the thorny hedge,

singers in the evening summer,
in the blessed peace of the distantly radiant
vineyard.
Shadows now in the cool womb of night,
mourning eagles.
So gently does a moonbeam close
the purple wound of melancholy.

IV. Occident III
Ye huge cities, built of stone in the plain!
Equally mute, the homeless wanderer follows
with dark brow the wind,
the bare trees on the hill.
Ye far-off vanishing streams!
Overwhiningly afright the grisly evening glow
in the thunderhead, Ye dying people!
Falling wave breaking on the shore of night,
Falling stars.

V. At Night
The blue of my eyes has faded this night,
the red gold of my heart.
Oh, how softly the light burned.
Your blue mantle enveloped the sinking one:
your red mouth sealed
the friend's enshroument.

VI. Song of a Trapped Blackbird
Dark haze in green branches.
Blue flowers float round the head of the
lonely one, the golden step
dying beneath the olive tree.
The night flutters up on drunken wings.
So gently bleeds humbleness:
dew, falling slowly from the flowering thorn.
The mercy of glowing arms
embraces a breaking heart.

Varese: Offrandes

CHANSON DE LA-HAUT
Vicente Huidobro

La Seine dort sous l'ombre de ses ponts
Je vois tourner la terre
et le somme mon clairon
vers toutes les mers.

Sur le chemin de ton parfum
toutes les abillies et les paroles s'en vont.
Reine de l'Aube des Pôles.
Rose des Vents que fane l'Automne.

Dans ma tête un oiseau chante toute l'année

LA CROIX DU SUD
José Juan Tablada

Les femmes aux gestes de madrépore
ont des poils et des levres rouge d'orchidée.
Les singes du Pôle sont albinos
ambre et neige et sautent
vêtus d'aurora boreale.

Dans Le Ciel il y a une affiche
d'Oléo margarite
Voici l'arbre de la quinine
et la Vierge des Douleurs

Le Zodiaque tourne dans la nuit de fièvre jaune
la pluie enferme tout le Tropique
dans une cage de cristal
C'est l'heure d'enlamber le crépuscule
Comme un zèbre vers l'île de jadis
ou se reveillent les femmes
assassinées.

SONG FROM ON HIGH
Vicente Huidobro

The Seine is asleep in the shadow of
its bridges.

I watch Earth spinning,
And I sound my trumpet toward all the seas.

On the pathway of her perfume
All the bees and the words depart,
Queen of the Polar Dawns.
Rose of the Winds that Autumn withers:
In my head a bird sings all year long.

THE SOUTHERN CROSS
José Juan Tablada

Women with gestures of madrepores
Have hair and lips as red as orchids.
The monkeys at the pole are albinos.
amber and snow, and frisk
dressed in the aurora borealis.

In The Sky there is a sign.
Oleomargarine.
Here is the quinine tree
And the Virgin of the Sorrows.
The Zodiac revolves in the night
of yellow fever.

The rain holds the tropics in a crystal cage.
It is the hour to stride over the dusk
Like a zebra toward the island of yesterday
Where the murdered women wake.

Webert: Three Leitler, Opus 25
Text by Hildegarde Jone

I. Wie bin ich froh!
noch einmal wird mir alles grün
und leuchtet so!
noch überdühn die Blumen mir die Welt!
noch einmal bin ich ganz ins Werden
hingestellt und bin auf Erden.

II. Des Herzens Purpurvogel fliegt durch Nacht.
Der Augen Falter, die im Hellen gaukeln,
sind ihm voraus, wenn sie im Tage
schaukeln.
Und doch ist er's der sie ans Ziel gebracht.
Sie ruhen oft, die bald sich neu erheben
zu neuem Flug. Doch raslet endlich er
am Ast des Todes, müd und flügellos,
dann müssen sie zum letzten Blick verleben.

III. Sterne, ihr silbernen Biemen
der Nacht um die Blume der Liebe!
Wahrlich, der Honig aus ihr
hängt schimmernd an Euch,
Lasset ihn tropfen ins Herz,
in die goldene Wabe,
füllt sie an bis zum Rand.
Ach, schon tropfet sie über,
selig und bis ans Ende mit
ewiger Suisse durchtränkt.

