

GLSG Newsletter

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introduction

Welcome to the fall issue of the Newsletter of the Gay & Lesbian Study Group of the American Musicological Society (AMS). The GLSG is a recognised special interest group of the AMS. A list of GLSG officers and their addresses appears at the end of this issue.

Our objectives include promoting communication among lesbian & gay music scholars, increasing awareness of issues in sexuality and music in the academic community, and establishing a forum for the presentation of lesbian & gay music studies. We also intend to provide an environment in which to examine the process of coming out in academia, and to contribute to a positive political climate for gay & lesbian affirmative action and curricula.

Subscriptions & Contributions: Issues appear twice a year in March and October. We ask (US) \$10 per year for subscribing individuals, \$20 for institutions, \$15 for couples, and \$7 for the unwaged. Subscribers outside North America should add \$2 to the appropriate category. Subscriptions cover the calendar year; we supply sample or back issues on request. Please make cheques out to *GLSG--Mario Champagne* and mail to the address listed at the end of this issue. If you need a receipt (in addition to your canceled cheque) please say so.

The financial burden of producing this Newsletter is not eased by any institution or grant. We welcome contributions in any amount. A Supporting Member subscription is \$25, which goes toward production of the Newsletter.

Mailing List: We encourage you to send names for the mailing list to Mario Champagne at the address listed at the end of this issue. Names and addresses of your colleagues are welcome, as well as addresses of lesbian & gay musical institutions. The GLSG mailing list is not offered to any other organization.

Announcements & Articles should be sent to Stephen McClatchie, co-editor, by 15 February and 15 September of each year. E-mail submissions are preferred, if possible. We welcome news items, announcements of

conferences, concerts, and workshops, special bibliographies, syllabi, suggestions, and letters (even complaints).

Photocopying: Libraries are authorized to photocopy materials in this Newsletter for the purposes of course reserve reading at the rate of one copy for every fifteen students, and may reuse copies for other courses or for the same course offered subsequently.

Gentle readers: Fall 1997 will bring changes to the GLSG Board in general, and the Newsletter in particular. Martha will finish her work as co-editor, and a new person will be elected for this post at the GLSG meeting in Phoenix. See the co-chairs' report for the details. Please send your Newsletter submissions to Stephen whose email and snail mail addresses are printed at the end of this issue.

RENEWAL TIME has come round again. We rely entirely on membership dues for the production of this Newsletter, so please take a moment to fill out the renewal form and send in your dues.

[Martha Mockus and Stephen McClatchie]

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upcoming conference

Composing a Career, a career development symposium for women composers, will be held at Mills College, Oakland, California, on November 15-16, 1997. Presented by The Women's Philharmonic, our purpose is to provide information and inspiration to women composers desiring to move to more active professional levels. Speakers include composers Libby Larsen and Pauline Oliveros, conductors JoAnn Falletta and Apo Hsu, Tom Broido of Theodore Presser Publishing, Fran Richard from ASCAP, composer Laura Karpman on composing for films and television, sound engineer Leslie Ann Jones on producing your own CD, Carl Stone from Meet the Composer, David Harrington from the Kronos Quartet, and performers and advocates of self-publishing. Cost: \$100. For a brochure and registration form, contact The Women's Philharmonic, 4 Page Street, Suite 604D, San Francisco, CA 94102. Tel: 415/437-0123. Fax: 415/437-0121. email: womensphil@aol.com.

report from the co-chairs

The Co-Chairs hope to see as many of the membership as possible at our meeting in Phoenix this year. We are very lucky to be able to build this year's program around a wonderful guest speaker: Professor Sue-Ellen Case, of the University of California-Davis, is a celebrated scholar of feminism, theater, and lesbian studies. She has written and co-edited a number of books, including *Feminism and Theatre* (New York, 1988), and with Philip Brett and Susan Leigh Foster, *Cruising the Performative: Interventions Into the Representation of Ethnicity, Nationality, and Sexuality* (Bloomington, 1995). Her most recent work is entitled *The Domain-matrix: Performing Lesbian at the End of Print Culture* (Bloomington, 1996). We hope you will be able to come hear Professor Case, and join in on what should be a very lively discussion. Also, please remember that at the AMS annual business meeting, we will be presenting the first ever Philip Brett award. Come for the excitement, come for the glamour, come for the political effect.

The GLSG Board scheduled the party on Saturday before realizing that, alas, Friday night is actually Halloween (what some of us might consider one of the queer holy days). Given the short notice, we have decided not to move the party; *but* the membership might think about terrorising the Valley of the Sun on the night before. If anyone knows anyone who lives in Phoenix, now's the time to get the addresses of bars, bathhouses, coffeeshops, bus terminal bathrooms... [Suzanne adds: parades, costume balls, rodeos, butch/femme fashion shows,

vampire bars, Catherine Deneuve look-alike contests....]

Although we can't give any details, there are plans afoot to organize an actual Queer Music conference in a couple of years from now. It is not too soon for the membership to begin thinking of topics they might like to discuss, research, present, maybe someday publish... And there's an important venue already available to us, in the GLSG Newsletter.

We remind the membership that this election, there will be a turnover in officials: Richard Agee and Judith Peraino will be leaving as members-at-large, Mario Champagne will be stepping down from his position as Secretary-Treasurer, Martha Mockus will be resigning as Co-Editor, and Mitchell Morris will had over his Co-Chair's tiara. We thank all of them for their service, and look forward to their continuing activity in the group. We will present the membership with a slate of nominations on the glsg email list in early October; nominations from the floor will also be very welcome.

Your humble servants,
Suzanne Cusick & Mitchell Morris

feature article

Queering the Pianist: Frederic Rzewski's *De Profundis*¹

1. The Wilde Piano Bench

Algernon: Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?

Lane: I didn't think it polite to listen, sir.

Algernon: I'm sorry for that, for your sake. I don't play accurately--any one can play accurately--but I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned, sentiment is my forte. I keep science for Life.² (Wilde, *The Importance*

¹ The following article is excerpted from my doctoral dissertation essay entitled *Queer Effects, Wilde Behaviour: Frederic Rzewski's De Profundis*. Earlier versions were presented as lecture-recitals at Feminist Theory and Music 3 in Riverside, 1995, and at the 1996 Canadian University Music Society conference at Brock University.

² I would like to acknowledge and thank Kevin Kopelson who, in a conversation, reminded me of this opening scene from Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. In *Beethoven's Kiss: Pianism, Perversion, and the Mastery of Desire*, Kopelson draws upon this scene and other literary excerpts to outline links between amateur pianism, effeminacy, and homosexuality

A shrewd observer of social behaviour, Oscar Wilde outlines to outline in his writings the significance of the piano as a locus of feminine identity within nineteenth-century society.³ While the cult of the (male) keyboard virtuoso declined in western Europe after the middle of the nineteenth century, the role of the (female) piano *amateur* continued to flourish within domestic circles (Plantinga 12-13). In the previous century, the playing of keyboard instruments was a sign of *gentility* in young women. In the nineteenth century, the playing of the piano was to continue this legacy; however, conscripted as an inculcator of Victorian sensibilities, the piano also became a sign of *respectability*. In service of such a moral imperative, the piano comes under scrutiny in the writings of Wilde; irony, wit and mockery serve to situate the piano as an encoder of complex and contradictory social meanings. In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Wilde's depiction of Algernon idly playing the piano seems to indicate the ability of males to engage in such a "feminine" activity. Yet, Wilde ultimately confirms the piano as a *feminine* discursive construction; Algernon differentiates "sentiment" from "science," Fantasy from "Life," and, consequently, the feminine from the masculine. Further, the piano is revealed as a site where the erotic and exotic are conflated, proving themselves too beguiling for the likes of Lady Henry in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*:

I adore [music], but I am afraid of it. It makes me too romantic. I have simply worshipped pianists--two at a time, sometimes, Harry tells me. I don't know what it is about them. Perhaps it is that they are foreigners. They all are, ain't they? Even those that are born in England become foreigners after a time, don't they? It is so clever of them, and such a compliment to art. Makes it quite cosmopolitan, doesn't it? (46)

The dangerous, seductive qualities ascribed to the piano allow it to be read as a text on which exotic sexualities, including queer desire, are inscribed. In the lecture *The House Beautiful*, Wilde admonishes that "the revolving stool should be sent to the museum of horrors, and a seat large enough for two players be substituted" (921). For Wilde, the piano bench outlines music as a social activity between two people and, as such, the bench suggests the

(13-15).

³ For an insightful discussion of the relationship between the piano and women in the nineteenth century, see Richard Leppert's chapter "Sexual Identity, Death, and the Family Piano in the Nineteenth Century" as found in *The Sight of Sound*, 119-51.

potential to be the *seat* of desire (pun intended). The linking of the Wilde piano bench with desire produces a queer irony; Wilde is noted by critics as the modern prototype of homosexual identity (Sedgwick, *Epistemology* 132). Is the piano bench the modern prototype of homosexual activity, a recently constructed seat on which queer desire may situate itself? Such a question in the context of literary criticism may not seem inappropriate; Wilde's sexuality was openly scrutinized in the latter years of his life. But within the context of the music academy, can the same question be asked? Given musicians' collusion in the phenomenon of the "open secret" which permits societal tolerance of homosexuality as long as relationships *appear* "professional", the piano bench as an embodiment of the Wildean "love that dare not speak its name" is enough to send most musicians scurrying back to retrieve the revolving stool from the museum of horrors.⁴

My consideration of the Wilde piano bench occurs during the centenary of Wilde's release from imprisonment in Reading Gaol for "indecent behaviour with men" (Ellmann xv).⁵ Specifically, American composer Frederic Rzewski's 1992 piano composition *De Profundis: For Speaking Pianist* focuses on Wilde's incarceration. Likened by the composer to an oratorio in which eight sections with text are each preceded by an instrumental prelude, *De Profundis* requires that the pianist speak selected passages from Oscar Wilde's letter from prison to his lover Lord Alfred Douglas. The use of text within a solo piano work challenges notions of classical music as "autonomous," as transcending the constraints of sexuality, gender, class, and race. In general, Rzewski's

⁴ By way of example of the "open secret" phenomenon in music, I would like to draw attention to the entry for Benjamin Britten in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* which portrays Peter Pears as the tenor "whose individual artistry was to inspire many of [Britten's] greatest operatic roles and song cycles" (Evans 293). Other than a few cursory references in the context of compositional dedications or recitals, Peter Pears is not mentioned again. While Pears and Britten appear together in a photograph (297), they appear, not surprisingly, "working" together. Britten and Pears were to be lovers over the course of thirty years (Aldrich 4; Brett, "Musicality" 19). That Britten and Pears were to remain in the favour of the British establishment, including the royal family, attests to the discrete silence which governed the status of their relationship despite its acknowledgement.

⁵ Significantly, Oscar Wilde was welcomed back to the literary establishment when his name finally joined the roll-call at Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey on February 14, 1995.

compositions contest this presumption, situating music as a socio-political text; Rzewski's social conscience interacts and combines with European compositional techniques, his interest in "popular" idioms, and his keyboard virtuosity to create an eclectic style which pianist David Burge describes as "human realism" (228).⁶ In Rzewski's acclaimed set of variations *The People United Will Never Be Defeated*, a few extra-keyboard effects (e.g., whistling, slamming the keyboard's lid, shouting) are employed in order to relate aspects of the Chilean resistance movement. In *De Profundis*, an even greater variety of such effects is employed to relate the thoughts of an imprisoned gay writer.⁷ In a sense, Rzewski's *De Profundis* conflates the piano bench and the prison bench, forcing the pianist to performatively constitute queer desire *and* represent the experience of state-sponsored violence designed to cure/punish the queer body.

In the section which follows, I will describe the queer body in terms of four characteristics which weave themselves through Rzewski's *De Profundis*: excess, sexual fantasy, madness, and sorrow. My analytical approach is intended neither to be exhaustive nor definitive, but rather, to attempt to integrate Lee Edelman's *homographesis* in the discussion of this piano composition. Edelman's approach to analysis consists of a double operation which begins with the tracking of characteristics which identify the queer body as *different* (Edelman 13-14). Given the history of the queer body as a site of state-sponsored violence, my approach in *De Profundis* necessarily focuses on the specifics of the Wilde body and how the description of such a body necessarily invokes the terms and conditions of the penal institution. By marking the Wilde body as a production of penal discourse, the second operation of *homographesis* occurs; it seizes the inconsistencies and fissures which accumulate around male identity and allows for the queer body to be de-scribed. In other words, queer effects and Wilde behaviour will be seen to embody queer desire as well as the effects of incarceration, thus destabilizing heterosexual male identity through its potential to be read as queer. In summary, it is my contention from *my* seat of desire at the piano bench is that queer effects, combined with Wilde behaviour, are woven together with text and music in Rzewski's *De Profundis* both to describe and de-scribe the

⁶ For a discussion of Rzewski's piano music within the context of twentieth-century piano literature, see David Burge's *Twentieth-Century Piano Music* (228-34).

⁷ The years of composition of *The People United* and *De Profundis* are, respectively, 1976 and 1992.

queer body.

