

# Music, Media And Noise



A cursory look at the presentation of two winter term groups, each the result of four weeks of experimentation in the performing arts:

"CREATING MUSIC FROM NOISE." Concert No. 1. George Welmer, instructor, Program "The End;" "Fowl Music;" "Opus Corpus Vox;" "Asylum E;" "Wandering Thoughts;" "Life with Beaujolais;" "Opus II;" "Rapping;" "Music to Watch Men Die By;" "Paper Piece." January 28, Avinger Auditorium.

Since both the "Creating Music" and "Mixed Media" programs were the presentation of the results of individual and group experimentation, and thus cannot be viewed as definitive or even final work in their respective fields, the reviewer, (and the reader) must evaluate them in the same light as he would any experiment. From this point of view, the terms "success" and "failure" represent purely subjective opinion and should not be constructed as definite labels; we cannot measure them in terms of box office grosses, publication and recording demands, packed houses or long runs; a work of this nature succeeds or fails only in the individuals' minds of the audience. The extent of preparation is largely unknown and cannot be taken into account. (Where in the "Creating Music" program notes an aim was stated for a particular experiment, it will be used as a criterion for evaluation.)

Two compositions that the reviewer found particularly interesting in "Creating Music" were "Asylum E" and "Life with Beaujolais." "Asylum E" was intended to "simulate the feeling of entrapment," and well it did so: its resonances suggest a bare confinement and a mood of desperation; played in total darkness and slightly louder it could easily be even a frightening experience. "Beaujolais," which was replaced by a shorter composition in the subsequent performances, can mean what a listener wants it to; its sounds bring to mind both moods and actual objects,

but its length and variety allow the reader's mind to slip from one mood or picture to another, constructing countless different streams of thought.

"Wandering Thoughts" was a clever, sophisticated musical joke, and one of the best items on the bill. This one was a piano composition utilizing the twelve-tone compositional technique and, after being played through, was shown to be equally playable upside-down.

The improvisatory "Rapping" -- an interaction piece by two people, one generating electronic sounds while the other beats on percussion instruments -- had its value as an experiment to its participants and even to the class, but was unexciting as a presentation item. The reviewer likewise questions the validity of the inclusion of "Music to Watch Men Die By," although it was perhaps the strongest statement made and was extremely well constructed for presentation. The opinion here is that it utilized no music and little noise, and was actually a work in the mixed media field--and would have been a worthy addition to that class's performance.

The reviewer maintains the following negative feelings on the other items on the program: "Opus II" was fun thing for the participating audience in a single sort of way, but largely created noise from noise, and playing the recorded results backward didn't help. "Fowl Music" needed refining and equipment not available to the students, and came off sounding painfully amateurish; "Opus Corpus Vox" strongly resembled an acting class assignment or improvisation, valueless to all but is participants, and took interminably long not doing anything. "Paper Piece" seemed like a good idea beforehand, but once it began the listeners waited expectantly for something to happen, and nothing much did. And "The End" looked good and "The End" sounded good, but the twain never met: the program called it "An attempt to express the composer's feelings," but the composer and the film-

maker seemed to be on different wavelengths.

"EXPERIMENT IN MIXED MEDIA." Performance no. 3. Howard Cobbs and Mark Smith, instructors. Presentation in six parts. February 7, Farrago Coffee house.

The "Mixed Media" company didn't give any titles, but we'll do our best without them. The performance opened with a contemporary musical prelude accompanied by abstract projections surrounding the audience; at best it was an acceptable way of killing time until the audience was seated and ready. A piece based on the creation followed, with a very well-written monologue and a good series of projections, concluding with the surprise discovery (and adornment) of man from the middle of the audience. Unfortunately, it was marred by the rather annoying movements of three participants under white cloth, who provided a sort of mobile screen for the projections.

Then came a silent film sequence concerning a collection of characters reminiscent of "Tobacco Road", during which one character killed another's baby, and after a funeral the mortgagee or landlady or somebody tried to evict the bunch of them. The film, though long, was well-made, and the two seconds' worth that was performed live was jarring, to say the least. Next, a peculiarly existential segment, with live actors and projections -- a sort of montage of life, with grim reminders of approaching death, climaxed by a hanging -- that combined into perhaps the most intriguing portion of the presentation. An endless collection of Sprite commercials succeeded that, played on two screens at once, looking dreadfully anticlimactic now, apparently with no purpose other than to try one's patience. Another live act closed the performance, with metallic-faced actors inviting the audience to manipulate a live puppet with a plastic face. Interpret that as you may.

There was good and bad in both presentations, success and failure, and there were technical flaws; the opinion here is that there was enough good in both to make them worthwhile, but enough that wasn't good to leave room for improvement in both.

# Bragg Conference

(Continued from page 2)

4. They will enter discussions of the procedures to guarantee the safety of all withdrawing troops.

5. The Americans pledge to end the imposition of Thieu-Ky-Khiem on the people of South Vietnam in order to insure their right to self-determination and so that all political prisoners can be released.

6. The Vietnamese pledge to form a provisional coalition government to organize democratic elections. All parties agree to respect the results of elections in which all South Vietnamese can participate freely without the presence of any foreign troops.

7. The South Vietnamese pledge to enter discussion of procedures to guarantee the safety and political freedom of those South Vietnamese who

have collaborated with the U. S. or with the U. S.--supported regime.

8. The Americans and Vietnamese agree to respect the independence, peace and neutrality of Laos and Cambodia in accord with the 1954 and 1962 Geneva conventions and not to interfere in the internal affairs of these two countries.

9. Upon these points of agreement, we pledge to end the war and resolve all other questions in the spirit of self-determination and mutual respect for independence and political freedom of the people of Vietnam and the United States.

By ratifying the agreement, we pledge to take whatever actions are appropriate to implement the terms of this joint Treaty and to insure its acceptance by the government of the United States.

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