

entertainment

The orchestra of glassical music

By Hugh Westrup

Flick your fingernail against a drinking glass or produce a breathy "toot!" by blowing across the top of an open beer bottle and you've begun to make music. Music, that is, according to Toronto's Glass Orchestra, a new group performing out of the Music Gallery on St. Patrick Street.

The five-man ensemble is comprised of three York students, Paul Hodge and Miguel Frascone from the music department, and graduate student John Kuipers, plus free-lance percussionist V. Eric Cadesky, and Marvin Green, a York graduate who now works at the Music Gallery.

The music of the Glass Orchestra

can be broadly described as avant-garde or experimental although the members prefer to use the terms "exploratory" and "textural". Whatever the label, their music delves into the resonant qualities of glass from the familiar clinks and crashes of the kitchen table to a variety of more extraordinary sound creations.

One strange and fascinating sound results from a technique which the members refer to as "bowing". Wet fingers are rubbed around the rim of a water-filled bowl to create an eerie, high pitched set of harmonies which varies with the pressure of the finger motion and the texture of the glass. According to Marvin Green, the spherical shape of the bowl creates more complex wave patterns than those produced by traditional musical instruments.

Other unique sounds emanate from the group's collection of everyday items like jars, jugs, wine goblets, champagne glasses, and wine bottles, both domestic and foreign. Amongst this translucent array can also be found a few glass versions of traditional instruments like flutes, maracas and marimbas, although the sounds are unique from their orchestral counterparts.

The music of the Glass Orchestra is largely improvised, yet rather than being a random assortment of sounds, it is characterized by a cohesive, communicative flow, obviously built up through hours of

collective experimentation. The 10-minute piece performed during this interview moved from a spell-binding blend of relentless rhythms produced by mallets striking marimbas, bottles, and jars, through the sudden clattering of glass fragments to an otherworldly chorus of "bowed" voices punctuated by chimes and shrill glass cries.

The history of these sounds in Toronto dates back to the early 70s. Four years ago, glass was used in "Rain Forest", a David Tudor composition, in which audio transducers were attached to a variety of materials such as wood, metal, rubber and glass.

About the same time Marvin Green was composing a piece for glass bowls called "Glass Chants". Two years later, the York New Music Cooperative, which included Marvin, Paul and Miguel, performed a piece for bottles and jugs. Last spring the York Synthesizer Orchestra experimented with glass and electronics in several performances.

In June of this year, the Glass Orchestra formally came together. Since then it has made frequent public appearances including the opening of "A Gather of Glass" at the Royal Ontario Museum in October.

The goals of the group are "to make better music, create new sounds and new sound environments. We might also evolve

toward a more visual experience." The group has already abandoned artificial illumination in favour of candlelight.

Orchestra members also foresee audience participation in a sort of "bring your own bowl" concert with 100 hands bowing a spontaneous symphony of glass sound.

According to John Kuipers, audience response has been favourable so far. "Some people find it mentally cleansing and therapeutic," he says.

"As for myself, I feel very calm while playing. The whole thing is very meditative. The sound of glass is like that. There's some magical thing in the glass."

Paul Hodge said he becomes acutely aware of all sounds around him, "even audience sounds. We get auditory feedback from our audience, not like at a rock concert."

Marvin Green also spoke of a communicative element in the music. "we develop a sensitivity, an understanding and a way of anticipating what someone else will do. Each of us has a different rhythmic understanding of other members in the group."

"The group has a history, a collective consciousness. It knows things that none of us know individually."

You can experience the Glass Orchestra for yourself this Sunday, December 4 at 3:00 p.m. in the Music Gallery.



Gary Hershorn photo

Paul Hodge and a few of the Glass Orchestra's instruments

TFT's Zastrozzi

By David Litzenberger

Zastrozzi appears center-stage.

He is an image of unyielding 'machismo' - dressed in a sleeveless white shirt open at the front with a black leather vest, black leotards, and black boots. A sword is strapped over his shoulder, a knife is visible at the back neckline of his vest.

He assaults the audience from his isolated spot in the light with his presence. He shouts that everyone had better watch him carefully, for the mind and body of Zastrozzi have no equal on earth. He is the master criminal of Europe.

Such is the opening of George F. Walker's new play, *Zastrozzi* (*The Master of Discipline*) which recently played at Toronto Free Theatre downtown under the direction of William Lane. *Zastrozzi* is a vision from the past, or so it seems. There is a great deal of flashing steel and sexual innuendo. While all the sword-fighting, knife-pulling, and half-revealed breasts and torsos are well-timed and pertain to the story, they are certainly not the only dimensions of the play to contend with.