2. Benching Queer Identity

Wilde's letter from prison is published and known by the title *De Profundis*; however, its original title *Epistola: In Carcere et Vinculis* [*Letter: In Prison and In Chains*] reveals the specific conditions under which the letter was produced. Wilde was at the height of his career when charges of sodomy were laid against him. Flamboyant, effeminate, aesthetic, prone to excess: these characteristics not only have been used to describe Wilde, but also the characteristics of the "homosexual" as established by nineteenth-century medical discourse. The marking of the queer body in these terms and others served to increase the chances of conviction and the lengths of sentencing penalties in late nineteenth-century England through the production of queer *visibility* (Mosse 28-29).

If the judicial system was unfavourably disposed to the likes of Wilde, the penal system was equally merciless and severe. Wilde's sentence to two years of hard labour was served under contemporary regulations of solitary confinement, meaning that Wilde's days unfolded with little variation: waking at 6 a.m., oakum picking or another repetitive labour until 5:30 p.m., lights out at 7 p.m.⁸ The text which opens Rzewski's work is Wilde's statement "People point to Reading Gaol and say, 'That is where the artistic life leads a man.' Well it could lead to worse places." Ironically, due to the silence of solitary confinement and the monotony of meaningless work, there were few worse places to be. Indeed, Regenia Gagnier summarizes the mental effects of solitary confinement on prisoners of all sexual orientations over the past hundred years as the following: "disruptive outbursts against the system, sexual and other fantasies, rehearsing of dialogues from previous times, and the specific reconstruction of local life outside" (351). Gagnier points to the Wilde imagination as an antidote to insanity, serving as a means by which resistance to institutionalized control and regulation occurred. In the prelude which begins this work, the effects of breathing, grunting, and groaning disrupt the normative semiotic universe of so-called classical music. But do they create an *excess*, a *flamboyance* suggestive of the queer body? The answer may be yes, but Gagnier's listing of disruptive outbursts as a mental effect of solitary confinement serves to de-scribe the queer body by potentializing the heterosexual body to disrupt and puncture the deafening

⁸ For a detailed examination of the prison system and conditions in operation during Wilde's incarceration, see Regenia Gagnier's "'De Profundis' as 'Epistola: in Carcere et Vinculis': A Materialist Reading of Oscar Wilde's Autobiography."

silence of the prison cell as well.

The extent to which the imagination is able to resist the effects of isolation is exemplified in the sixth section of Rzewski's work. Whispering the text, the pianist drums first on the piano, then proceeds to strike various parts of the body to reflect Wilde's contention that "there is nothing that happened in those ill-starred years that I cannot recreate in the chamber of the brain which is set apart for grief or for despair". The physicality of the effects used in this section - scratching, slapping, stroking - graphically orient the audience to the ability of the imagination to recreate and embody *queer* desire; after all, it is Lord Alfred Douglas he is remembering. Phantasmagorical in its recreation of detail and physical sensation, this section represents the imagination as that which provides agency to queer subjectivities overwhelmed by enforced monotony and extreme forms of isolation. Queer desire is further described in this section's prelude which consists of a gentle, undulating pattern is interposed with "soft sighs". These sighing figures, in accordance with the composer's written instructions, begin in the normal register and end in falsetto, a register usually associated with males imitating the stereotypical "female voice character" (Sundberg 50). Rzewski parenthetically entitles this section "Song Without Words," invoking the solo compositions of the same title written by Romantic composer Felix Mendelssohn. Marketed to middle-class women, Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words* were often assigned titles at publication which would be constructed as "feminine" (e.g., night, dreams, memory, regret, lost happiness). While Mendelssohn refused to outline specific meanings in these piano works, it was not because he viewed music as abstract or autonomous.⁹ Rather, music was too definite, being both a cognitive and physical act; as Richard Leppert states, music for Mendelssohn was "sensual/emotion, embodied and physical. . . . Naming is redundant, for the subject is always already 'known'" (214). The "known" subject of the prelude to the sixth section, Wilde's transgressive desire, is expressed in this, a *Song Without Words* which, in requiring the male voice register of falsetto, doubles as a drag queen's *Torch Song With Sighs*.¹⁰

To proceed to de-cribe the queer body in terms of *De Profundis*' sixth section may be viewed as an attempt to disassociate the queer body from queer desire. Isn't my

⁹ Mendelssohn writes that what music expresses to him "is not thought too *indefinite* to be put into words, but, on the contrary, too *definite*" (269-70).

¹⁰ The "torch song" -- a genre popular with some gay men -- is set in ballad form and commonly evokes a forlorn sense of desire.

goal to claim queer desire rather than demonstrate it to be the same as heterosexual desire? Isn't my intention to situate the queer subject as a *viabile* subjectivity? The goals of an analytical approach using *homographesis* are, indeed, to claim queer desire as well as to provide viability to the queer subject. However, such goals are reached through a process which acknowledges the queer subject's inability to step outside dominant discursive formations. Oppositionality is gained through doubling back on heterosexual definitions of queer desire. Thus, as Gagnier has pointed out, sexual fantasy is not exclusive to Wilde, but rather is endemic to all individuals kept in solitary confinement. It is important to privilege queer desire, but to do so in a way which sets it apart or as "different" from (heterosexual) male identity tends to replicate rather than resist dominant discursive strategies, strategies which seek to enforce *difference* in the interests of power structures. To describe the use of falsetto as representative of the Wilde body *may* be true, but to limit drag queens to queers fails to seize the delicious definitional incoherence which erupts around male identity and *difference* when those other "feminine" cross-dressers come out of the closet: heterosexual males.

The so-called "feminine" within society--women and homosexual included--were construed by nineteenth century medical discourse as prone to nervous disorders and insanity. The prelude to section seven is seamlessly attached to the prelude and text of section six, linking the feminine "Song Without Words" to an ensuing barrage of queer effects: nonsense syllables, imitations of animals and musical instruments, the slapping of various parts of the body. Has the imagination gone Wilde, so to speak? Are we witnessing the links among madness, women, and music as outlined by McClary (*Feminine* 81)? A certain amount of ambiguity seems to be purposefully created by Rzewski, suggesting that the imagination gone Wilde *may* be mistaken for craziness. As Mosse points out in the context of the ideal male identity circulating in the nineteenth century, the medical profession enforced ideas that one abnormality led to another; the masturbator's passion for secrecy led to homosexuality which led to various forms of insanity (11). However, the potential for solitary confinement to produce insanity fails to provide the proof that such madness is particularly *queer*. Intriguingly, as the text then clarifies within section seven, it is the Gods who "are strange," bringing us to ruin through what in us is "good, gentle, humane, loving." Rzewski, in what amounts to as an act of de-description, creates the appearance of insanity to point out that actually, as the satirical film title suggests, "the Gods must be crazy."

The isolation and monotony of solitary confinement were to shift Wilde's aesthetic stance. Bruce Bashford outlines how Wilde's theory of criticism in his dialogues on criticism, "The Decaying of Lying" and "The Critic as

Artist," initially situated form as the enabler of expression, releasing into social space the private and personal (395). A variety of forms is seen to be needed, facilitating new discoveries and new perspectives (398). But the monotony of prison life eliminates any sense of variety of form and, as Wilde says, "motion is no more." Rzewski may be seen to reflect Wilde's altered aesthetic view in the prelude to section four. Exploiting a fugal style of writing, Rzewski presents a single theme or subject which is then restated a number of times. For Wilde, suffering is the single theme which returns again and again. Other than the fluctuation and "fleeing" of the moods of suffering, there are no motion and variety within prison.¹¹ These are further illustrated in the prelude to section five. Written in a style which exploits perpetual rhythmic motion and the slightest of dynamic nuances within an extremely quiet context, Rzewski's work may be seen to create, in the words of Wilde, those "varying modes of anguish" which have become markers of time and signifiers of identity.

Is Wilde's preoccupation with suffering a gesture of self-pity bordering on narcissism? In the context of the musical work, Rzewski accompanies Wilde's comments on suffering with texturally sparse and rhythmically static piano figuration. Forlorn, abandoned, Wilde sees himself as a victim in his fall from fame to infamy. Is this the quintessential experience which every parent fears for a gay son? Is this what it means to be gay? Certainly, in the context of Wilde's life, such a disastrous experience was not imagined, but real. But to situate suffering as an inevitable consequence of being "homosexual" parallels attempts to situate death from AIDS as an inevitable consequence of being "gay." To de-scribe the queer body of suffering, then, is to place suffering within the realm of social oppression and not merely as the cause of some inner angst. In a move which may serve to deconstruct the societal conflation of "homosexuality" and "suffering," Wilde posits sorrow as that which facilitates expressiveness for the artist and allows for self-development. Indeed, Bashford postulates that sorrow replaces form in any expression theory attributable to Wilde at this time (399). Sorrow is seen as the purest and most sensitive of the emotions, that which removes masks and strips one of all that is seen to imprison or encumber the soul, including identity. Wilde sees the transformative power of suffering as embodied in Christ with whom Wilde becomes fascinated as "the supreme Individualist" (400). Ironically, state-sponsored violence designed to cure the "gay" body has worked to bring about its self-realization.

¹¹ The use of the fugal form in the context of "fleeing" moods is significant, given the origins of the term fugue from the Latin *fugere*, meaning "to flee."

3. The Tenses of Queer Excess: Speak/Spunk/Spunk¹²

One must have a piano I suppose but it is a melancholy thing, and more like a dreadful, funereal packing-case in form than anything else. (Wilde, *House Beautiful* 920)

The linking of queer desire and the piano bench proves to be a provocative entry into the study of music and its relationship to gender and sexuality. The history of the piano constitutes, in many respects, a social history of the nineteenth century; the site of the keyboard as an inculcator of *respectability* for young women serves to delineate music's role in the structuring of gender and social relations. Constructed as "feminine," the piano becomes a place of sentiment, of social gossip, of exotic desires. That queer desire is articulated at the piano is underscored by the association of "feminine" melancholy with both the piano and the "homosexual." Indeed, Wilde's description of the piano as "a melancholy thing, and more like a dreadful, funereal packing-case in form" resonates with descriptions of the homosexual beginning in the late eighteenth century. In *The Outline of Forensic Medicine* (1796), Johann Valentine Müller describes the sodomite as being characterized by red eyes, weakness, depression, dishevelled appearance, and a tendency for the head to droop; further, he links the traits of the sodomite to that of the masturbator, both being the results of "bad thoughts and bad nerves" and leading to state treason, insanity and aspirituality (Mosse 29). As the wax figures of J.F. Bertrand's late eighteenth century Parisian museum were to attest, masturbators suffered from exhaustion - most figures were depicted near death - caused by both the physical act and excessive sensuality (12). Homosexuality, constituting an *excess*, becomes linked with masturbation as a place of melancholy and death. Thus, Wilde's description of the piano as melancholic together with other "feminine" terms of *excess* - sentimental, romantic, exotic - tends to confirm a connection between the piano bench and queer desire.

Frederic Rzewski's *De Profundis* invites such a connection through its insistence on privileging the queer body through pianistic *excess*. Queer effects and Wilde behaviour serve to outline queer desire and the effects of regulatory measures on it. But as I have sought to demonstrate through the analytic procedures of *homographesis*, the tracking of the queer body through music must proceed tentatively, conscious of how regulatory forces implement and perpetuate the identity category of "queer" as a means of enforcing constraints on the queer body. As an example of how *not* to proceed, one can look to most music departments which, intending to redress the exclusion of women from the canon, develop and implement courses dealing with the music of

¹² ["Spunk" is British slang for semen. Eds.]

women. These courses, when they fail to problematize and interrogate the concept of "woman," serve to silence women's voices; essentialist notions of gender and sexuality mixed with positivistic musicology leave little room for the feminist subject within the music academy. To de-scribe the queer body, then, is both to view it as a complex cultural production and to insist on the diverse ways that it can be apprehended.

Is the modern piano bench capable of queer excess and diversity? Fortunately, the modern piano bench is adjustable, being able to accommodate the diverse body sizes and playing positions. As I have discovered in adjudicating piano classes at musical festivals, the modern piano bench is capable of excess, seating two people and facilitating the playing of piano trio repertoire if the bench is large enough. That ensembles of two or more pianists at one piano prove to be the popular "spectacles" at music festivals indicates how naturalized the piano has become as a solo instrument. Yet, as I watch and listen to three people playing the same piano, I witness excess and diversity: bodies separate and entwine, mistakes are reproached through not-so-discrete elbowing, differing personalities commingle and jostle, and serious intent mixes with humour and giggles.¹³ Viewed in this manner, the piano invites speculation about its use in the nineteenth century. Pianists might have talked as they played. Perhaps they gossiped, sighed, and fantasized. Sometimes, men who desired each other may have played duets and kissed while seated on the piano bench. Frederic Rzewski's *De Profundis* provokes the consideration of the piano as a continuing site of excess and diversity, of social engagement and erotic exchange. Stripped of Victorian sensibilities and the cult of *respectability*, the piano bench may be seen once again as the seat of pianists who speak, spank, and have spunk.¹⁴

¹³ Philip Brett presented a paper on the relationship between duet playing and queer desire entitled "Piano Four Hands: Schubert and the Performance of Gay Male Desire" at *Bordercrossings: Future Directions in Music Studies*, a conference held at the University of Ottawa in March 1995.

