

MICHAEL S. HORWOOD
BARRY TRUAX

BARRY TRUAX: Sonic Landscapes — Electronic & computer music. *She, a Solo*, for mezzo-soprano & tape. *Trigon*, for mezzo-soprano, alto flute, piano, & tape. *Sonic Landscape No. 3* (1977 revision). *Nautilus*, for percussionist and tape. Phyllis Mailing, mezzo-soprano. Kathryn Cernauskas, alto flute. Arlie Thompson, piano. Russell Hartenberger, percussion. Melbourne. SMLP 4033.

The four works on this record span only five years (1973-77). Since tape, computer-synthesized or otherwise, is involved in each work, it becomes obvious that this has been a major pre-occupation of Truax lately (besides his work with R. Murray Schafer in the World Soundscape Project). This almost exclusivity in the tape idiom reminds me of the Dutch composer Jan Boerman who has also dedicated (restricted?) himself primarily to tape pieces. (Balletomanes may recall the reactionary *Monument for a Dead Boy* staged in Toronto some years back, which used Boerman's *Alchemie 1961* for its score.) I bring up this comparison because Truax' *She, a Solo* was realized at the Utrecht Institute of Sonology, where Boerman composes many of his tape works. Furthermore, the Truax piece has the *richest* (read: smoooothest, nicest, best!, most interesting) electronic sounds out of the four pieces on this disc. (It's also the earliest!) Such qualities may also be noted in various other electronic works to come out of these famed Utrecht studios. Could it be that the equipment is just plain superior to that at Simon Fraser (or U of T) OR was it an OD of Gouda cheese and the Dutch girls lovely bums?

Nevertheless, the remaining pieces all have similar sounding timbres, quite different from *She, a Solo*. I find these works dryer and less satisfying by comparison and to be honest, I'm a bit bored with them by the end of side 2.

Phyllis Mailing sings quite radiantly in both works: *She, a Solo* uses words and non-words (phonetics): *Trigon* uses syllables inspired from computer-simulation of vowels and consonants. The role of the voice in *Trigon* is understandably lessened due to the addition of two other instruments (piano/alto flute) into its retrogradable structure. *Sonic Landscape No. 3* (tape alone) is the weakest piece on the record for two reasons: it's a long (15 1/2 min.) work filled with too much of those thin sound textures I mentioned earlier; and, it's a stereo reduction from four tracks (somehow, many of these collapsed pieces always lose their unique spaciousness). The title has nothing apparently to do with the Soundscape project (sorry: no frogs, crickets, of fog horns!).

Nautilus involves a tape supporting the percussionist whose 'score' may be read in over 1,000 ways, even though the tape is the same for each performance. It's an O.K. piece, meaning there are some better and a lot worse. This album is part of Melbourne's continued interest in recording/promoting/preserving contemporary Canadian music. I hope to see these records circulate outside Canada someday. The Truax side is worth having for the two works with voice, even if the best one germinated abroad.

MICHAEL S. HORWOOD
MUSIC OF MICHAEL COLGRASS

It seemed like I was attending a family reunion. Everyone acted as if they really knew Colgrass. I don't. Nor did I see too many familiar faces from the New Music Concerts or the Music Gallery — a different crowd (?). Despite intrusions from passing streetcars and sirens, on March 13 the uncomfortable pews of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church held about 100 people interested in the What? When? and Why? of the recent Michael Colgrass. Perhaps it's his reclusive attitude — one which says if you're going to compose, compose. That's it! Now I don't buy all that! But Colgrass evidently subscribes to the notion that there's still a lot of room (and money) for the world to house (and support) great composers on a full-time basis. So he attempts to live out a semi-private existence — composing. Well it's working, apparently. His name is still known and respected. New recordings over the past few years give credence to this. (My own favorite is *'The Earth's A Baked Apple'* on Orion.)

What this all boils down to is that the Toronto audience was essentially treated to a kind of coming-out concert of Colgrass' chamber works spanning 1963-1975. Because CBC was taping the event, the audience had to wait — those awful pews! — between pieces for stage manoeuvres. The composer genially talked to us during these breaks and gave informative commentary about himself and his music. Most revealing! Colgrass views himself as a real craftsman. He acts like a proud father with each work being a special child. I felt like I was in someone's personal craft shop (way up North somewhere) with the owner/maker explaining the fun/trouble/experience of each item. 'Now with this one I had to . . . ' 'But that one was different. It had a . . . '

Musically, all the works played were pretty conservative. Even the 'Improvisation' that the group worked on for six hours (based on his acting experience) was very straight and controlled. Sounded as if all the parameters were written out — no spontaneity. Other works included *'Auras'* — a latex-like, atonal *'La Mer'* for harp and piano; and, *'Wolf'* — a long, American-Indian influenced *'Domestic Symphony'* for solo cello, ably played by Peter Schenkman, whose hi-browish mannerisms didn't seem to fit into the relaxed, informality of this concert. The piece refrains/restrains cello avant-gardery in favor of good, old-fashioned program music.

'Light Spirit' accurately depicted the good-naturedness of its title and made me recall Maderna's *'Serenata No. 2'*. *'New People'* (based on his own poems) concluded the evening and showed that Colgrass is not without a sense of humour and the ability to make a (political!) statement in musical terms. This one was: man's loss of self through the fast-paced technological society. I felt it was the best work on the program — beautifully sung by Cathy Robbin, but backed by violist Rivka Golani-Erdesz, who had much trouble with the part's many harmonics.