Zastrozzi, with accomplice Bernardo (George Buza), a large, lumbering ignoramus, is on a vendetta against a man named Verezzi, whom he has been hunting for three years. Apparently, Verezzi and his father had hideously murdered Zastrozzi's mother, which becomes rather hard to believe when one sees Verezzi.

Zastrozzi (Stephen Markle) is powerful, lucid, rational, skilled, unequivocal, brilliant, and terrifying. Verezzi (Geoffrey Bowes) is contrastingly a delicate, fair-haired artist, given to uncontrolled bursts of emotion like those of a 12-year-old child.

He is wholly swallowed up by an image of himself as the Messiah.

The play becomes a kind of battleground of the mind. Zastrozzi's logic and rationality hunts down Verezzi's intuition and non-rationality for the final battle over control of thought. But as the play goes on, the distinctions between illusion and reality, good and evil, artist and criminal, begin to blur.

Zastrozzi himself appears not entirely evil and horrible, although his reasons may be rather unacceptable in a court of law, he has reasons nevertheless. When queried as to why he killed a man and destroyed his painting, Zastrozzi answers, "Even an artist must answer to somebody." He is a kind of blood-thirsty critic it would appear.

Zastrozzi sees himself as the ultimate judge on earth, "and who is more qualified?" he asks.

The play is well-constructed, and forms an extremely attractive tapestry of activity. Its wealth of ambiguities almost places it on the verge of being incoherent and uninterpretable. But it is rooted in a strong plot-line and in the juxtaposition of 'out-of-balance' contrasts which run throughout the work.

The performance of Stephen Markle as Zastrozzi was remarkable; all the sinister intelligence and slightly psychopathic tendencies of the man are revealed beside a deeper feeling of humaneness and compassion.

It seems Walker received the inspiration for the play by reading a brief description of Shelley's novel *Zastrozzi* in a biography of that author.

Walker's plays, most of them written in Toronto for the alternative theatres here, all deal in some way with the past, which is an interesting phenomenon. In his dedication to "Sacktown Rag", a play he wrote in 1972, he writes:

Always after a few drinks I'd start talking about the past. People would listen for a while and then mutter "nostalgia" as they left or passed out.

So there were only a few limp bodies left to explain to that the past was insistent, not because of any nostalgia, but because of its size. "It's a huge, awkward thing, that won't go away," I'd tell the bodies... the response was deafening.

Nancy Cole, creator of *Gertrude Stein's Gertrude Stein*, will speak Tuesday from 1 to 3 in Ross S869. The topic is Paris in the 1920's, touching on the lives of Stein and Ernest Hemingway. It's free, sponsored by Stong and Calumet Colleges and the department of English.

The next Cabaret show, being



staged next Wednesday and Thursday, is *A Christmas Cabaret*. It's an original production directed by Brenda

Gladwish. The doors open at 8 and shows are at 9 and 10:30.

Rough Trade returns to York for their last bar appearance before their revue *Restless Underwear* opens (maybe their last bar gig ever!) They'll be at Bethune dining hall Friday night for \$3, or \$9 with a full turkey dinner (\$7.50 for Bethuners).

6174 Yonge St.
North Toronto
223-9551
Mon./Fri, 9-9
Sat. 9-6

GUARANTEED
TAT
HI-FI CENTRES

10176 Yonge St.
Richmond Hill
884-4439
Daily 11-9
Wed. 11-6
Sat. 9-6

**OUR BIGGEST PRE-XMAS STEREO SALE EVER
BEGINS NOW, AS DOES OUR
ELECTROHOME HOLIDAY VALUES SALE,**

PACER

Features: Black Matrix (NGB) Stripe picture tube. Solid State Chassis. 26,500 volts picture power. Full range automatic fine tuning. Power saver switch. Instavuu. Shielded cable connection.

ONLY \$379⁹⁵

3 YR. IN HOME SERVICE



SPRITE

SPRITE M17-501 12" Black and White Portable Sun Shield • Front panel side controls for contrast, brightness, volume • VHF monopole antenna • UHF loop antenna • Rear controls for vertical and horizontal hold • Concealed carry grip • Walnut Woodgrain finish • Weight: 22½ lbs. • Dimensions: 16" W. x 11½" H. x 12½" D.

ONLY \$125⁰⁰

2 YR. PARTS & LABOR
EXTENDED WARRANTY SERVICE



**ELECTROHOME '78 MODELS ARE IN!
AND WE FEATURE A CLEARANCE ON ALL '77 MODELS**