¹⁴ In a section entitled "Site-Reading Music," here omitted, I deal with some interesting performance issues. It uses Kevin Kopelson's strategy from "Love's Litany" to address different readerships. Is Rzewski gay and does it matter? What does it mean to be a pianist/political provocateur in a province where one can be fired? Is the performer of the work necessarily male? Rzewski makes the pianist spank him-/herself: does he/she enjoy it? How would female pianists generally respond to being required by a male composer to slap themselves in public? How would an audience view a

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[Milton Schlosser]

laura nyro: a tribute

Laura Nyro, 1947-1997

My first encounter with Laura Nyro's music was with her second album, *Eli and the Thirteenth Confession*, which I bought partly because I knew the song "Eli's Comin'." I hadn't known that Nyro had written it; I had heard only Three Dog Night's swaggering macho version from the early seventies, and to hear the same words and music sung by the woman who had written them blew me away. Where Three Dog Night's "Eli" is a manly warning to "girls" to flee a pitiless seducer (perhaps the singer), Nyro's voice is that of a woman (perhaps his victim) who's known the abyss of love and sex, of God and the devil, of life and death. It was the voice of all her earlier work, and as time passed, her wild and original spirit only seemed to grow outward in ever greater circles, to encompass the themes that informed her later work: the tragedies of a corrupt society, the beauty of childhood, of the earth and of animals, and the spirituality of women. In the first albums - especially the finest, *Eli and the Thirteenth Confession* - Nyro whirls out of the speakers like a hurricane, in a breathtaking fusion of rock, r & b, jazz, Tin Pan Alley and Broadway, characteristically turning song forms inside out and structuring them according to an almost manic-depressive emotional logic. Maybe it just says a lot about me that these songs spoke right to my heart and soul.

Always true to herself, Nyro dropped out of the commercial music scene early in the seventies, and returned to the studio only when she felt she had something to say. *Smile* was her first effort after an absence of several years, and this lovely album finds her style at a crossroads. The untamed energy and poetic edginess have given way to a broder, mellower sound, but the characteristic passion is there, as well as the characteristic slides into melancholy. The tug-of-war between God and the devil that seemed to obsess her earlier writing has resolved into a personal spirituality, partly Eastern-influenced, and partly a result of an increasingly committed feminism. *Smile's* production, simple, tasteful and unadorned, reflects the honesty always at the core of Nyro's art, and points the way to the future.

The last twenty-odd years of Nyro's life saw only a handful of albums, including two wonderfully listenable live sets (*Season of Lights* and *Laura Nyro Live at the Bottom Line*), while her latest material delved deeper into her concerns about the environment and animals, children and radical feminist spirituality. Instinctively, she saw them all as linked, and stemming ultimately from feminism.

We have few of her spoken words, as she did not customarily grant interviews. Her personal life - early success, a marriage, a son, and finally a female companion - always and appropriately fades into the background behind the formidable energy of her artistic personality. She lived the life she wanted to live, and apparently left the world at peace with herself. She also left the legacy of a voice that knew passion and pain, but found sanity and peace deep within her own humanity and her womanhood.

Recently released are a compilation, *Stoned Soul Picnic*, and a tribute album, *Time and Love*.

[Udayan Sen]

conference report

Last June, scholars, performers, and composers arrived at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville from four continents for the fourth **Feminist Theory and Music Conference**. FTM4 reflected the broad scope and viability of feminist work in music, within the tradition set by its predecessors. Paper topics ranged from "popular" to "art" musics. Some presenters sought to reinterpret canonical male composers (and performers) and their work; others sought to explore the works, roles, bodies, and voices of women musicians. Works of living women composers were well represented in performances

as well as in scholarly papers. Notably, the conference organizers commissioned Maura Bosch to compose "The Crossing," a choral piece, which was performed by attendees during a plenary post-luncheon session under J. Michele Edwards's direction. Having attended FTM3, I was encouraged to observe the greater representation of ethnomusicological topics and the increased presence of undergraduates (and recent undergraduates) at FTM4.

The organizers deserve congratulations for coordinating the great diversity of panels. The excellent pacing and organization of the sessions reflected their hard work and dedication. My only frustration was that the large number of concurrent sessions made it impossible for me to attend every paper I wanted to hear, an inevitable problem at a conference with a feminist focus. A large number of papers at a conference sometimes suggests uneven quality; to the credit of the presenters at FTM4, the majority of the papers I heard proved to be well-prepared and insightful. Few presenters, however, used the more open forum of FTM4 to experiment with presentation styles. One exception was Marianne Kielian-Gilbert's "Sound Bodies--Tango, Texture, and Identity in works of 20th-century Women Composers (bodily interventions, resisting the arbitrariness of signs)."

Another real pleasure of the conference was its setting. I was taken with the manicured lawns and gardens, the colonial-style buildings, and the magnolia-scented air of the University of Virginia. The attractive campus and the mild, sunny weather made walks between the meeting rooms, dining hall, and dormitories quite pleasant. The organizers were aware that the widely-dispersed meeting areas challenged the participants' sense of community and organized several plenary sessions to draw the group together.

The opening panel consisted of depressing reports on the state of feminist musicology in Germany and feminist work in the field of ethnomusicology. Eva Rieger and Ruth Heckmann reported that feminist musicologies--and, for that matter, American musicology and popular music studies--are not taken very seriously in Germany. (*Queering the Pitch*, for example, was located in the medical section of one university library.) Elizabeth Tolbert reported that feminist theory is not considered useful in ethnomusicology, especially in the study of ritual and oral traditions. Fortunately, as mentioned previously, more papers of an ethnomusicological bent were presented at FTM4 than at FTM3 where there was a lone session dedicated to such topics. At FTM4 for example, in "Kol Isha -- Women's Voices in Ultra-Orthodox Jewish Society," Ruth Rosenfelder centered her discussion of the way Orthodox women negotiate rabbinic law with her study of singing at an Orthodox girls' school, and Michelle Kisliuk led a plenary session entitled "Music as Community:

Workshop in Central African Polyphony."

In the plenary session, "Remembering Ruth Crawford Seeger," the audience was treated to slides, Mike Seeger's reminiscences of his mother, and a brief performance by the well-known folksinger. Crawford's biographer, Judith Tick, spoke generally on the composer's life and more specifically on her concern with and transcriptions of American folk music.

Several papers concerned the issue of voice in both its literal and figurative meanings. In the "Strange Voices" session, Johanne Blank and Brian Eugenio Herrera examined issues of vocal quality and gender. Blank's elegantly presented "Witches, Bitches, Whores, and Britches: The Liminal Life of the Operatic Mezzo-Soprano" included an extensive survey of mezzo roles and their subversive potentialities. According to Lydia Hamessley in her "Pioneering Women of Bluegrass: The Coon Creek Girls and Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard," low vocal register bolstered Dickens and Gerrard's self-determined artistic presentation. Her paper also served as a much-needed supplement to the history of bluegrass. In "'He isn't a marrying man': Gender and Sexuality in the Repertoire of Male Impersonators, 1870-1920" on the "Women in Pants" panel, Gillian Rodger presented her ground-breaking research into the changing presentations of the popular performers and the relation they bore to ideologies of gender in the wider society. Finally, Elizabeth Paley, in one of the few papers I heard which could be classified as music theoretical, proposed an empowered reinterpretation based upon a vocal entrance in "'The Voice Which Was Whose Music?': Envoicing Astarte in Robert Schumann's *Manfred*."

"Theorizing Persons, Relationships, and Power" was probably the most crowded session that I attended. In "Music, Feminism, and the Problem of the Material," Tamara Schwartztruber drew on the work of Judith Butler to present a provocative critique of some feminist musicological writing which too closely links the feminine and the bodily. Laurel Zeiss and Marion Guck examined specific Beethoven works as they considered questions of musical interpretation and emotional investment in the context of the *querelle* that has arisen in the wake of Susan McClary's widely quoted Ninth Symphony depiction. Andrew Mead concluded the session with an engagingly personal reflection on the role of musician as composer, performer, and listener.

I left FTM4 energized with the knowledge that exciting feminist work is being done in music. In the last paper I heard, Jessica Courtier discussed the performance art response of a group of Mills College women to the decidedly non-feminist music historical canon they had been taught. Feminist work in music is not simply an

academic exercise but has very real political ramifications in the world beyond FTM4.

[Christina Baade]

book reviews

En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera.
Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith, eds.
New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

In *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, editors Blackmer and Smith present a collection as eclectic, exciting and problematic as the genre of opera itself. Bringing together the contributions of literary critics and musicologists, the twelve essays address a variety of subjects ranging from operas marginal to the standard repertory (co-editor Corinne E. Blackmer's "The Ecstasies of St. Teresa: The Saint as Queer Diva from Crashaw to *Four Saints in Three Acts*") to gender issues in operatic staging (Ralph Locke's "What are These Women Doing in Opera?"). A number of methods are represented in the collection; relatively straightforward historical accounts (for instance Lowell Gallagher on Jenny Lind's popularity in America) rub shoulders with fanciful yet sincere fantasias upon authors' relationships with opera (notably H  l  ne Cixous's "Tancredi Continues"). Perhaps most striking is the eagerness with which many of the contributors approach opera as a realm in which issues of gender and sexuality are played out. Accordingly, a wide variety of queer readings are presented which are alternately enlightening and obscure.

Like much recent opera criticism with a decidedly queer slant, many of the contributors to *En Travesti* are not musicologists. Predictably, this situation has opened the book to criticism from music scholars for its presumed lack of rigor (see, for example, Heather Hadlock's review in *Opera Quarterly*). Yet, however jarring the postmodern polyphony of approaches in *En Travesti* might be to some, the very inconsistencies of the collection highlight a number of important issues facing musicology today: the tension between autobiographical insight and more traditional critical methods, the often contradictory worlds of the opera scholar and the opera fan, and the disparities between present-day operatic experience and historical accounts of opera.

The strongest articles in the collection are those which make such issues explicit. Terry Castle's excellent "In Praise of Brigitte Fassbaender" has long been (with Elizabeth Wood's "Sapphonics") the classic account of lesbian diva-worship. Castle's eloquent tribute to the German mezzo aims to "rehabilitate" the emotional excess of the fan--often characterized as infantile (or even

dangerous)--and celebrate the "nourishing power of admiration" for lesbian listeners (p. 49).

In "The Lost Voice of Rosine Stoltz," Mary Ann Smart discusses the problem of recounting the lives of women singers of the pre-recording age whose voices have been "lost." Smart explores the tensions between biography and theory and offers some hope of reconstructing singers' lost voices by examining the collaboration between divas and composers prevalent during Stoltz's time. Smart's approach, like much contemporary opera criticism, further challenges the notion of a coherent, single-authored musical work.

Elizabeth Wood seeks out composer Ethel Smyth's "lesbian voice" in "The Lesbian in the Opera: Desire Unmasked in Smyth's *Fantasio* and *F  te Galante*." Building on her previous work which developed critical tools for describing the "sonic space of lesbian possibility," Wood explores how Smyth could have encoded lesbian desire in works whose narratives are ostensibly heterosexual. As the participation of the listener in decoding veiled representations of that desire is particularly necessary, Wood expands her characteristic concern for what a lesbian sound might be and how one might listen for it. Deftly weaving together biographical information (which often consciously borders upon gossip) and a discussion of the discontinuities, deceit, and unstable identities within Smyth's operas, Wood teases out "sonic spaces" in which Smyth's voice might be heard.

Mitchell Morris's "Admiring the Countess Geschwitz" opens with an epigraph of the Countess's dying words from Berg's *Lulu*. Morris asks himself "why is it so moving to me, this death?" Rather than experiencing vulturistic glee at yet another woman's "undoing," the author seeks to honor the pain of the Countess. Aware of the discontinuity between Geschwitz as operatic and literary persona on the one hand and as a character only fully existing in performance on the other, Morris explores his relationship as a listener with the Countess in light of both the historical context surrounding Wedekind's famous lesbian and Berg's musical portrayal of the character. Through an insightful reading of musical elements of the opera, with special attention given to Berg's blending of twelve-tone technique and quasi-tonal procedures and sonorities, Morris discerns an otherworldly character in Geschwitz's music that affirms her queer existence outside the opera's sordid heterosexual affairs. Examining Berg's stance toward homosexuality and indulging in some intriguing gossip concerning the composer, Morris postulates that Berg's close relationship to his lesbian sister, Smaragda, as well as his own ambiguous sexuality, have much to do with the composer's sympathetic treatment of the character while adding to the opera's queer appeal.