I. What great delight!
Once more now all the green's unfurled
and shines so bright!
And still the world is overgrown with flow'rs!
Once more I in creation's portal live my hours,
and yet am mortal.

II. The heart's purple eagle flies by night,
The eyes, like daylight's butterflies that hover,
flutter ahead and fly before it ever.
Yet it's the bird that brought them to their goal.
They often rest who soon must rise to heaven
to fly again. Yet finally he rests
on death's grey branches, tired with heavy
wings:

the butterflies then look their last and perish.
III. Stars, Ye little bright bees
of night round the flower of love!
Truly the honey from it
hangs shimmering on you.
Let it then drop in the heart,
in the gold comb of honey,
fill up the comb to the brim.
Oh, the heart runneth over,
happy and full for ever.
full of the great sweetness of love.

THE SAN FRANCISCO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PLAYERS

In 1974, oboist Jean-Louis LeRoux, harpist Marcella DeClary and composer Charles Boone created the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation dedicated to the professional presentation of contemporary chamber music, drawing upon a core of Bay Area professional musicians. In 1978 the ensemble began to present an annual concert series at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art which continues to draw audiences attracted by the informal atmosphere, innovative programming and moderate ticket prices, as well as the synergistic experience of the joining of modern music and modern art.

Music Director Jean-Louis LeRoux's dedication to providing the finest artistic performance of today's music results in an exciting balance of American and European compositions, the music of the great 20th Century masters and that which has been written in the last few years. American and world premieres are given each season, several of which are commissioned by San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. The ensemble has recently completed its first recording, to be released in February on the Grenadilla label. Critical acclaim has been consistently high, praising the group's dedication to New Music, excellent programming and standards of artistic performance.

Our audiences are open-minded and willing to experiment. They represent all ages, professions, economic and geographic backgrounds. They welcome the opportunity to hear unfamiliar music, to meet unknown composers and to broaden their artistic scope. They take home with them minds and spirits awakened by the expressive power of modern music.

JEAN-LOUIS LE ROUX

Music Director Jean-Louis LeRoux was born in France where he studied law and business prior to attending the Paris Conservatoire National. His teachers there included Pierre Baileux in oboe and Jean Fourvestier in conducting. Post-graduate study included training with Jean Martinon and a summer in Tanglemood with Eleazar de Carvalho and Charles Munch. Positions in Brazil and Uruguay followed, among which was the directorship of the chamber ensemble "Euterpe". In 1980 he came to the U.S. to play principal oboe in the San Francisco Symphony. At the same time, he was music director of the Modesto Symphony Orchestra and the Mills Performing Group. In 1975, Jean-Louis LeRoux was appointed con-

ductor of the Performing Arts Orchestra of the San Francisco Ballet. In 1974, his devotion to contemporary music led to the establishment of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players.

JUDITH CLINE

Judith Cline, soprano, studied at Drake University and has worked at the University of Southern California under Leonard Stein, Director of the Schoenberg Institute. Ms. Cline is on the faculty of Chabot College, Mission College and Evergreen Valley College. She has performed with the San Francisco Early Music Ensemble, at the Schoenberg Institute and with the Francisco Contemporary Music Players, and has recently completed a recording with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players on the Grenadilla label.

SFMA SERIES

The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players invite you to come LISTEN TO MODERN ART when our Monday evening series at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art resumes on March 14 at 8 PM. Remaining programs this season are:

Monday, March 14, 8PM

Wayne Peterson
Commissioned work

(1982) **PREMIERE**

Charles Wuorinen

Beardirungen über das Glogauer Liederbuch (1962) for flute, clarinet, violin and cello

Christopher Fulkerson

Scrifi di Leonardo (1982)

PREMIERE for tenor, vocal quartet, flute, bass-clarinet, viola, guitar and harp

Slatan Wolfe

Piece in Two Parts for Six Players (1961/62) for violin, clarinet, trumpet, cello, harp and piano

Monday, April 11, 8PM

Computer Music Program

Music from the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics, Stanford University, John Chowning, Director

Monday, May 9, 8PM

Guest Artist: Anna Carol Dudley, Soprano

Charles Boone

Trace (1982)

PREMIERE

Mario Davidovski

Commissioned work (1982)

PREMIERE

Charles Shere
Songs for Voice and Violin (1982) **PREMIERE**

Luca Lombardi

Tur Gesange (1977) for soprano, flute, clarinet, piano, violin and cello

FRANK ZAPPA

"I have been asked to write about Edgard Varèse. I am in no way qualified to. I can't even pronounce his name right. The only reason I have agreed to is because I love his music very much, and if by some chance this article can influence more people to hear his works, it will have been worthwhile."

