

## Classical Music Review

Different meanings  
for string quartet, composers' co-op

# 'Modern' music is in the ear of the performer

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**W**HAT exactly constitutes a modern work? Wednesday's concerts at Stanford University showed diametric perspectives. For one group, a 1931 composition served as the modern work; for another, a 1983 opus served as the old work.

The first group was the long-absent Muir String Quartet. Santa Cruz audiences remember this engaging ensemble from 1982, but the version that turned up Wednesday was not very familiar.

When the group was in residence at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Joseph Genualdi was first violinist. In 1985 Lucy Stoltzman replaced Genualdi, and was spelled in turn last fall by the astonishing appointment of Peter Zazofsky.

Each had a distinctive style, tone and manner. The shocker was the addition of Zazofsky, one of the hot young talents and individualists on the concerto scene; he played Prokofiev's Second with the San Francisco Symphony just two

months ago. Dovetailing his heavy concerto schedule, and particularly his characteristic independence, with ensemble needs will prove a special challenge, as Wednesday's Dinkelspiel Auditorium outing demonstrated.

Judgment is still out here, especially in works requiring close interplay. In the amazingly advanced Quartet in G Major, Op. 77, No. 1 by the 67-year-old Haydn, Zazofsky showed a grand rapport and sparkling personality, doing the extensive solo burdens with fiber, purity and integrity. There was strength yet also cleanliness, ample to illuminate that incredible presto minuet foreshadowing all the symphonic scherzos of the 19th century.

In the Prokofiev Quartet No. 1 in B Minor (1931), however, sonorities were lacking and intonation was off; the interpretations had even more enigmas than the famous fade-out ending of this piece. It's a fascinating creation, in transition from Prokofiev's more classical moments to his big 1930s ballet score (compare the opening theme here to the Montague-Capulet skir-



Adapting to the schedule and individualism of Peter Zazofsky, left, will be challenging for the Muir String Quartet.

mish of "Romeo and Juliet"). The piece is wane more than warm, restless more than rustic, caustic more than classic.

Apart from Zazofsky, the Muir quartet's personnel are unchanged since 1982: Bayla Keyes, violin,

Steven Ansell, viola, and Michael Reynolds, cello. Currently in residence at Boston University, this important ensemble will reach its 10th season next year. To celebrate, it could be fun to program only the 10th quartets of different

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composers: Haydn, Mozart (both early works), Schubert (a late work), Beethoven ("Harp"), Shostakovich and maybe even Ludwig Spohr, Darius Milhaud and Peter Sculthorpe. The group could go in many directions from here, but first it must focus its musical persona.

The same evening, Stanford hosted Earplay, a San Francisco composers' cooperative that performs its own music, without waiting for invitations from sponsors. This is a bold concept, and all the pieces performed by the chamber players at the Knoll were from the past five years.

The democratic, non-profit corporation now in its third season lists no artistic director. It is guided instead by its musically knowledgeable seven-member board. Its music is decidedly for the cognoscenti, with most of the composers coming from the area's universities.

One work was unveiled this week, "A Chamber Symphony" to mixed media by 47-year-old Edward Dugger of the University of California, Berkeley faculty. I used what for Earplay is a large ensemble: violin, cello, bass, flute, clarinet, piano (and lots of it!) plus two-channel electronic tape. It's an energetic, uncompromising, demanding work, where the tape provides well-integrated metallic thrusts and the cello often serves as a weaver to bind elements.

The four sections are thematically linked. Dugger's style is unusual. He likes long, dissonant crescendo chords. His players hop from chord to chord as if negotiating steppingstones in a pond. They insert fast little phrases and flourishes in between, as if some dancers were doing the movement with impromptu punctuation.

It's an aggressive, post-serial work bristling with intensity.

Dugger, who for some incomprehensible reason was forgotten when the New Grove Dictionary of American Music was compiled, attended the performance conducted in the tiny hall by Jonathan Khuner.

Restaurant Guide  
**Weekend Dining**