Both Wood and Morris offer elegantly crafted essays which are carefully attuned to the problems of doing queer musicology; the authors make it clear that they speak from positions (in Morris's words) "still being formed." In "I am an Opera: Identifying with Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*," Judith Peraino imaginatively compares her marginal position as a lesbian musicologist to the tenuous place of Purcell's opera within the musical canon. In re-reading traditional musicology's treatment of the opera, Peraino uncovers a certain anxiety over the work's status as a "miniature" and the conditions surrounding its composition and performance. She considers aspects of the dramaturgy thought of as odd, inexplicable, or even flawed. Rather than weakening the opera's integrity, however, Peraino argues that these strange moments provide lesbian access to the drama. In particular, in the relationship between the Sorceress and Dido, which other musicologists have found puzzling for the apparent lack of motives in their actions, Peraino reads a veiled sado-masochistic relationship. She then attempts to "project backward...to reconfigure history from the perspective of the margins" (p. 100), postulating that the relationship between the drama's female characters must have been of considerable appeal to the boarding school girls who performed the opera. Peraino's scope is broad, and her ambitious goal--to reconcile the personal and the professional--is one many scholars on the margins can appreciate.

While the integration of personal experience and professional pursuits is a common concern in *En Travesti*, other contributors are less successful in the attempt. For instance, in co-editor Patricia Juliana Smith's "*Gli Enigmi Sono Tre: The [D]evolution of Turandot, Lesbian Monster*," a direct link is established between the author's life and the history of an operatic character which seems to bias her conclusion. Smith opens with an autobiographical tale of proto-lesbian resistance to the heterosexual imperative of her young adulthood; upon encountering Puccini's opera, she recognizes that she herself had "performed the role" of Turandot. Tracing the changing significance of the Turandot archetype through its various literary manifestations, Smith suggests that the "riddling woman who puts men to the test," though previously lesbian, is becoming heterosexual. Though she links this change to "the ever shifting cultural zeitgeist and changes in women's social conditions" (p. 270), Smith supports her position by claiming that although lesbians of today may no longer need Turandot to channel their fantasies about destroying men, the same is not true for straight women. In effect, Smith's own development is used to devalue women who have not "arrived at the same point" (p.271).

In the worst cases, the subjective basis of an author's critical perspective, rather than being made explicit, remains largely unexamined. Wendy Bashant's effort to

establish the "queer genealogy" of the Orpheus myth in opera results in a muddled and idiosyncratic account ("Singing in Greek Drag: Gluck, Berlioz, George Eliot"). Further, her experiments with form are often confusing rather than thought-provoking. However, the straightforward chronological model chosen by Margaret Reynolds ("Ruggiero's Deceptions, Cherubino's Distractions") is just as problematic. Her account of the woman in pants throughout operatic history, although an enjoyable read, is somewhat hampered by her "evolution of the lesbian in opera" format. Reynolds's article is more useful as a description of modern-day lesbian reception of trouser roles than as a history of the operatic convention itself.

At times, some of the essays in *En Travesti* use personal experience to justify all sorts of strange assertions. Historian Joan Scott has criticized approaches which treat experience as "uncontestable evidence and as originary point of explanation" because the constructed nature of experience and its role in constituting thinking subjects are left unexamined (*Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, 399). As Heather Hadlock has pointed out, one unfortunate result is that the word "queer" in this collection becomes merely a handy (but not very descriptive) label. This is especially true of the Introduction. Blackmer and Smith open with a compelling personal history, "told on condition of anonymity," of one literary critic who "found herself 'accidentally' tuning in to opera on television and radio, reading about divas, and, at last, being unable to throw away a day-old newspaper because it contained a particularly striking photograph of Leontyne Price" (p. 1). The second part of the Introduction, however, abandons this fluid prose style in favor of a sketchy summary--laden with generalities and misconceptions--of "queer operas" throughout history. The autobiographical and the critical here do not fruitfully inform one another; rather, the engaging story of the literary critic remains virtually unexamined, and the "queer history" seems like a very individual conception unsuccessfully masquerading as "objective." The resulting campy effect, we fear, is unintentional.

Because the essays which are most problematic are written by non-musicologists, it might be tempting to ascribe their faults (as Hadlock does) to the authors' status as "tourists" within the field of opera criticism. But instead of rendering suspect approaches which embrace the personal, the difficulty of integrating the opera fan's perspective into existing modes of criticism should prompt a reevaluation of those modes. If, as Hadlock claims, operatic history here is "pervert[ed] ... in the old, non-celebratory sense," perhaps we need to reconsider our notions of what "history" is (Hadlock, 96).

Despite its flaws, *En Travesti* is a must-read;

encountering lesbians on nearly every page of a text on music--especially opera--is a heady experience, rather like happening upon a leather dyke at a society tea. One has the same reaction reading this collection as did the Introduction's anonymous listener upon first hearing a mezzo voice *en travesti*: "Can they do that? Can they get away with that?" The very boldness of its contributors is the collection's greatest asset, and their voices are refreshing and revealing enough to carry the reader's interest. The stories they tell--of passionate diva-worship, of identification with operatic characters and operas themselves, of seducing a desired woman by taking her to *Der Rosenkavalier*--all speak of opera as a realm where rigid categories of gender and sexuality become more flexible and where queer desire becomes possible. Why and how opera can be such a freeing space is a question which this groundbreaking work challenges future criticism to address.

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[Holly Watkins and Melina Esse]

Sam Abel, *Opera in the Flesh: Sexuality in Operatic Performance*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996.

How sweet to hear a pretty mouth sing verses of love. A charming voice entices you, encircles you, even touches you, and enters you as if to kiss your heart. (Giulio Strozzi, c. 1650)

The erotic power of music, especially vocal music, would have come as no surprise to centuries before our own. Music's eros is one of the most reliable themes in lyric poetry, in fiction about music, and in musical autobiographies. With *Opera in the Flesh*, Sam Abel joins a venerable company (Rousseau, Stendahl, Balzac, to name only a few) who have attempted to capture in prose the impact of music on "the body" —which, he is quick to remind us, should not be taken to mean any body but his own.

But on the other hand, Abel may be distinguished from Rousseau, who juxtaposed the pleasures of opera with accounts of his repeated failures with women; from Balzac, whose *Sarrasine* represented opera-love as the prototypical Last Seduction; and from recent critics Wayne Koestenbaum and Paul Robinson, who described opera as a "voice from the closet," a soundtrack to despair and melancholy abjection. Opera has at last become *heimlich*: it supplies Triumphant Marches for Gay Pride

parades, and accompanies cooking, cleaning, and conjugal attachment. Above all, it provides abundant sexual satisfaction without risk, without *tristesse*, and without stigma.

Contrary, too, to Michel Poizat, who conceived operatic jouissance as a rare and elusive pleasure, Abel finds it to be always at hand: for him, characters have orgasms in every scene, and Abel shares these, experiencing each number as a *ménage à trois, quatre, cinque (ad infinitum)*, depending on the number of singers involved. To situate Abel's project within more recent critical discourse, we might substitute "listening" or "music" for "writing" in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's acknowledgment of "how hard it is to circumscribe the vibrations of the highly relational but, in practical terms, solitary pleasure and adventure of writing itself."¹ The prominence of autoerotic images and scenes in Abel's account suggest that we may now add the "masturbating aesthete" to a growing list of self-stimulators, including Freud's child, Sedgwick's girl, and Abel's own androgyne (Cherubino, of course, in "Non so più").

This sense of intimacy, he suggests, derives from the permeability of opera's "fourth wall," the traditional performance style in which singers address the audience directly. I wish that Abel (who is, in his day job, a theater historian) had addressed this seriously. One does not learn from his frankly carnivalesque account of the genre that early nineteenth-century opera, influenced by earlier developments in the spoken theater, did lumber toward increased realism in casting, stage decors and stage movement, subjects, and poetic style. Yet no one could call even the most *verismo* opera "realistic," and, as Abel points out, acoustics provided a natural limit: in opera, unlike the spoken theater, "Singing out [facing the audience] is ... a vital technical requirement" (28). Is the consequent intimacy of operatic performance—the sense that the performer is singing to me—merely a happy accident, as Abel seems to conclude, or is it an essential part of opera's aesthetic?

History and aesthetics aren't really part of this book, though; Abel wants to describe his pleasure, not analyze or historicize it. Respecting his intentions, what can we conclude from this exemplar of self-conscious, situated, and certainly embodied writing on music?

Abel's overwhelming message is simple: "Music is sex." I must admit that the particular style of his argument made me nostalgic for music as sounding form. He quotes Suzanne Cusick's more elegant meditation on the

¹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl," *Tendencies* (Duke University Press, 1993), 110.

point, but contra Cusick he seems disinterested in an "escape from the constraints of the phallic economy." Nor does he need Cusick's subtle re-definition of "sex" as "a means of negotiating power and intimacy through the circulation of pleasure" (83). His hackneyed Freudian strategy is simply to describe every human response (to anything) and interaction (with anything) as a sublimated sexual act. High notes, cadenzas, and final cadences are now *orgasmic* climaxes. Recitatives, scenas, and slow movements are *foreplay*. An ensemble that weaves individual voices into an increasingly complex polyphonic texture is *sex*. Music provokes *arousal*, not interest or engagement; pleasure and excitement must be qualified as *erotic*. While there's nothing inherently wrong with this NC-17 vocabulary, it supplies a surprising dearth of new insights. Abel's claims about the masturbatory subtext of "Non so più," the representation of sex in *Der Rosenkavalier's* Prelude, and the process of seduction in "Là ci darem la mano" have all been made before, in presumably less permissive eras.

Abel implicitly expects a political pay-off from calling everything "sex": opera, he repeatedly asserts, is "dangerous," and he accounts for opera's elitism with the claim that ruling classes must exclude the *hoi polloi* from a potentially revolutionary irritant.² He displays a touchingly groovy faith that our responses to opera's "queer" and "transgressive" energies will empower us against our repressive, anti-sex culture.

These claims about revolutionary potential, however, founder on Abel's insistence that opera is private. Despite his vaguely Nietzschean assertions that live performance provides a communal/Dionysian experience, his anecdotes show his isolation from other listeners. Opera, he says, "is my life, yet it produces physical illness in my friends" (11). In Vienna, he hits someone for talking during "Non so più"; at the Met, he is enraged when people leave before the *Rosenkavalier* trio, wondering, "don't they hear what I hear?" The detailed discussion of that trio, on which he bases his claims for opera's revolutionary perversity, begins with big claims about historical process and communal experience, but quickly recedes back to the discourse of the self (30-31). "My body" is not the body politic, after all. The rhetoric of self-absorption segues into more rapturous invocations of opera as a modern-day Land of the Lotus-Eaters, a place where one can forget reality for as long as the music lasts. But if opera is the opiate of the masses, I must doubt the revolutionary potential he wants to ascribe to it: to whom

² For an account of opera's perceived effeminizing and degenerate tendencies, see Suzanne Aspden, "'An infinity of factions': Opera in eighteenth-century Britain and the undoing of society," *Cambridge Opera Journal* (March 1997): 1- 20.

is the trio "dangerous"?

Abel's other claim—and one that has been made with equal insistence in the recent *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*—is that opera is inherently "queer." The trio from *Der Rosenkavalier*, a kind of leitmotif through the book, illustrates Abel's assertions about "opera's queerness." On the most superficial level, this trio involves a cross-dressed performer and a "fetish" in the form of Octavian's sword. His chapter on "Women-as-Men in Opera" runs down the roster of soprano boys in opera, and he goes further than previous writers on the subject, remarking that these characters are (surprise!) erotic objects for him: "I typically do not make an erotic investment in women's bodies, but Cherubino and Octavian turn me on." Where is the transgression here? Abel ascribes it to the cross-dressing, but women in pants are now an unremarkable part of all but the most conservative fashion landscapes. Eroticization of the young, on the other hand, still has the potential to outrage our jaded society—but Abel doesn't test our tolerance by exploring or explicating his "erotic investment" in opera's boys.

Opera is also supposed to be "queer" because it invites audiences to identify with and revel in deviance: for Abel, "Le pervers, c'est moi." Proudly detailing his obsessive and insatiable desire for opera, he performs the anti-gay stereotype of the homosexual as sexually voracious, indiscriminate. His queer catalog includes any deviation from a monogamous-heterosexual-alloerotic norm: adulterers, rapists, nymphomaniacs, fetishists, and masturbators. He celebrates opera as an irresistibly glamorous display of taboo behaviors, and indeed his fundamental perversion seems to be voyeurism: "I have nothing to fear from [perverted characters], for they are locked safely away in opera's elegant prison, and I am merely a visitor to their cell. Opera gives me power over these perverts because I can look at them and know them..." (125). On the other hand, he derives "relief, not to mention sexual thrill" (125) when the pervert is crushed, stabbed, obliterated. I found this vicarious thrill—the risk-free identification with rebels and enforcers, with sexual outlaws and guardians of morality—hard to distinguish from any other form of prurience, and hard to celebrate as a model of queer utopianism.

Abel makes, or implies, one more barely articulated argument about what makes opera "queer," an argument that surprisingly attenuates the connection between opera and sexuality. He finds the *Rosenkavalier* trio queer in part because it sacrifices narrative momentum in favor of the ecstatic-contemplative moment. The trio's suspension of time creates a space in which, he says, his erotic energies can circulate among the various characters, and his senses be ravished by abstract musical beauty (30,

79-81). What he does not acknowledge is that opera has its own normative structures: most scenes, at least from the eighteenth century forward, are designed to culminate in a "frozen moment" where music drowns out plot and narrative—a *da capo* aria, a *cabaletta*, a *concertato* tableau. Is opera queer because it demotes plot resolution to a decidedly secondary status?