With those lines Frank Zappa began "a reminiscence and appreciation" of Varèse, whom he described as "idol of my youth," for a 1971 issue of *Stereo Review Magazine*. This charming account of a teenager's discovery of the composer and his music refutes Zappa's protest that he is not qualified to write about Edgard Varèse... and it leaves no doubt that the innovative rock musician-composer who has made more than 30 albums both idolizes Varèse and loves his music.

"I was about thirteen when I read an article in *Look* about Sam Goody's Record Store in New York. My memory is not too clear on the details, but I recall it was praising the store's exceptional record merchandising ability. One example of brilliant salesmanship described how, through some mysterious trickery, the store actually managed to sell an album called 'Ionisation' (the real name of the album was 'The Complete Works of Edgard Varèse, Volume One'). The article described the record as a weird jumble of drums and other unpleasant sounds.

"I dashed off to my local record store and asked for it. Nobody ever heard of it. I told the guy in the store what it was like. He turned away, repulsed, and mumbled solemnly, 'I probably wouldn't stock it anyway... nobody here in San Diego would buy it.'

"I didn't give up. I was so hot to get that record I couldn't even believe it. In those days I was a rhythm-and-blues fanatic. I saved any money I could get (sometimes as much as \$2 a week) so that every Friday and Saturday I could rummage through piles of old records at the Juice Box Used Record Dump (or whatever they called it) in the Maryland Hotel or the dusty corners of little record stores where they'd keep the crappy records nobody wanted to buy.

"One day I was passing a hi-fi store in La Mesa. A little sign in the window announced a sale on 45s. After shuffling through their singles rack and finding a couple of Joe Houston records, I walked toward the cash register. On my way, I happened to glance into the L.P. bin. Sitting in the front, just a little bent at the corners, was a strange-looking black-and-white album cover. On it there was a picture of a man with gray frizzy hair. He looked like a mad scientist. I thought it

was great that somebody had finally made a record of a mad scientist. I picked it up. I nearly (this is true, ladies and gentlemen) peed in my pants. ... THERE IT WAS! *EMS 401: The Complete Works of Edgard Varèse Volume 1... Intégrales, Density 215, Ionization, Octandre... Rene Le Roy, the N. Y. Wind Ensemble, the Julliard Percussion Orchestra, Federico Waldman Conducting... liner notes by Sidney Finkelstein, WOW!*

"I ran over to the singles box and stuffed the Joe Houston records back in it. I tumbled around in my pocket to see how much money I had (about \$3.80). I knew I had to have a lot of money to buy an album. Only old people had enough money to buy albums. I'd never bought an album before. I sneaked over to the guy at the cash register and asked him how much *EMS 401* cost. "That gray one in the box? \$5.95."

"I had searched for that album for over a year, and now... disaster. I told the guy I only had \$3.80. He scratched his neck. 'We use that record to demonstrate the hi-fi's with, but nobody ever buys one when we use it... you can have it for \$3.80 if you want it that bad.'

"I couldn't imagine what he meant by 'demonstrating hi-fi's with it.' I'd never heard a hi-fi. I only knew that old people bought them. I had a genuine lo-fi... it was a little box about 4 inches deep with imitation wrought-iron legs at each corner (sort of brass-plated) which elevated it from the table top because the speaker was in the bottom. My mother kept it near the ironing board. She used to listen to a 78 of *The Little Shoemaker* on it. I took off the 78 of *The Little Shoemaker* and, carefully moving the speed lever to 33 1/3 (it had never been there before), turned the volume all the way up and placed the all-purpose omnium-tip needle in the lead-in spiral to *Ionization*. I have a nice Catholic mother who likes Roller Derby. Edgard Varèse does not get her off, even to this very day. I was forbidden to play that record in the living room ever again.

