

titled *Epitaph for Moonlight*, a setting of the seventh-graders' made-up words for 'moonlight.' Schafer explains in the preface that "Moonlight is a study-piece for youth choir. It is an ear-training exercise, for the singers must learn to pitch their notes by interval from any note given." Schafer's musical score itself carries on the process of education and mind-opening, training now practicing young musicians, rather than music teachers of regular schoolchildren or young adults. As the chorus begins each one of its episodes, one singer is allowed to choose a tone on which to begin. Thereafter, throughout the episode, the other singers must cue on this original note and sing another note a particular musical distance away.

Schafer's first piece for youth performers, *Statement in Blue* for youth orchestra, is even more free in giving performers choices. Here, pitch and duration are free throughout the composition. This means that within set limits, each player can choose which note to play at all times, and even how long to play it.

At one point in the score, a solo is proscribed as follows: A box is drawn, clearly setting off a certain space in the score for one event. Within the box, a wavy line begins at the lower left and moves upward as it progresses naturally toward the right. Midway its course, it turns downward, and then becomes wavy at the end, just as at the beginning. This solo is suggested for flute or oboe. The player is given two verbal instructions: "A bird climbs slowly into the sky." at the beginning of the wavy line's adventure to the far left; and then "Then glides to earth again." at the ending on the right.

Schafer's attitude toward musical performance and toward the relationship between composer and performers in his youth pieces can be seen from a very interesting comment with which he closes out his set of instructions to *Statement in Blue*:

"Anything in this score may be omitted or changed if, in the opinion of the performers it leads to an improvement."

Murray Schafer's most recent piece for youth is by far his most ambitious. It is called *Threnody* and it involves youth choir and youth orchestra as well as magnetic tape and five narrators — children ranging in age from eight to seventeen years old.

Threnody is an evocation of the horrors of nuclear destruction. The narrators intone eyewitness accounts of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki and comments and telegrams sent to and from the Potsdam Conference reacting to the first atomic bomb blast. It is a rare opportunity for young musicians. The musical score itself is complex and varied in the degree to which it gives performers options. Also, in the field of new classical music, the coherence of form and rightness of the many parts of the whole of a piece of music are often the weakest aspects of a musical composition. Experiencing a masterful work which succeeds in tying together diversities cannot help being a valuable experience.

Murray Schafer has contributed a great deal to the musical life of countries where English is read. Now in progress is the translation of his books into German for publication in Europe.

This article is by Stephen Wheelton, a composer, artist and music reviewer.

STATEMENT
IN BLUE
FOR YOUTH ORCHESTRA
R. MURRAY SCHAFER

1. The music is to be played in a relaxed, unhurried manner. The tempo is to be determined by the conductor. The music is to be played in a relaxed, unhurried manner. The tempo is to be determined by the conductor. The music is to be played in a relaxed, unhurried manner. The tempo is to be determined by the conductor.