

Earplay targets the brain

Allan Ulrich, EXAMINER MUSIC CRITIC
 Published 4:00 am, Tuesday, November 16, 1999

0 0 0
 Tweet Like Share
 Comments (0) Email This
 Larger | Smaller | Font
 Printable Version

EARPLAY, the feisty Bay Area new music organization (one of a couple, actually) launched its 15th season Monday evening at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Forum with another of the group's challenging programs, this one inclining to the cerebral. Fortunately, a couple of works exerted a more universal appeal.

What's new with Earplay this season is the resignation, after 14 years, of conductor [George Thomson](#), whose position this year will be taken by a series of guests; French-Canadian musician [Linda Bouchard](#) assumed the duties Monday and she will be followed by Karla Lemon, [David Milnes](#) and [Mary Chun](#). Earplay will also move around in the next few months. The Jan. 24 concert, which entails the use of computers and electronics, will happen at Stanford [University's Braun Music Center](#).

Monday's opener featured the first of three 1999-2000 Earplay commissions, "Manners of Speaking," by [Eric Zivian](#), who also served as the evening's pianist. Joining him were Tod Brody, flute; Peter Josheff, clarinet; [Robin Bonnell](#), cello; [Karin Bentley](#), violin; and Ken Paicik, percussion.

To frame Zivian's quartet, Earplay came up with four works by old American masters. They included [Lou Harrison](#) ("Ariadne"), [Ruth Crawford Seeger](#) (Sonata for Violin and Piano), [Elliott Carter](#) ("Gra") and [Jacob Druckman](#) ("Come Round"). It would be hard to find a more eclectic bunch.

[Harrison's](#) enchanting 1987 work for flute and percussion was composed for dancer [Eva Soltes](#), a specialist in the South Indian form of movement known as Bharata Natyam, and the kinetic impulse is omnipresent. In the first section,

"Ariadne Abandoned," the flute winds its way through the modal writing yielding another of the striking melodic cells for which the Aptos-based musician is famous; the sense of Ariadne's solitude is conveyed. Then, the tambourine and drums propose a rhythm for the exuberant "Triumph of Ariadne and Dionysus," in which the flute creates a mood of neoprimitivism, one carried off with conviction.

Seeger's engrossing 1926 sonata proved the evening's most fascinating discovery, a major component of this musician's agonizingly small catalog. The four movements reveal the influence of Scriabin in the chord clusters and coloration of the thematic lines. After an impassioned opening, the second movement is downright winsome in the exchange of material between players. The third adheres to the composer's marking, "Mistico, intenso." And the finale with its unusual stops and starts supplies its own drama.

Entertainment Photos

Displaying 1-3 of 4



St. Patrick's Day events 2013



Green Day, Pomona (March 10, 2013)



Varr TI

Most Read | Most Commented

1. Dianne Feinstein clashes sharply v Partier Ted Cruz
2. Pedestrian, 69, killed in S.F. crash
3. Islamophobic ads on Muni are sta reason
4. More cuts at KGO Radio
5. Bay Bridge drivers slow for lower
6. Police: Calif teacher had sex with
7. Devil's Slide Tunnel to open Mar

Today's Deal

\$75 -- SF Bay Winery Cruise w/ Reg. \$165



SAI
3d
PR
\$

Most remarkable, despite the indebtedness to Scriabin, is the boldness of the writing, which avoids any of the wispieness often attributed to the Russian composer. It helped that Bentley is a keenly expressive player with a robust tone and a welcome thrust to her playing; Zivian etched the piano part with exuberance.

His premiere, arranged for piano, violin, cello and clarinet, is a seven-minute essay that, per the title, attempts a conversation between equals. One wondered why Bouchard's services were required for a quartet, until it began. Zivian lards the score with all manner of unexpected rests and surprising accents. Despite the conscientious performance, the work seemed elusive on first hearing.

On the other hand, nothing escapes you in the four-minute clarinet solo, "Gra," penned by Carter in 1993 for the 80th birthday of fellow composer, [Witold Lutoslawski](#). Josheff contributed a remarkable reading, diving to the instrument's lowest register, soaring to its highest, jumping through chords and sustaining long lines with breathing that never faltered.

