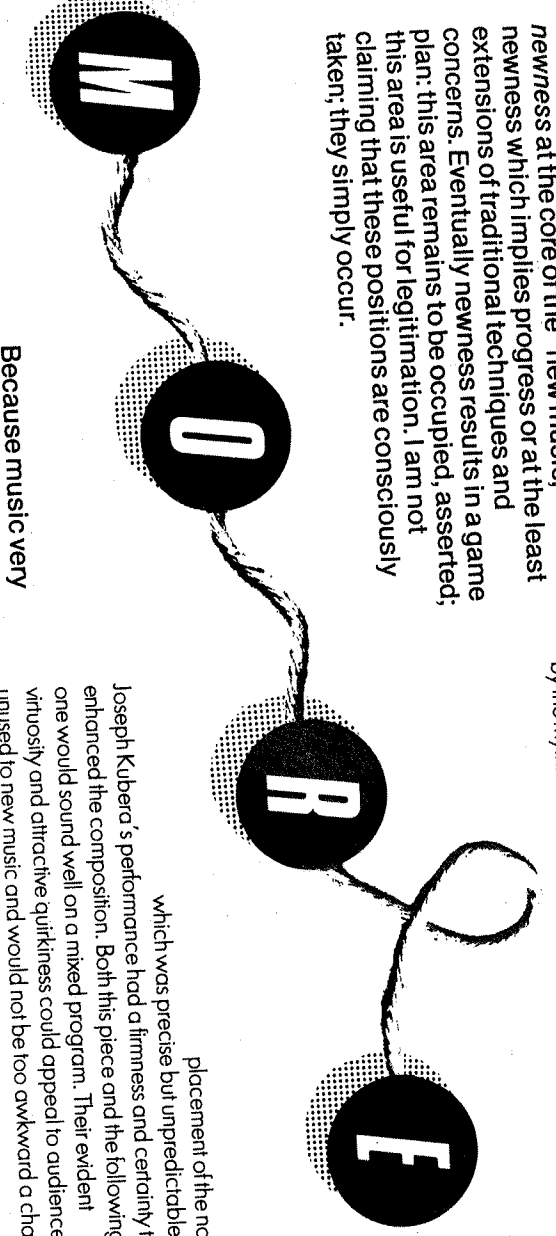


mutually tuned),

even timbre, and use of slide whistle, voice, kazoo, and some electronics in addition to oboe and english horn. The work is surprisingly "musical" in the traditional sense, as compared to either Cage's use of radios, or Alvin Lucier's *North American Time Capsule* work which used a Sylvania voice encoder device for somewhat the same effect. In *Spiral*, the oboe and voice parallel and at times imitate the radio and electronic sound; it is as if subjectivity were on the retreat within the sphere of technology. (I should mention here that part of my initial reaction was against the logistics of the work, which must have dominated the original performance. World fairs are almost never concerned with intimacy, and the automations that pass for high culture—use of multi-screen situations, moving sidewalks, and so forth—seem to function solely for the manipulation (physical and psychological) of people en masse, a manipulation that parallels the techniques (although not the intentions) of totalitarianism. This manipulation is always technocratic. It is to Celli's credit that the recorded version possesses an intimacy that immediately engages the listener.)

Extensions: There are a lot of extensions on the market today, from Lucier's *Extended Voices* collection to Schwartz's *Extended Oboe*, the only piece on the album where Celli actually plays in the traditional sense of the creation of musical sequences of notes—although the roots here are more jazz-oriented than classical. The work is lovely and emotional; a crowd-pleaser. It breaks no new ground.

Extensions II: "Breaking ground" is one of the main characteristics of a certain kind of new music, which is paralleled by the individuation of saxophone styles in jazz, for example. There is newness at the core of the "new music," newness which implies progress or at the least extensions of traditional techniques and concerns. Eventually newness results in a game plan: this area remains to be occupied, asserted; this area is useful for legitimation. I am not claiming that these positions are consciously taken; they simply occur.