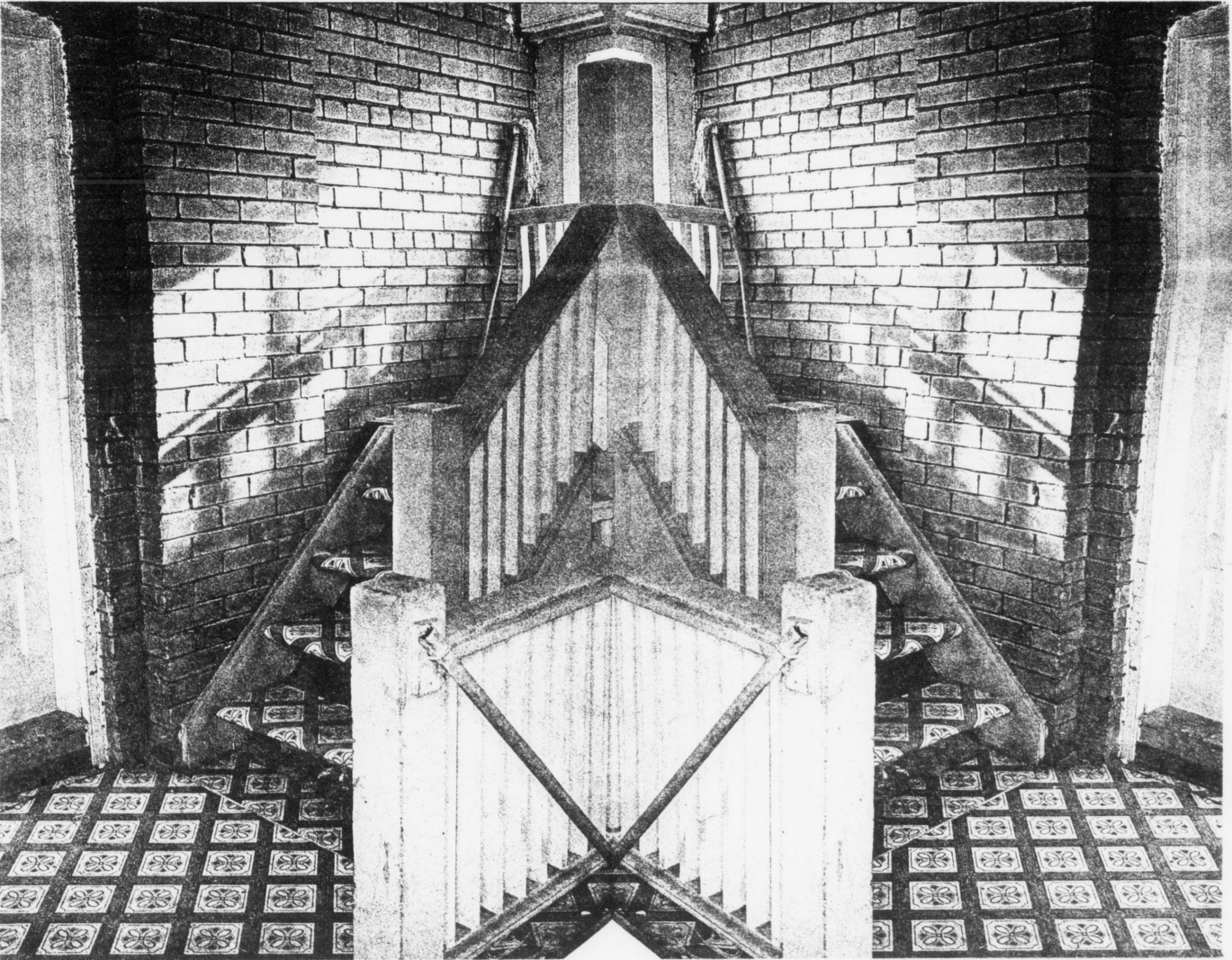
Finally, I kept wondering about what the next road is for Colgrass and if he considered this concert a turning point/milestone in his career. Is a church concert with a hundred or so people (followers?) where a moderately well-known international composer of 46 winds up? I've still got mixed feelings about concerts made up exclusively of one composer's works. But if you've got the support, great! I think CBC's *'Contempo'* series staff deserves praise, if for no other reason than allowing us to know what Michael Colgrass has been up to. Anybody for a Harry Partch concert?

KARL JIRGENS
TOWARDS MAKE BELIEVE
GARDENS
GLENN JAMES:
ELEKTRIK HOCKEY STIK



breakaway musik offside eeelektrissity
jamming upstairs at th beverly tavern
th one 'n only GLENN JAMES! sings
plays a single metal wire strung to a pro-style
hockey stik makin' sounds on rebound
from th music gallery th same man that played
A-Space and in front uv th new eaton's centre
continues his wide open career
bringing it to th beverly's attik searing
slapshot words & musik all original
"Don't Strike Mother of the Night"
a hard angle on th misconduct uv men savagery
then a burgeoning blue line drive to th gut
"Keels Station Strangulation" sudden death
penalties uv city life unstopable words
th thots score scare sliding elektroniks
distortions searing spearing vibrations
a high sticking performance ending with
an off th wrist "Pants Down Rag"
lightly skating away on thin ice enjoyable
Glenn James entertains is original drives hard
wants to play Maple Leaf Gardens someday
'cause "its such a big and booming place"
honest poetiks new noise street musik
pull your goalie! put on your skates 'n dance!

Rick / Simon



ANDREW TIMAR
RAIN CHANT

Dad	a	da	da	3X	Dad	a	da	da
1 2	3	4	5		1 2	3	4	5 6
Da	ka	ta	kai	X	Da	ka	ta	kai
1	2	3	4 5		1	2	3	4 5 6
Ḑed	ō	ḑed	ḡ	3X	Ḑed	o	ḑed	o
1 2	3	4 5	6		1 2	3	4 5	6 7
Da	ka	ta	kai	X	Da	ka	ta	kai
1	2	3	4 5		1	2	3	4 5 6

> = drum