By operatic standards, of course, the trio is not deviant but normal. But Abel does not read the trio against this background—again, he evaluates it against the standard of 19th-century realist prose. Perhaps the question is not, Why is opera "queer" vis-à-vis the "straight" literary narrative? but rather, Why is Abel surprised and titillated when operas do not behave like novels? Is the novel straight? I begin to suspect that it's no accident that the recent spate of queer meditations on opera come from scholars of Victorian literature, and that opera's imputed queerness is less a function of the critic's sexuality than of his/her orientation toward and investment in certain modes of story-telling.

[Heather Hadlock]

When the Drummers Were Women, Every Woman was Happy, except, of course, the queers, who were invisible...

A review of Layne Redmond, *When the Drummers Were Women*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

The links between women's liberation and queer liberation are historically undeniable, but so are the tensions between the two movements. In particular, the cultural feminist schools which rely on the resuscitation of ancient goddess culture as a major ideological prop have been ambivalent in their relation to les-bi-gay-trans concerns. Similarly, the links between music and religion, on both historical and phenomenological grounds, are rich and varied. But the ability to speak to their cultural manifestations with any degree of specificity (either musical or religious) has been rare within scholarship.

As a scholar of both music and religion, I feel some responsibility to tell scholars in either of these specializations when someone is deluding them with simplified generalizations from the other one. In the case of Layne Redmond's new book, though, neither musicians nor scholars of religion will find much of substance. If she was honest in calling her work strictly speculative, or strictly autobiographical, I would have been much more forgiving. But it is masquerading as a serious effort of feminist scholarship, when it is nothing more than the assertion of ungrounded, sweeping trans-historical claims. Its lack of even a token acknowledgment of variation in human sexuality or human spirituality only sharpens my disappointment.

The Pre-Post-Modern Goddess and Her Grand Narrative

Redmond's book *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm* promised so much in the title: a gendered relation of religion to basic component parts of music, such as rhythm and percussion. Given Redmond's reputation as a percussionist and ensemble leader, I was hoping that she would build a convincing case around the shared links of physicality in both music and sexuality. Unfortunately, her research skills and ideological commitments foundered into a weak attempt to project her own consciousness onto a mythic past.

Essentially, Redmond re-presents a warmed-over version of the Engels-Bachofen-Gimbutas school of archeological history. The nine central chapters of her book avoid concrete musical evidence in favor of summarizing the religio-cultural assumptions of what I term The Goddess School (emphasis on "The"); briefly, once upon an unchanging time, there were matrifocal societies that existed throughout the Mediterranean and river culture regions. These societies are valorized as being relatively equalitarian and peaceful, with universal respect for women as the givers of life. From the rapacious ascent of the Big Bad Patriarchal Hordes from central Asia (roughly 5,000 BP), to the cementing of their victory in Christian ideology (roughly 1,700 BP), all matrifocal cultures were destroyed and suppressed; with that achieved, the joy of life was excised from humankind. Redmond's study is replete with the common errors of this romanticized unilinear vision.

Her actual thesis is an interesting speculation concerning the connections between the frame drum, the grain sieve, and women's ritual role in maintaining life-cycles. She suggests that the frame drum regulated rituals of cyclic time, while also serving as a tool for obtaining states of altered consciousness (1-2, 169). The problem is that Redmond does not make the case for her ideas, and instead becomes obsessed with a poorly argued historical polemic against Christianity, maintaining that "banning women's drumming from religious life was central to the disempowerment of women in Western culture" (2). Her evidence is nowhere near compelling enough to demonstrate an argument on such a world-historic scale.

Where are the Dykes?

Patriarchal men are reputed to prefer their women barefoot (impoverished and without any autonomous economic base from which to improve their lot) and pregnant (producing progeny for the continuation of the male-dominated system). Feminists of all types have decried this. However, the image worms its way back into The Goddess School, where it seems feminists prefer their women barefoot (in touch with nature), pregnant (in

touch with their miraculous fructive powers) and bare breasted (unashamed of their sexual nature). This added bare-breasted touch would seem to have a certain attraction to lesbians, except that we are left out of the narrative all together.

For all of Redmond's appeals to women's sexual powers, they are invariably heterosexual powers. Like most followers of The Goddess School, she has a poor ear for social contradictions regarding the Divine Feminine (her caps). Take for instance her discussion of sacred sexuality in the Sumerian religious traditions. She notes that "sexual union with the goddess was a metaphor for the release of healing spiritual, psychological, and physical energy." (84). This is fine and good (albeit anachronistically phrased), but the questions are (and they are the basic feminist questions) for whom is this healing energy made available? Whose power is served by it? Is it accessible to women?

Similarly, when she discusses Aphrodite, Redmond does not take care to specify the gender of her devotees: "Aphrodite's rituals also preserved the ancient tradition of sacred sexuality. Pilgrims traveled to her temples...to experience sexual communion with her priestesses....Here the physical union of female and male became a ritual sacrament. Aphrodite's dove...symbolized possession by the goddess, in the form of orgasmic energy" (112). The pilgrims, presumably male since we are told that the sacred energy is found in hetero-union, are not marked by any other feature such as class, age, or position. But what really irks me is that it is left unclear whose "orgasmic energy" is invoked. Given the alarming rates at which male heterosexual partners don't concern themselves with the sexual satisfaction of their female partners (recent statistics show that the average heterosexual encounter lasts less than five minutes!), to leave us in the dark, so to say, about whose orgasm is being discussed, is not an idle question. (I can hear her response already - that it is only in evil patriarchal cultures that men don't care about female pleasure...) Whenever she mentions breasts, they are for milk and sustenance, not for arousal and pleasure. Even more mysteriously, in a book about drumming, rhythm, and women, the clitoris is never once raised--which certainly contradicts my personal subjective experience of music, women and rhythm.

Redmond manages to mention both Sappho and the Amazons without ever once using the words *lesbian* or *bisexual*. Likewise, she attests that she is "not a separatist. I have a deep and abiding love for the various men in my life" (188) which--whatever her intent--functions as heterosexist code for assuring us that she is not a lesbian!

As for gay men, she seems unable to theorize any middle ground in her gendered dualism. While she is righteously

angry at male archeologists who ignore the evidence of women's leadership in ancient ritual practices, her own essentialism obscures the nuances of the realities she so blithely discusses. For instance, in discussing North Asian male shamans, she castigates them as having "*insinuated* themselves into the sacred rituals" (41, my emphasis). Noting that these male shamans "often dress in the clothing of women" she sees only an appropriation of women's role, and misses the queer dimension of a potential third gender. She thus forecloses the possibility of individual men--or transgendered people--resisting patriarchy via both sexuality and ritual.

The Static Ancients

Redmond has assembled an impressive array of visual and textual evidence pointing to women being important musical and ritual officiants in the ancient Mediterranean. But her tone-deafness on cultural contradictions reduces even this achievement by collapsing it into her general preference for a static notion of culture. Stating that "the material trappings of life have changed many times throughout the last forty millennia, but our spiritual needs remain constant" (185), she also falls into the nineteenth-century error of presuming that indigenous cultures are ancient vestiges "whose practices have remained virtually unchanged since the Stone Age" (86).

The chapter on Sumerian culture contains the high points and low points of her analysis. When she cites the confusion among archeologists concerning whether women in ancient sculpture are carrying cakes or drums, Redmond's humorous tone underlies a scathing critique of how patriarchal analyses automatically relegate even ancient women to a degraded kitchen. But then, in discussing the companionate human sacrifice of women musicians in royal tombs she says "There are no signs of violence and it is almost certain that they went to their deaths voluntarily. Scholars conjecture that, after performing some ritual, they drank a poisonous drug and simply went to sleep" (79). This is, categorically, not feminist scholarship. She has jettisoned any hermeneutic of suspicion, and, not coincidentally, evidences no uneasiness with the overt social stratification, the obvious hierarchy, or the expendability of women which this incident represents. There is no hint that this mass death of women musicians could be a dialectic root in the growth of patriarchy. Redmond is so enamored of the archetype of the Divine Feminine that she leaves women unmarked as a category: as long as they are playing a drum in a ritual context, it doesn't matter if they have to die at the end of the performance.

She makes such huge claims for the unchanging power of the feminine and of drumming that she can make such baldly ridiculous statements as "Women who drum

together can connect to their own rhythms, form a healthier collective view of their own potential, and loosen the unconscious grip of dominant cultural beliefs" (14). My personal favorite among her excessive stretches is the claim that because all of our mother's eggs were formed when she was a fetus, our sense of rhythm connects us to our grandmother's heartbeat, which set the pulsing rhythm for our pre-fetal lives (170-171).

Now, I don't want to seem too much the grinch who stole women's drumming fire. The idea that we have a cosmological and biological link to our grandmothers' bodies is a poetic insight which would be valued within many religious systems. But the claim that this is a human universal is a ludicrous biologism.

Autobiography and the Idiosyncratic Universal

When Redmond speaks of her own work and self-discoveries through drumming, I can be empathetic with her project, briefly. It is abundantly clear that she has had transformative experiences as a musician, moments which have been revelatory to her. I would (and have) argued strenuously that music creates exactly such immanent spiritual cauldrons, and that our conscious participation in music can generate ontological and epistemological experiences which have a cognitive autonomy from language. When Redmond discusses her work in the all-women's percussion ensemble "Mob of Angels," she conveys some of the excitement of their collective creativity as they construct modern-day ceremonial works. I wanted her to describe these pieces in more detail, to specify what rhythms worked when, and why she made the kinds of compositional decisions she did. But just when she seemed to be approaching such details, she would back off into subjectively inaccessible smoke screens, as in her implicit claim that her music is slower and more ceremonial than that of the male virtuoso player with whom she used to work because of her "radiant feminine energy" (18).

Her priestly (priestess-ly?) invocation of the Divine Feminine reaches sacrificial pitch when Redmond castigates all who would dare to disagree with her: If these ancient archetypes of natural power seem strange to us now, it is an indication of how far removed we have become from the universal rhythms and images of nature. Just as the drum reminded our ancestors to observe and respect and rejoice in the power of nature, so it can help us today to remember and celebrate our origins. (55) This is a totally subjective argument: if you don't *feel* the same way Redmond does, it shows you to be merely cynical, out of touch with nature, and alienated from the universal rhythms! Indeed, this is not mere conjecture on my part: she blames the "purposelessness, nihilism, and self-indulgence" of modern art on the loss of art's "original link to the sacred" (181), and gratuitously adds

that rock drummers are leaving that genre because of the "less-than-spiritual milieu of audiences bent on getting as unconscious as possible" (189). Apparently the only good altered consciousness is one that the Goddess brings to you through gentle drumming, and the spiritual epiphanies I've achieved under the influence of loud, fast drums--from tablas to Pearl Jam--were just so much nihilism, or, worse, capitulation to patriarchal conditioning.

This is a typical example of intuitionism: projecting the contents of one's consciousness into the facts of universal consciousness. Intuitionism has never been the friend of les-bi-gay people: straight people rarely intuit our existence when they are building their cosmological castles, as Redmond's strain blatantly demonstrates. While the intuitive and discursive modes of human thought certainly meet in music, they need a more thorough and interrogative method than Redmond brings to *When the Drummers Were Women*. Don't bother with this volume, unless you seek a warm fuzzy feeling for the trans-historical, trans-cultural potential of your local post-modern multi-cultural drumming circle.

[Jennifer Rycenga]

recording review

Beyond Any Sensual Classics: Reflections on CRI's Gay American Composers

Gay American Composers. Conceived and produced by Joseph R. Dalton. New York: Composers Recordings, Inc., 1996. CRI 721.

Gay American Composers, Volume 2. Conceived and produced by Joseph R. Dalton. New York: Composers Recordings, Inc., 1997. CRI 750.

In recent years record companies have created anthologies of music that capitalize on almost every segment of the potential market. Instead of starting with a musical concept, which had previously involved song recitals, highlights of operas, or retrospective collections of a performer's repertoire, etc., these recent compact discs have been created with a specific market in mind, and the music fitted to that purpose. Often the compilations are kitsch or, at best, predictably mundane, but on some occasions the basis for an anthology merits notice. Between 1996 and 1997, CRI has released two such CDs entitled *Gay American Composers* which are genuinely provocative and quite serious. Volume 1 contains music by living composers or individuals who died in the last decade, and the compositions are of relatively recent origin. The composers presented in

Volume 1 include Chester Biscardi, Conrad Cummings, Chris DeBlasio, David Del Tredici, Lou Harrison, Robert Helps, William Hibbard, Lee Hoiby, Jerry Hunt, Robert Maggio, and Ned Rorem. As Joseph Dalton states in his introduction to Volume 2, the composers in Volume 1 expressed concern about identifying their music as gay. Volume 2, as Dalton states, contains music of deceased composers who were homosexual, but the compilation is not intended to "label" the music *ex post facto* as gay. Volume 2 contains music of some of the more well-known composers of the 1920s through the 1980s, and includes Samuel Barber, Marc Blitzstein, John Cage, Aaron Copland, Henry Cowell, Alwin Nikolais, Harry Partch, Virgil Thomson, and Ben Weber. Dalton goes on to say that Volume 2 should assist new audiences and new generations to recognize the important gay thread within the marvelous history of American music, and therefore to recognize also that American music has become a part of gay history.