Because music very

often is a collaboration (at least between composer and performer) that involves a minimum of space-time in the world (a concert season can possess a much greater number of events than a gallery season), game plans are not taken as seriously as they would be in the art world (where too closely related bodies of work are either united under the rubric of style or considered imitative). Not that much may be at stake—except the experience of the audience. For this reason, the "newness" of Celli's album (some of which is very very new) seems irrelevant after several hearings: as usual, it is music to be enjoyed. As such, my favorite work remains *Sky: Sforzi*; *A Summoring of Focus* has become difficult to listen to. On the other hand, Stockhausen's piece is strangely endearing; the short-wave had a good day, and *Extended Oboe* seems prettier than ever. I would advise everyone to listen to the album, which in its totality possesses a brittle beauty coupled with surprising flows of sound.

Conclusion: This would naturally lie with the sound itself—not the internal repetition of the *new* as you read it, but the recording. Consider it a pitch for purchase; the record (remodified, the music may be read (reread carefully) in more than

David Feldman

Third Street Music School, NYC April 15, 1980

The bulk of this long concert of music by David Feldman consisted of two piano pieces played with confidence, eloquence, and necessary clarity by Joseph Kubera. The final piece was performed by a large ensemble, mostly students; the overall effect was that of an under-rehearsed experiment which contrasted with the professionalism demonstrated earlier.

The piano music was peculiar because it satisfied the listener on a variety of levels without compromise. While the music tended not only to tonalities but to emotionally evocative pretty tonalities, there was a consistent, almost insistent, systematic structuring of the sound which was integral to the effectiveness of the music's romanticism. The coupling of classicism and 'romanticism is characteristic of "Minimalists," but Feldman's music, while sharing some of their ideals, sounds nothing like the repetitive modal noodling usually associated with that school. Repetition seems to play no part in his music, although variation—or, more accurately, permutation—does.

David Feldman makes his living as a mathematician working with computers, and mathematical structures were used in composing the two piano pieces. As a performing musician Feldman is a flautist, which seems to allow him a fresh approach to writing for the piano. The piano pieces are virtuosic primarily because of their rhythmic complexity. Feldman has chosen to title his pieces in an eccentric way. It reminds me of painter David Hockney's admission that he used to give his paintings long titles so that any mention of them would take up a lot of room in a review. But perhaps a poetic title is best for a mathematically structured piece, and anyway it's much better than "Abstractions N°" and that ilk.

The first piece performed was "In Real Life Mr. Pipe is a Plumber," composed in 1978. It was in twelve movements and seemed to go on and on, which, in this case, was a nice feeling. The sustain pedal was down for the entire duration of each movement. This effect would usually be inadvisable but was appropriate to the kind of single note, wide intervallic jumps that formed the character of the piece. Constant sustain might imply dreaminess, but here that was avoided by the rhythmic

placement of the notes

which was precise but unpredictable. Joseph Kubera's performance had a firmness and certainty that enhanced the composition. Both this piece and the following one would sound well on a mixed program. Their evident virtuosity and attractive quirkiness could appeal to audiences unused to new music and would not be too awkward a change from older music.

The second piece (here we go), "Scissored Into Slender Ships the Wings of Butterflies First One Wing Then the Other Sometimes For a Change the Two Abreast Never So Good Since" was written in 1977 and showed a variety of compositional methods in its three sections. There were a prelude and postlude, identical, I think, which were very brief and seemed a seed for the rest of the composition. The section I found most fascinating consisted of a single chord which occurred on a steady pulse but never the same way twice. There must have been almost a hundred permutations achieved through arpeggiation and rhythmic refractions of the several notes that formed the chord. A basic pulse remained, sometimes almost incoherently syncopated, a new variation appearing every four beats. The sections were not separated by pauses, but moved sensibly into one another. The length of the piece made it a bit difficult to give it constant attention, but there was never a sense that the length was gratuitous.