"In order to listen to *The Album*, I had to stay in my room. I could sit there every night and play it two or three times and read the liner notes over and over. I didn't understand them at all. I didn't know what *timbre* was. I never heard of *polyphony*. I just like the music because it sounded good to me. I would force anybody who came over to listen to it. (I had heard someplace that in radio stations the guys would make chalk marks on records so they could find an exact spot, so I did the same thing to *EMS 401*... marked all the hot items so my friends wouldn't get bored in the quiet parts.)

"I went to the library and tried to find a book about Mr. Varèse. There wasn't any. The librarian

told me he probably wasn't a Major Composer. She suggested I look in books about new or unpopular composers. I found a book that had a little blurb in it (with a picture of Mr. Varèse as a young man, staring into the camera very seriously) saying that he would be just as happy growing grapes as being a composer.

"On my fifteenth birthday my mother said she'd give me \$5. I told her I would rather make a long-distance phone call. I figured Mr. Varèse lived in New York because the record was made in New York (and because he was so weird, he would live in Greenwich Village). I got New York information, and sure enough, he was in the phone book.

"His wife answered. She was very nice and told me he was in Europe and to call back in a few weeks. I did. I don't remember what I said to him exactly, but it was something like: 'I really dig your music.' He told me he was working on a new piece called *Deserts*. This thrilled me quite a bit since I was living in Lancaster, California then. When you're fifteen and living in the Mojave Desert and find out that the world's greatest composer, somewhere in a secret Greenwich Village laboratory, is working on a song about your home town, you can get pretty excited. It seemed a great tragedy that nobody in Palmdale or Rosamond would care if they ever heard it. I still think *Deserts* is about Lancaster, even if the liner notes on the Columbia LP say it's something more philosophical.

"All through high school I searched for information about Varèse and his music. One of the most exciting discoveries was in the school library in Lancaster. I found an orchestration book that had score examples in the back, and included was an excerpt from *Offrandes* with a lot of harp notes (and you know how groovy harp notes look). I remember fetishizing the book for several weeks.

"When I was eighteen I got a chance to go to the East Coast to visit my Aunt Mary in Baltimore. I had been composing for about four years then but had not heard any of it played. Aunt Mary was going to introduce me to some friend of hers (an Italian gentleman) who was connected with the symphony there. I had planned on making a side trip to mysterious Greenwich Village. During my Birthday telephone conversation, Mr. Varèse had casually mentioned the possibility of a visit if I was ever in the area. I wrote him a letter when I got to Baltimore, just to let him know I was in the area.

"I waited. My aunt introduced me to the symphony guy. She said, 'This is Frankie. He writes orchestra music.' The guy said, 'Really?' Tell me,

sonny boy, what's the lowest note on the bassoon?' I said, 'B flat... and also it says in the book you can get 'em up to a C or something in the treble clef.' He said, 'Really? You know about violin harmonics?' I said, 'What's that?' he said, 'See me again in a few years.'

"I waited some more. The letter came. I couldn't believe it. A real handwritten letter from Edgard Varèse! I still have it in a little frame. In very tiny scientific-looking script. It says:

VII 12th/57

Dear Mr. Zappa

I am sorry not to be able to grant your request. I am leaving for Europe next week and will be gone until next spring. I am hoping however to see you on my return. With best wishes.

Sincerely

Edgard Varèse

"I never got to meet Mr. Varèse. But I kept looking for records of his music. When he got to be about eighty I guess a few companies gave in and recorded some of his stuff. Sort of a *gesture*, I imagine. I always wondered who bought them besides me. It was about seven years from the time I first heard his music till I met someone else who even knew he existed. That person was a film student at USC. He had the Columbia LP with *Poème électronique* on it. He thought it would make groovy sound effects.

"I can't give you any structural insights or academic suppositions about how his music works or why I think it sounds so good. His music is completely unique. If you haven't heard it yet, go hear it. If you've already heard it, and think it might make groovy sound effects, listen again." Do so and you'll soon realize how Zappa's music has been influenced by Varèse's and why several old Mothers of Invention albums reprinted Varèse's saying, "The present day composer refuses to die."

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GRACE SLICK

Grace Slick skyrocketed to fame in 1966 as lead vocalist of the Jefferson Airplane. Her unmistakable style brought the Airplane to the zenith of the rock and roll world, establishing the group as the foremost exponent of the "San Francisco sound" which influenced an entire generation. The Airplane earned over a dozen gold and platinum records. With the Jefferson Starship formed in 1974, she continues to make music history.

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