The impetus behind Volume 1 begs the question about differentiating between gay and straight composers. The blurb at the back of the jewel box sets the tone: "Is there a gay sensibility to American classical music? Decide for yourself as you enjoy over 70 minutes of today's most beautiful and soulful classical music--all written by gay American composers." The fact that the jacket copy is partly phrased as a provocative question will certainly challenge some casual browsers. Yet the more informed musician will probably find the second part of the statement offputting, with its hackneyed allusion to "today's most beautiful and soulful music."

In some ways, the copy on a promotional postcard containing a portion of the cover illustration seems to be more palatable: "More than a sexy cover and mood music, this disc features some of America's most respected composers alongside some of CRI's newest talents--plus new liner notes by each of the composers on the controversial topic of sexuality and music. An enjoyable new look at the finest in today's classical music." Moving away from what may be for some beautiful and soulful or, for others, mood music, the "controversial" idea of homosexuality and music emerges as the focus of this recording, and it may be that CRI simply wanted to play upon the provocative topic of gay composers to entice sympathetic listeners. It certainly would draw attention to pieces that might not attract some audiences. However, the ideas expressed by Joseph Dalton in the liner notes aim at more profound matters. The serious mission of this CD is clear from reading Dalton's comments. In his explanation of the compilation's origins he calls attention to several excellent contemporary composers in the CRI catalogue and to the fact that they are gay men who have made important contributions to serious music.

Without detracting from the tribute Dalton pays to the contributions of gay composers, though, it may be useful to shift the perspective to gay listeners: Does being gay contribute to the experience of the music, especially if the listener knows the sexuality of the composer? The situation itself is complicated, and any responses would seem to underscore the personal nature of music as an expressive art. At the same time, the political side of being gay in the twentieth century begs the question of sexuality as a determinant of meaning. In fact, Dalton refers to this in passing in his notes to Volume 1, but the matter seems better suited to discussions of specific pieces, evident in comments the composers contributed to the recording.

One challenging example occurs with Conrad Cummings, who is represented by a piece he wrote when he believed himself to be heterosexual. In discussing his music, Cummings states: "The interesting thing is that when I composed *In the Department of Love* in 1988 I was fairly sure that I was straight. I'm quite sure I'm gay now . . . so is *In the Department of Love* a piece by a gay composer?" Cummings goes on to mention the dualities behind the music, which take it beyond the gay-straight continuum. Without providing further clues, though, the composer leaves the matter of gayness to the listener, if it is--or even can be--a critical element for this kind of discussion.

It may be argued that music does not have sexual identity, but composers do. Sounds, like words, have meaning, but their interpretation is left to the perceiver. For music to be relevant to a gay audience presupposes an interaction that goes beyond the notation of the score. When it comes to vocal music, a text by Walt Whitman or James Purdy might contribute something more direct, just as knowledge of the composer's sexual identity or politics enhances the meaning of other works, like Corigliano's First Symphony. This may seem to be a matter of semantics, but the gay element does not exist in the musical structure. Rather, the "gay sensibility" is something apart from the notes and rhythms on the page and enters into the aesthetics of the music.

Thus, it is possible to enjoy music by a gay composer without appreciating the gay element. For example, Blitzstein's song "In Twos" contains an element that links it to the McCarthy witchhunts of the 1950s (with its reference to Morgan Moulder), but the piece does not hinge on that knowledge; at the same time, the word "moulder" is cast as a double entendre that takes the listener back the principal meaning of the text, the narrator's observation of many couples around him. More importantly, the couples described in the song don't have to be gay to make the piece meaningful. Yet the gay perspective can become part of the experience of the music and contribute a level of meaning to it without making it irrelevant to those who may not apprehend it.

Similarly, the matter of "gay sensibility" mentioned in the jewel box copy emerges more clearly in Stephen Housewright's remarks about his partner, the late Jerry Hunt: ". . . if he [Hunt] was marginalized as a homosexual, he was at the same time given a unique perspective on the world." It is this kind of perspective that informs some of the music on this recording and sets this particular compilation apart.

Gay identity contributes to the meaning of Lee Hoiby's "I Was There," which contains a Walt Whitman text celebrating the poet's otherness and the courage it takes to accept it. Certainly the song can stand on its own merits, but in a collection like this, Hoiby's contribution is especially potent and speaks perhaps more loudly than it would if heard in a collection of New York composers, twentieth-century song, or some other designation. From those two latter perspectives, the idea of homosexuality may emerge as an incidental factor, but under the rubric "gay composers" the political and sexual parameters become preeminent.

This perspective forms the core of much of the music on Volume 1. Yet it takes on a different nuance with Volume 2 where the composers' sexual persuasion may have played a less prominent role in the origins of the compositions. Nevertheless, the association of the composers as gay contributes an important interpretive factor to this group of works. In a sense, Volume 2 helps to establish a context for Volume 1. Again, the copy on the jewel box provides a useful point of departure: "Rediscover *from a new perspective* [emphasis by CRI] the great pioneering voices of American music. A surprising and enjoyable adventure through the romantic, rational and rebellious terrain of American classical music." The mention of gayness or gay composers occurs prominently only in the title of Volume 2, and the idea of gay sensibility has given way to a more mainstream presentation of this volume as a compilation of "pioneering voices of American music." Volume 2 emphasizes the seminal nature of the music, and the identification of the composers as gay is of less concern.

While these ideas emerge only in the accompanying booklet, they are essential to Volume 2. In fact, it is this "gay thread" that makes Volume 2 a significant release, which also establishes a context for Volume 1. Volume 2 contains music by important twentieth-century composers, including such landmark compositions as Cowell's *The Banshee* and Barber's *Excursions for Piano*. These are two works that "mainstream" audiences would know for reasons other than sexuality.

Volume 2 also contains other excellent music, including a movement from Blitzstein's Piano Concerto (1931), a convincing work which bears further study, and a selection from Copland's Sonata for Violin and Piano

(1945), an intimate piece completed in 1943. These two compositions stand well with other, more familiar music by both composers, just as some of the other music included on this recording should enhance the appreciation of the other composers represented on it. (For those more familiar with Copland's larger pieces, this Sonata demonstrates the composer's mastery of chamber music. It is a brilliant example of twentieth-century music for violin that holds up well.)

As to Blitzstein's Piano Concerto, it is a refreshing and challenging work that deserves rehearing in its entirety (this compilation includes the slow movement only). Of his orchestral music, the "Airborne" Symphony may be better known, but the Piano Concerto appears to be a less dated work. The first movement (included in this compilation) demonstrates the strength of this composition. It is an energetic work that brings to mind comparisons with Ravel's Piano Concerto in G minor. With the recent interest in Blitzstein's vocal music, the inclusion of this movement should spark some interest in the instrumental works.

While this second volume is by no means intended as a definitive compilation of historic gay composers, it represents well gay American composers of serious music, and the quality of selections themselves is laudable. Unlike the music on Volume 1, the pieces were composed at different times and under various circumstances, with no overt connection between any of them except for the fact that the composers were gay men. The high quality of the compositions overrides any need for further explanation. For this reason the selections on Volume 2 reflect a wonderful diversity that mitigates against a "gay" style or the influence of any single element on gay American composers. Here are the sources for the "gay sensibility" that emerges in the subsequent generation of composers.

In general, the strength of the music chosen for both CDs showcases the creativity of the composers. At the same time, the content of the two CDs also reveals the quality of the CRI catalogue. All the selections are taken from various CRI releases and represent recordings made over almost fifty years. Considered in this fashion, it is clear that CRI has supported gay composers in its past and continues to promote the music of gay composers. This venue is certainly laudable, and the CRI catalogue continues the impressive tradition with releases of both new performances and older recordings of music that may reach beyond the scope of some mainstream labels.

The impulse behind both volumes of *Gay American Composers* reveals a mature, intelligent production that stands apart from other recent CDs that treat the gay audience in a patronizing manner with reissues of cliché'd examples from the standard repertoire and photos of buff,

bare-chested males on the jewel box. Such blatant marketing bespeaks a completely different approach to the subject matter from the one CRI takes with these recordings, since gay content, not packaging, forms the core of the CRI product.

CRI's approach to the music of gay composers should encourage discussions of the contents and, hopefully, further explorations of the music represented here as well as the other works of the talented composers. For those unfamiliar with the CRI catalogue, these two CDs are a fine introduction to both recent contemporary music and to "classic" American compositions. Those who know the CRI label will appreciate a retrospective view of CRI releases approximated by these selections of gay American composers. In his notes to Volume 1, Dalton reported the possibility of a similar collection of lesbian composers, and one can look forward to this and other recordings from CRI.

[James L. Zychowicz]

[Editors' Note: For more information, contact CRI, 73 Spring Street, Suite 506, New York, NY 10012-5800; tel (212) 941-9673, fax (212) 941-9704.]

gender and music syllabus

Seminar: **Women, Gender, and Music**

Faculty: Linda Austern

Spring 1997, University of Iowa

This course takes a no-holds-barred approach to some of the more controversial aspects of modern musicology and cultural criticism. Whatever your gender, sexuality, politics, or preferred intellectual framework, some of the assigned readings may seem disturbing, infuriating, condescending, or absolutely on target. Please bring ALL impassioned responses to class; the only agenda is the one you bring.

Introduction

"Whose Opera, Doc?:" Critical Approaches, Old and New

Required reading: Catherine Clement, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, pp. 1-42. Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death*, pp. 3-10. Ralph Locke, "What Are These Women Doing in Opera?," in Blackmer and Smith, eds., *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, pp. 59-98. Mitchell Morris, "Reading as an Opera Queen," in Solie, ed., *Musicology and Difference*, pp. 184-200.

Recommended reading: W. H. Auden, "Notes on Music and Opera," in *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays*, pp. 465-474. Suzanne Cusick, "On a Lesbian Relationship

with Music: A Serious Effort Not to Think Straight," in Brett, Wood, Thomas, eds., *Queering the Pitch*, pp. 67-84. Susan Leonardi, *The Diva's Mouth: Body, Voice, Prima Donna Politics*, selections. David Littlejohn, "The Difference is They Sing," in Littlejohn, *The Ultimate Art*, pp. 1-78. Michel Poizat, *The Angel's Cry: Beyond the Pleasure Principle in Opera*, pp. 132-158. Paul Robinson, "Reading Libretti and Misreading Opera," in Groos and Parker, eds., *Reading Opera*, pp. 328-346. Sam Abel, *Opera in the Flesh*, selections.

Gendering Western Music? ("femininity" and the conception of opera)

Required reading: Suzanne Cusick, "Gendering Modern Music: Thoughts on the Monteverdi-Artusi Controversy," *JAMS* 46 (1993): 1-25. Susan McClary, "Sexual Politics in Classical Music," in McClary, *Feminine Endings*, pp. 53-79. Leo Treitler, "Gender and Other Dualities of Music History," in Solie, ed., *Musicology and Difference*, pp. 23-45. *Recommended reading:* Linda Phyllis Austern, "'Alluring the Auditorie to Effeminacie'," *Music & Letters* 74 (1993): 343-354. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, pp. 7-34 and 128-141. Paula Higgins, "Women in Music, Feminist Criticism and Guerilla Musicology," *19th-Century Music* 17 (1993): 174-192. Joan Kelly Gadol, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?," in Renate Bridenthal et al., eds. *Becoming Visible*. Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead, "Accounting for Sexual Meanings," in Ortner and Whitehead, eds., *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality*, pp. 1-28. John Shepherd, "Difference and Power in Music," in *Musicology and Difference*, pp. 46-65. *Listening/Score study:* select examples of gendered/sexed Baroque vocal music.

Claudio Monteverdi, *Orfeo*

Required reading: Joseph Kerman, *Opera as Drama*, pp. 18-38. McClary, "Constructions of Gender in Monteverdi's Dramatic Music," in *Feminine Endings*, pp. 53-79.

Recommended reading: Wendy Bashant, "Singing in Greek Drag," in *En travesti*, pp. 216-241. Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, pp. 25-62. David Littlejohn, "Singing Greek Tragedy," in *The Ultimate Art*, pp. 79-93. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Books X-XI. John Whenham, *Claudio Monteverdi: Orfeo*, pp. 1-34.

Listening/Score study: Claudio Monteverdi, *Orfeo*

Henry Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas*

Required reading: Joseph Kerman, *Opera as Drama*, pp. 43-47. Judith A. Peraino, "I Am an Opera: Identifying with Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*," in *En travesti*, pp. 99-131.

Recommended reading: Mark Goldie, "The Earliest

Notice of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, *Early Music* 20 (1992): 392-401. Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book IV.
Listening/Score study: Henry Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Don Giovanni* (I)

Required reading: Clement, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, pp. 32-38. Lawrence Lipking, "Donna Abbandonata," in Jonathan Miller, ed., *Don Giovanni: Myths of Seduction and Betrayal*, pp. 36-47. Jane Miller, "The Seductions of Women," in Miller, *Don Giovanni*, pp. 48-61.