Process or systematic composition is not a new idea, and that's what's good about it. The older the idea becomes, the more its variability and worth become evident. A composer can hardly hide behind its novelty because it's no longer novel. David Feldman has invented systems that are coherent and thorough in-and-of-themselves, true to their own logic. They form a vocabulary and syntax that speak to us, rather than being the musical equivalent of a dictionary.

David Garland

Julius Eastman

33 Grand St., NYC April 3, 1980

Like it or not, theater is a part of every concert. Performers can leave standards unquestioned and present a concert that ignores the enhancements of theater: or setting, lighting, placement of audience and performer, and the movements of the performer, all can be utilized in the service of a conscious intention.

Julius Eastman sang his unaccompanied "Sacred Songs" in a very simple but well considered setting. The performance space was small, the audience necessarily limited to less than thirty. Lighting was from a single overhead spot and Eastman stood directly beneath it at the center and front of the stage. Everything about the performance emphasized singleness and isolation, which were a concern of the texts he sang. The overhead spot put Eastman's face into deep shadow, a welcome gesture of privacy in a performance so personal. Every time I have seen Eastman perform he has been dressed the same way, in torn and dirty clothing. Normally one ignores a musician's clothing, but here it seemed to count because it emphasized the unglamorousness of his non-conformity. The performance was strenuous for both Eastman and the audience. His voice is among the few that have the power and variety to succeed in a solo a cappella format. Eastman used no written music, but the songs were too carefully structured, with recurrent themes and figures, to imply much improvisation. The cycle of songs, with only brief pauses between each, lasted at least an hour and fifteen minutes.

The cycle of "sacred songs" was titled "Taking Refuge In The Two Principles," and the texts were written by Eastman. What made them sacred was not any association with a specific religion, but the fact that the texts concerned ideals sacred to Eastman. The central statement was, "I take refuge under the umbrella of two principles—Universality and Impartiality." The words *Altruism* and *Equality* were used also. That statement came up again and again, and was always followed by the declaration that those principles did not, in fact, give him refuge or protection from anything. His belief in these principles, according to the text, has separated him from most people and, painfully, even from his friends. There were reiterations and extensions of these ideas. About midway through the piece there was a touching section in which Eastman sang, "I place my friends around me. I place them on my left side. I place them on my right side." And he went on, listing where he places his friends, developing slowly from physical images to more abstract poetic ones. It was during this section that Eastman gestured most. Other times he often kept his hands clasped at his chest, not in an imploring way, but in a casual, absent-minded way. The text never seemed pretentious even at its most philosophical, because of its "soul-laid-bare" quality.

The vocal line encompassed the distant limits of Eastman's famous range (listen to his performance of Peter Maxwell Davies' "Eight Songs for a Mad King" on Nonesuch records), concentrating on the lower register. A contour common to the whole cycle was this: Eastman would start quietly on a note and, in the form of a long melisma (often on "I"), he would slip down and up about a half step in quick little grace notes. These never seemed haphazard, and his pitch was always under control. Gradually, as more words were sung, the lines became more drawn out and intervals widened until, at a climactic point, his voice was jumping back and forth at least on an octave, sometimes straining and loud without being unmusical. Within this soft-to-loud contour was a great deal of variety, never an overly obvious gradation. The music had a ritualistic quality to it and was probably influenced by the religious music of both east and west. This seemed to be more a result of common purpose and the extension of a tradition, rather than any need of Eastman's for an antecedent.

This was relentless music. At times it was like being shouted at. There was an intensity of conviction, physically and psychologically that was harrowing. The physical ordeal of singing for so long with such endurance complimented the difficulties inherent in the philosophical paradoxes of the text. It gave me a headache. It was startling that one person, in a small room, could generate such a thorough experience on so many levels.

David Garland