Druckman's 1992 sextet will scarcely earn a prize for loveliness. Over a 25-minute span, the players are enmeshed in a dense series of variations of contrasting tempi. Sustained notes and disturbing cadences from the percussion finally take their toll on the listener. Effects proliferate: soft buzzing in the violin is echoed by a wisp of sound from the flute. The cello and percussion have a meeting of sonorities; and there are a few moments that recall Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du soldat."

Bouchard conducted carefully. Still, "Come Round" is not something one thirsts to encounter soon again.

For more information about Earplay's 1999-2000 season, call (415) 978-2787.<

Printable Version
 Email This
 Like
 Tweet 0
 Share

From Around the Web [\[What's this?\]](#)

- [40 Worst Fielders in Baseball History](#) (Bleacher Report)
- [Samsung Galaxy S4 Photo Leaked Ahead Of March 14 Event](#) (InvestingChannel)
- [Finally Chemotherapy Game Changer for Stage 4 Cancer](#) (Envita)
- [Why You Shouldn't Buy A Hybrid](#) (Consumer Car Reviews)
- [15 Foods to Avoid with High Blood Pressure](#) (HealthCentral.com)
- [6 Olympic Stars Who Got Filthy Rich After The Games](#) (ThePostGame)

We Recommend

- [Historic Piedmont house offers lakeside location and 11,200...](#)
- [NY mom holding baby falls 8 stories, dies; baby OK](#)
- [Soccer goalie convicted in killing](#)
- [Strip club brawl ends in leg amputations for two men](#)
- [BART elevator crushes man in shaft](#)
- [Taiwan gang enforcer gets prison in Vegas slaying](#)



Subscribe to the San Francisco Chronicle and receive access to the Chronicle for iPad App and a gift:

- Sunday + a \$15 gift card
- Fri-Sun + a \$15 gift card
- Mon-Sun + a \$25 gift card

Add Your Comment

New to the site?

To use commenting, you need to sign up.

Already a member?

Please log in. [\(Forgot Password?\)](#)

Username

Password

Remember Me

FROM OUR HOMEPAGE



Devil's Slide Tunnel to open

After years of construction, twin tunnel bypass Highway 1's slippery slide area



Spring is springing up

The sun is shining and temperatures are rising. What outdoor spots do you like to visit?



The new cannibal in town

An octopus that eats its own is just one of Academy's bizarre animals. [See some](#)



Inside SFGate

Displaying 1-4 of 12 « »



New pope tainted by Argentina's 'dirty war' past?



Sky-high housing tarnishes Golden State



Fiore: Mr. Blasty goes to Washington



Remnants of the fabled Harrah Collection

Ads by Yahoo!

[Airport & Cruise Parking](#)

Free parking at airport & cruiseport with 1 nite
www.stay123.com

[hotel in san francisco](#)

\$99 Downtown Plus Free \$50 Rebate! 99 Hr Sale,
BookIt.com/SanFrancisco

[San Francisco Giants Sho](#)

Official Houston Astros Gear
Francisco Giants Fans
FastballFanatics.com/Houston

Sp

[Home](#) [News](#) [Sports](#) [Business](#) [Entertainment](#) [Food](#) [Living](#) [Travel](#) [Shopping](#) [Find Bay Area Jobs](#) [Real Estate](#) [Cars](#) [Site Index](#)

Company Info: [Contact Us](#) [Hearst](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Your California Privacy Rights](#) [Terms & Conditions](#) [Work for Us](#) [Chron in Education](#) [Events & Promotions](#)

Advertising Services: [Advertise with us](#) [Place a Classified](#) [About Our Ads](#) [Public Notices](#) [Local Businesses: Business Directory](#)

Reader Services: [Home Delivery](#) [Subscribers](#) [iPad](#) [E-Edition](#) [Mobile](#) [RSS Feeds](#) [Newsletters](#) [Feedback](#) [FAQ](#) [Corrections](#) [Get Us](#)

Local Services: [Air Conditioning Contractors](#) [Car Dealerships](#) [Cleaning Services](#) [Family Doctors](#) [Furniture Stores](#) [Injury Attorneys](#) [Local Restaurants](#) [New C](#)
[Real Estate Agents](#) [Real Estate Attorneys](#)

© 2013 Hearst Communications Inc.

HEARST newspapers