Recommended reading: Kerman, *Opera as Drama*, pp. 98-108. Abby Kleinbaum, "Women in the Age of Light," in Renate Bridenthal et al, eds. *Becoming Visible*, Laqueur, *Making Sex*, pp. 149-207. Littlejohn, "Don Giovanni: The Impossible Opera," in *The Ultimate Art*, pp. 120-129. Phyllis Mack, "Women and the Enlightenment: Introduction," in Hunt, Jacob, Mack, and Perry, eds., *Women and the Enlightenment*, pp. 1-12. Moliere, *Don Juan*, Tirso de Molina, *The Trickster of Seville*. Peter Wagner, "The Discourse on Sex--or Sex as Discourse: Eighteenth-Century Medical and Paramedical Erotica," in Rousseau and Porter, eds., *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment*, pp. 46-68.
Listening/Score study: Mozart, *Don Giovanni*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Don Giovanni* (II)

Required reading: Malcolm Baker, "Odzooks! A Man of Stone," in Miller, *Don Giovanni*, pp. 62-69. Clement, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, pp. 93-95. Peter Gay, "The Father's Revenge," in Miller, *Don Giovanni*, pp. 70-80.

Recommended reading: David Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, pp. 27-40 and 283-291. Kerman, "Reading *Don Giovanni*," in Miller, *Don Giovanni*, pp. 108-125. Littlejohn, "What Peter Sellars Did to Mozart," in *The Ultimate Art*, pp. 130-155. Jeremy Tambling, "Losey's 'Fenomeni Morbosi': *Don Giovanni*, in *Opera, Ideology and Film*, pp. 159-175. Theodore Tarczylo, "From Lascivious Erudition to the History of Mentalities," in Rousseau and Porter, eds., *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment*, pp. 26-45.

Listening/Score study: Mozart, *Don Giovanni*

Gaetano Donizetti, *Lucia di Lammermoor*

Required reading: Clement, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, pp. 87-90. McClary, "Excess and Frame: The Musical Representation of Madwomen," in *Feminine Endings*, pp. 80-111. Mary Ann Smart, "The Silencing of Lucia," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 4 (1992): 119-141.

Recommended reading: Evelyne Ender, *Sexing the Mind: Nineteenth-Century Fictions of Hysteria*, pp. 25-66. Sir Walter Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*

Listening/Score study: Gaetano Donizetti, *Lucia di Lammermoor*

Georges Bizet, *Carmen* (I)

Required reading: Clement, *Opera*, pp. 43-53. Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death*, pp. 178-191. McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, pp. 15-43.

Recommended reading: Littlejohn, "Sex and Religion in French Opera," in *The Ultimate Art*, pp. 183-192. Theresa M. McBride, "The Long Road Home: Women's Work and Industrialization," in Bridenthal et al, eds. *Becoming Visible*. McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, pp. 1-14 and 62-110. Prosper Merimee, *Carmen*
Listening/Score study: Georges Bizet, *Carmen*

Georges Bizet, *Carmen* (II)

Required reading: Nelly Furman, "The Languages of Love in *Carmen*," in Groos and Parker, eds., *Reading Opera*, pp. 168-183. McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, pp. 44-61.

Recommended reading: McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, pp. 130-146. H. Marshall Leicester, Jr., "Discourse and the Film Text: Four Readings of *Carmen*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 4 (1994): 245-282. Tambling, "Ideology in the Cinema: Rewriting *Carmen*," in *Opera, Ideology and Film*, pp. 13-40.

Richard Wagner, *Parsifal* (I)

Required reading: Barry Emslie, "Woman as Image and Narrative in Wagner's *Parsifal*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 2 (1991): 104-124. Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, "Syphillis, Sin and the Social Order: Richard Wagner's *Parsifal*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 7 (1995): 261-276.

Recommended reading: Jeffrey Peter Bauer, *Women and the Changing Concept of Salvation in the Operas of Richard Wagner*, pp. 160-183. Milton Brener, *Opera Offstage*, pp. 168-180.

Wolfram von Eisenbach, *Parzifal*

Listening/Score study: Richard Wagner, *Parsifal*

Richard Wagner, *Parsifal* (II)

Required reading: Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death*, pp. 61-94.

Recommended reading: Michel Poizat, *The Angel's Cry: Beyond the Pleasure Principle in Opera*, pp. 191-200. Jeremy Tambling, "The Fusion of Brecht and Wagner: Syberberg's *Parsifal*," in *Opera, Ideology and Film*, pp. 194-213.

Listening/Score study: Richard Wagner, *Parsifal*

Richard Strauss, *Salome*

Required reading: Carolyn Abbate, "Opera; or, the Envoicing of Women," in *Musicology and Difference*, pp. 225-258. Sander L. Gilman, "Strauss and the Pervert," in *Reading Opera*, pp. 306-327.

Recommended reading: Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, pp. 375-401. Elliot L. Gilbert, "'Tumult of Images': Wilde, Beardsley and *Salomé*," *Victorian Studies* 26 (1983): 133-159. Lawrence Kramer, "Culture

and Musical Hermeneutics: The Salome Complex," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 2 (1990): 269-294. Oscar Wilde, *Salomé*

Listening/Score study: Richard Strauss, *Salome*

Alban Berg, *Lulu*

Required reading: Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death*, pp. 95-99 and 130-132. Douglas Jarman, *Alban Berg: Lulu*, pp. 1-23 and 67-80.

Recommended reading: Renate Bridenthal, "Something Old, Something New: Women Between the Two World Wars," in Bridenthal *et al* eds., *Becoming Visible*.

Mitchell Morris, "Admiring the Countess Geschwitz," in *En travesti*, pp. 348-370. Michel Poizat, *The Angel's Cry*, pp. 201-206. Leo Treitler, "The Lulu Character and the Character of *Lulu*," in Treitler, *Music and the Historical Imagination*, pp. 264-306. Frank Wedekind, *The Lulu Plays*.

Listening/Score study: Alban Berg, *Lulu*.

current bibliography

Current Bibliography is a regular list of books, articles, online resources, and other materials relating to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and queer meanings in music. It focusses on recent publications. We encourage you to send us articles and entries for this list.

"#2 - #40 Most Vital Artists in Music Today." *Spin* 1 May 1997. [Includes bisexual Ani DiFranco.]

Anthony, Michael. "Harrison Celebrates His 'World Music' at 80." *Star Tribune*, 11 April 1997, p. E1-2. [Preview of festival honoring Lou Harrison, an out classical composer, whose partner (William Colvig) constructed instruments for Harrison's American gamelan.]

_____. "A Sommerfest Debut for Conductor Tate." *Star Tribune*, 9 July 1997, p. E1, 13. [Profile about Jeffrey Tate which mentions his partner, Klaus Kuhlemann.]

_____. "Women's Program Shows Philharmonic Has Room To Grow." *Star Tribune*, 10 March 1997, p. B5. [Review of Minnesota Philharmonic, a gay-lesbian community orchestra.]

Baker, James Ireland. "Two For the Road: Two Jazz Singers Reveal How Being Gay Gives Them An Edge." *Advocate*, issue 729 (18 March 1997): 50-51, 55. [Vocalist Ian Shaw and singer-songwriter Steven Kowalczyk.]

Bauder, David. "Playing 5 Questions (and Answers) with k.d. lang." *Star Tribune*, 15 July 1997.

Bostridge, Ian. "A New Look at the Master of Song."

Wall Street Journal, 13 May 1997, p. A21.

[Review of *Schubert: The Music and the Man* by Brian Newbould; this review is somewhat dismissive of Maynard Solomon's work and the issue of Schubert's sexuality.]

"Cancer Claims Life of Laura Nyro, 49; She Inspired a Generation of Songwriters." *Star Tribune* 10 April 1997, p. B6. [Influential lesbian singer-songwriter.]

"Chorus Concert Addresses Gay Suicide." *focusPoint* 4/159, issue 159 (June 1997): 7. [*Prayers for Bobby*, a choral cantata chronicling the life and death of a gay teenager, was performed.]

Curve 7/4 (September 1997). [Special Music Issue; some article are listed separately.]

Dear Paul Dear Ned, foreword by Gavin Lambert. North Pomfret, VT: Elysium Press, 1997.

[Correspondence of Paul Bowles and Ned Rorem which chronicles their friendship in more than 130 letters, beginning in 1941 and continuing to 1996; limited edition for \$150 or \$370.]

Druckenbrod, Andrew. "Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis' Life Revisited in New Opera." *Lavender* 3, issue 60 (12 September 1997): 46. [Reviews the opera recording of *Jackie O* by Michael Daugherty and Wayne Koestenbaum, a gay writer.]

_____. "Mary Bussmann--We Hardly Knew Ya." *Lavender* 3, issue 56 (8 July 1997): 50.

[Discussion of Mary Bussmann's dismissal from the Calliope Women's Chorus, a Twin Cities lesbian ensemble.]

Edwards, J. Michele. Review of *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, edited by Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith. *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 1/1 (1997): 86-90.

Fleming, Michael. "Pulling the Chords." *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 25 July 1997, p. 12F. [Preview of Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus with Holly Near, including history and mission of the group.]

Flick, Larry. "Joi de Vivre: Ms. Cardwell Rules The Dance Floor--Just Don't Call Her a Diva." *Out*, no. 47 (September 1997): 78. [Lesbian Joi Cardwell mixes jazz, soul, and funk.]

Frutkin, Alan. "The Advocate Guide to Music '97." *Advocate*, issue 733 (13 May 1997): 59-60. [News about some favorite popular musicians.]

Gardner, Elysa. "A Plucky Strike." *Los Angeles Times*, 10 June 1997, p. F1. [Review's k.d. lang's new album, *Drag*, with some attention to gender-bending elements of the cover; this album of covers shows-off lang as a torch singer.]

"Generation Q: The Best and Brightest Under 30." *Advocate*, issue 739/740 (19 August 1997): 35-54. [Includes GLB musicians Rufus Wainwright, Skin, Ani DiFranco, Leisha Hailey, Heather

- Grody, Patrick Briggs, Me'Shell Ndegéocello, Ashley MacIsaac, Corin Tucker, and Carrie Brownstein.]
- Gold, Rachel. "Holly Near Celebrates with the Chorus." *focusPoint* 4/3, issue 158 (11-17 June 1997): 7. [Her work with choruses, her views on 25 years of pride and the next 25 years to come.]
- _____. "Percussion and Design: Gail Wallinga." *focusPoint* 3/45, issue 149 (9-15 April 1997): 7. [Drummer with "Joe's Elevator" discusses being a female drummer.]
- Grow, Doug. "Ellen's Out, Show's Over; Now, It's Back To Reality." *Star Tribune*, 2 May 1997, p. B2. [Lesbian violinist, Deborah Serafini, challenges Minnesota Orchestra's lack of domestic partner health benefits.]
- Hannaham, James. "David Bowie's 50th Birthday Concert: Madison Square Garden, New York City, January 9th, 1997." *Spin* (January 1997).
- Hanson, A.M. Review of *Franz Schubert: A Biography* by Elizabeth Norman McKay. *CHOICE* 34/8 (April 1997): 253. [Favorable review; notes the contributions made on "sensitive issues" such as homosexuality.]
- Hayman, Ellen. "Calliope Women's Chorus: Still Singing after All These Years." *Minnesota Women's Press*, 30 April-13 May 1997, p. 18. [History and discussion of lesbian chorus but with no mention of sexuality.]
- Herman, James Patrick. "k.d. Lounge." *Out*, no. 46 (August 1997): 68-71. [Cover story and review of *Drag*.]
- Hilferty, Robert. "Not So Anonymous 4." *Out*, no. 47 (September 1997): 80. [Member Ruth Cunningham is openly lesbian; new Hildegard album *11,000 Virgins*.]
- Holden, Stephen. "A Torch Song Anthology About Dangerous Pleasures." *New York Times*, 8 June 1997, sec. 2, p. 32. [Review of k.d. lang's new album, *Drag*.]
- Horowitz, Joseph. "Masterly Music, Provocative Prose." *Wall Street Journal*, 16 June 1997, p. A10. [Favorable review of *Virgil Thomson: Composer on the Aisle* by Anthony Tommasini.]
- Ian, Janis. "Breaking Silence: Black Like You." *Advocate*, issue 729 (18 March 1997): 63. [About closeted African American musicians.]
- Johnson, Anne. "Before the Renaissance, A Renaissance Woman." *New York Times*, 28 September 1997. [About Hildegard of Bingen, encompassing several strands of current scholarship, including queer work of Bruce Holsinger.]
- Kort, Michele. "In Profile: Indigo Girls." *Advocate*, issue 733 (13 May 1997): 58.
- Lara, Maya. "Rocked with *Kindness*: Toshi Reagon." *Curve* 7/4 (September 1997): 22. [Although Reagon claims no interest in people's sexuality, she has always been out.]
- Lavigne, Steven. "Lemper May Have Filled the Dietrich Void." *Lavender* (June 1997): 47. [Review of Ute Lemper's new CD *Berlin Cabaret Songs*; discussion of the "politics of homosexuality" raised by many of the songs.]
- Luck, Joyce. *Melissa Etheridge: Our Little Secret*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1997. [Billed as "the first complete biography"; includes photos and discography.]
- Mass, Lawrence D. "Musical Closets: A Personal and Selective Documentary History of Outing and Coming Out in the Music World." In *Taking Liberties: Gay Men's Essays on Politics, Culture, and Sex*, edited by Michael Bronski. 1st Richard Kasak Book Edition. New York: Masquerade Books, 1996.
- McClary, Susan. "The Impromptu That Trod on a Loaf: or How Music Tells Stories." *Narrative* 5 (1997): 20-35. [On Schubert.]
- _____. Review of *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death* by Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon. *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 50/1 (spring 1997): 175-81. [Notes how cholera became a marker for homosexuality on the operatic stage; use of humor in connection with syphilis once it could be cured; and the frequent self-representation by gays in art works dealing with AIDS.]
- McDonagh, Michael. "Gay Vibes." *Advocate*, issue 730 (1 April 1997): 67-68. [Review of *Departure* by Gary Burton, an out gay jazz musician, and friends.]
- McKay, Elizabeth Norman. *Franz Schubert: A Biography*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. [Touches on many aspects of his life: his music as well as his homosexuality, opium addiction, etc.]
- Monson, Ingrid. "Report of the Sexualities and Les/Bi/Gay/Transgendered Concerns Committee." *SEM Newsletter* 31/3 (May 1997): 4. [Participants agreed on two main goals: increasing personal comfort and encouraging cross-cultural research on issues of sexualities, gender, and music.]
- Morse, Steve. "Writing Hits Only Part of Nyro Legacy." *Star Tribune*, 11 April 1997, p. E2. [Profile of the life and work of Laura Nyro, whose obituary mentions a longtime female companion.]
- "Music '97." *Advocate*, issue 733 (13 May 1997): 61-68. [Brief popular and classical reviews by various authors; part of the section called "Bonus: Gay Music Special."]
- [Music Reviews.] *Out*, no. 45 (July 1997): 56, 58, 60. [Various authors; including artists k.d. lang, Foo Fighters, etc.]
- [Music Reviews]. *Out*, no. 47 (September 1997): 94-97.

