

Concert: *Harold Budd* *On Bill With Jon Gibson*

It was an evening of slightly simplistic, superficially pretty minimalism at the Kitchen on Friday, for the first of two concerts by Harold Budd and Jon Gibson.

Mr. Budd is a Los Angeles performer-composer best known for his association with Brian Eno, the rock avant-gardist. He has put out one record on Mr. Eno's *Obscure* label, and has a collaboration with Mr. Eno due momentarily on Mr. Eno's *Ambient* label. On Friday, he played 45 minutes of *Preludes* for solo acoustic piano, described as "selections from a cycle of improvised works."

That presumably meant music that was partly preplanned and partly improvised. The music was all quiet and played mostly in the middle of the keyboard, with simple, repetitive tunes over gentle chords, some arpeggiated and some not. The effect blended kitschy sweetness and austerity in an interesting manner, with a flavoring of the sort of rocking lullabies that George Gurdjieff, the mystic, used to compose. It was appealing in its way, but might better be encountered in a nonconcert situation — ambiently or on record.

Mr. Gibson is most often seen playing winds in the ensembles of leading structuralist-minimalist composers,

above all Philip Glass. But he is also a composer with a considerable track record. For some years, he has concentrated on solo music he played himself, but for this weekend's concerts he has reverted to ensemble writing.

Of the three pieces he offered, the most successful by far was the first, entitled *Variations* and said to be in progress. This was for soprano saxophone, electric piano, electric organ and vibraphone and in three main sections: solo sax over sustained chords and trills from the others; choppy unison figures for all four instruments interrupted by pauses, and a final section with everyone slowing down and Mr. Gibson ornamenting the figures ever more ornately as their duration made it increasingly difficult for him to sustain his breath. The effect was eerily and evocatively like a gamelan, with three vibraphones supplying the percussive attack and the other instruments recalling the resonance of the gongs and the recorderlike wind part.

Otherwise, there was a short, rather bland piece called "Song 4," reminiscent of Mr. Glass's efforts on his "North Star" album, and a dour effort called "Return" that either repeated itself doggedly or employed a process too subtle to give this listener much pleasure.

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