- [Short reviews by various authors.]
- Newbould, Brian. *Schubert: The Music and The Man*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997; also London: Victor Gollancz, 1997. [Formalist analysis; in taking larger works seriously, he shifts Schubert's song writing to "miniaturist" status; discounts the question and relevance of Schubert's sexuality.]
- Oestreich, James R. "To Susan B., With Love: Gertrude S. And Virgil T." *New York Times*, 19 July 1997, p. A16. [Online version titled: "'Mother of Us All': New Staging of Thomson/Stein Opera"; reviews Baltimore production.]
- _____. "Schubert and the Symphony': A Genius Whose Primary Language Was Music." *New York Times*, 18 April 1997. [Favorable review of *Schubert: The Music and The Man* by Brian Newbould, especially of his formalist analysis of the music.]
- Pareles, John. "Jill Sobule: Blips of Pain and Hope, Humorously Monitored." *New York Times*, 19 July 1997.
- Pepper, Rachel. "Hot Licks from Cool Chicks." *Curve* 7/2 (May 1997): 36. [Reviews of No Doubt, Cat Power, Softies, and Ubaka Hill.]
- _____. "Hot Licks from Cool Chicks." *Curve* 7/3 (July 1997): 36. [Reviews of bisexual Ani DiFranco's latest release, *Living In Clip*; bisexual Kinnie Starr's *Tidy*; *Stoosh* by British band Skunk Anansie which is fronted by lesbian Skin; and lesbian humor in Fallopian Tubes' *Because Rock and Roll Isn't Pretty*.]
- _____. "Hot Licks from Cool Chicks." *Curve* 7/4 (September 1997): 36. [Reviews of lesbian musicians Linda Perry, Toshi Reagon, and k.d. lang.]
- Phillips, Gretchen. "From Punk to Folk and Back Again." *Curve* 7/4 (September 1997): 24-25. [Interview with Phranc.]
- Powers, Anne. "Singer-Songwriters of a New Generation Rewrite the Rules." *New York Times*, 29 May 1997. [Including bisexual Ani DiFranco.]
- Robson, Britt. "NdegeOcello Aims For Enlightenment as Well as Ruckus." *Star Tribune*, 25 May 1997, B5. [Review of Minneapolis performance by this Black openly bisexual artist.]
- Rogers, Ray. "Angst a la Mode." *Out*, no. 44 (June 1997): 60. [Depeche Mode's Dave Gahan emerges from heroin addiction and attempted suicide; his past singing about alienation, depression, and tragedy have made him popular with gay youth.]
- Roper, Jennifer. "Photoplay." *Curve* 7/2 (May 1997): 48. [Photos of k.d. lang and Ellen.]
- Sandow, Greg. "Versatile Virtuoso." *Wall Street Journal*, 28 April 1997, p. A17. [Reviews performance by gay pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet at Avery Fisher Hall in New York.]
- Sasscer, R.P. Review of *Tchaikovsky's Last Days: A Documentary Study* by Alexander Poznansky. *CHOICE* 34/8 (April 1997): 256. [Favorable review, citing importance of the research for the history of homosexuality in Russia.]
- Schwarz, K. Robert. "O Pioneers! Iconoclastic Composer Lou Harrison Celebrates 80 Years of Breaking the Rules." *Out*, no. 43 (May 1997): 42-43. [Openly gay classical composer.]
- Shaler, David. Review of *Michael Tilson Thomas: Viva Voce (Conversations with Edward Seckerson)* by Michael Tilson Thomas. *Choral Journal* 37/10 (May 1997): 81.
- Sheperd, Stephanie. "Erasure: English Electric Duo Spin Ambient Textures within Pop Framework." *DJ Times* 9/2 (February 1996): 12. [Interview with Andy Bell and Vince Clarke (the duo Erasure) about their latest, self-titled album.]
- "Songwriter Laura Nyro Dies; 'And When I Die,' First Hit." *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 10 April 1997, p. 3A. [Obituary which mentions a longtime female companion.]
- "Sound Scoop: New Sounds on the Scene." *Curve* 7/4 (September 1997): 28-32. [Short profiles by various authors about The Murmurs, Kinnie Starr, Lourdes Pérez, Carla Bozulich, and Ana Egge.]
- Steele, Mike. "Singing Out." *Star Tribune*, 23 June 1997, E1. [Profile of Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus, including history, mission of the group, and its role in coming out to family and friends.]
- Thomas, Michael Tilson. *Michael Tilson Thomas: Viva Voce (Conversations with Edward Seckerson)*. London: Faber and Faber, 1994. [Gay conductor; currently with San Francisco Symphony.]
- Tommasini, Anthony. "Poignant Work by Barber Is Sung at AIDS Benefit." *New York Times*, 12 March 1997, C10. [Online version titled: "Barber's 'Knoxville' Sung at AIDS Benefit"; musicians donate services for Carnegie Hall benefit.]
- _____. *Virgil Thomson: Composer on the Aisle*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997. [Includes discussion of his homosexuality and his efforts to conceal this.]
- _____. "A Walt Whitman Sampler, From Churchly to Sensuous." *New York Times*, 20 July 1997. [Reviews baritone Thomas Hampson's new CD of 22 Whitman settings; works by two gay composers, Ned Rorem and Michael Tilson Thomas, are cited as homoerotic; Bernstein's "To What You Said" is identified as among his most explicit settings.]
- Tulchinsky, Karen X. "Singing to Be Free." *Curve* 7/4 (September 1997): 23. [About Faith Nolan, an African-Canadian lesbian who blends blues, jazz, and folk.]
- Ulrich, Allan. "A Life in the Closet." *Advocate*, issue 738

(22 July 1997): 64. [Review of *Virgil Thomson: Composer on the Aisle* by Anthony Tommasini.]
 _____ . "Unearthing a Classical Treasure." *Advocate*, issue 727 (18 February 1997): 55-56.
 [Discussion of gay, Canadian composer Claude Vivier and his *Prologue pour un Marco Polo*; Vivier was stabbed to death in 1983 at his Paris apartment.]

Velez, Andrew. "Mallets to the Max: Vibe Player Gary Burton Jazzes It Up with Fred Hersch." *Out*, no. 42 (April 1997): 56. [Openly gay jazz musician.]

Walker, Rebecca. "Me'Shell Ndege'Ocello Is A Killer Musician, A Grammy Nominee, A Mother and the Only Openly Black Bisexual Recording Artist Working Today." *VIBE* (May 1997).
 [Wide-ranging article from conflict between lust and her Islamic beliefs to the differences between sex with men and women.]

Walters, Barry. "Gay Jewish Roots." *Advocate*, issue 735 (10 June 1997): 65-66. [Review of *Klezmatiks* by Possessed, which includes a gay vocalist/accordion player and a lesbian violinist.]
 _____ . "Gold Dusty." *Advocate*, issue 742 (16 September 1997): 63-64. [Review of 3-CD boxed anthology of the music of Dusty Springfield who has a strong following in lesbian and gay communities.]
 _____ . "Hot Rock." *Advocate*, 731 (15 April 1997): 45-46. [Review of fund-raising album, *Silencio=Muerte: Red Hot+Latin*.]
 _____ . "Indie Rock's Gay Heroes." *Advocate*, issue 738 (22 July 1997): 57-58. [Queer songwriter Stephin Merritt praised for his breakup album.]
 _____ . "Jam On It." *Advocate*, issue 741 (2 September 1997): 62. [Hottest club hits of the summer.]
 _____ . "Janis Ian: *Hunger*." *Advocate*, issue 743 (30 September 1997): 57.
 _____ . "k.d. Lights Up." *Advocate*, issue 736 (24 June 1997): 113.
 _____ . "Mood Indigo." *Advocate*, issue 733 (13 May 1997): 57-58. [Review of new album, *Shaming of the Sun*.]
 _____ . "Notes from the Underground." *Advocate*, issue 732 (29 April 1997): 67-68. [Review of *Club Verboten* by various artists.]
 _____ . "Pop a la Mode." *Advocate*, issue 734 (27 May 1997): 97-98. [Review of *Polydistortion* by Gus Gus and *Gene* by Drawn to the Deep End.]
 _____ . "Rock's Gay Wanna-Bes." *Advocate*, issue 729 (18 March 1997): 70-71. [About Weezer, Bloodhound Gang, and The Velvet Underground.]
 _____ . "She Wrote the Songs." *Advocate*, issue 737 (8 July 1997): 56-57. [Discusses how Laura Nyro's obituary mentions a longtime female companion adding support to the idea that this private

woman was a lesbian.]
 Wilson, Amy RaNae. "Fumbling Towards Sarah." *Curve* 7/4 (September 1997): 26-27. [Speculation about her sexuality ends when Sarah McLachlan, organizer of the Lilith Fair, married a man in February; about lesbian fans.]
 _____ . "Indigo Girls: *Shaming of the Sun*." *Curve* 7/4 (September 1997): 21.
 _____ . "Digging into Sleater-Kinney." *Curve* 7/2 (May 1997): 28-29. [A queer- and women-positive rock group]
 [J. Michele Edwards and Catherine Davies]

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Catherine Davies is a sophomore at Macalester, planning to double major in French and International Studies (focusing on the Middle East). She enjoys being a member of the Macalester Concert Choir, and has studied voice for the last three years.

Melina Esse and *Holly Watkins* recently received their Mistress of Arts degree from the University of Virginia. They currently live in Portland, OR and are planning to return to academia next fall. For now, they are biding their time in the "real" world and devising 101 ways to prepare salmon.

Heather Hadlock is Assistant Professor of Music at Stanford University. She is completing a book about affinities between women and music in French Romanticism, and her current research explores female travesty in opera since the eighteenth century. Her most characteristic embodied response to opera is to sing along, especially in the car.

Jennifer Rycenga is a buzzing lesbian gadfly nestled in the Comparative Religious Studies Program at San Jose State University. Her article "Sisterhood: A Loving Lesbian Ear Listens to Progressive Heterosexual Women's Rock Music" was just published in the anthology *Keeping Score: Music and Disciplinarity*, ed. Anahid Kassabian, David Schwartz and Larry Siegel

(University of Virginia Press).

Udayan Sen is an artist currently working in Minneapolis. *Milton Schlosser* teaches piano, music history, and other subjects at Augustana University College, a private liberal arts university in Alberta. He lives in a "rurban" setting with his partner and co-parents two boys.

James L. Zychowicz is a musicologist specializing in the music of Gustav Mahler. He has a monograph on Mahler's sketches forthcoming and a critical edition of Mahler's score for Weber's *Die drei Pintos* in press. He is an officer of the AMS-Midwest Chapter and chair of the AMS Committee on Career-Related Issues.

in future issues

Fear not! The Schubert and Vivier articles announced last issue are still in the pipeline and should appear in the next issue. The March issue will also include reports on the queer theory session at SEM, the AMS/SMT meeting in Phoenix, plus reviews of *Hot Licks: Lesbian Musicians of Note*; *Sappho is Burning*; *Lush Life: A Biography of Billy Strayhorn*; *Seduced and Abandoned: Essays on Gay Men and Popular Music*; and more. As always, we welcome your contributions and suggestions!