



## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

SCI Region IV Conference  
Winthrop University  
November 11–13, 2004  
Host: Ronald Keith Parks  
E-mail: parksr@winthrop.edu

Region VI Conference  
University of Texas at San Antonio  
February 24–26, 2005  
Submission Deadline: TBA  
Host: David Heuser  
E-mail: dheuser@utsa.edu

## The Pulitzer as a Sign of the Times

by Paul SanGregory  
(a misplaced American composer)  
Kaohsiung, Taiwan

As some members may recall, I recently made a listerv post regarding recent discussion about changes in the Pulitzer prize for music. Bruce Bennett, our Newsletter editor, has since asked if I would agree to publish some of my ideas in an article for the current Newsletter. I immediately agreed, not because I think the Pulitzer prize in music will directly change many of our lives or careers (for most of us, it won't), but because I believe that this matter brings up larger issues which go beyond the Pulitzer and that will possibly have an impact on American concert music and the way people perceive it.

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## SCI Region VII Conference Review

by Benjamin Boone

Daniel Kessner, Liviu Marinescu, and Daniel Hosken hosted an enormously successful SCI Region VII conference April 16–18, 2004 at California State University, Northridge. For those unfamiliar with this part of the world, CSUN abuts a range of foothills just north of Los Angeles. Works by twenty-nine composers from over nine states were presented in the acoustically sound CSUN Recital Hall during the course of four well-programmed and impeccably organized concerts. Five lecture-demonstrations on topics ranging from Bulgarian music to computer programming rounded out the program.

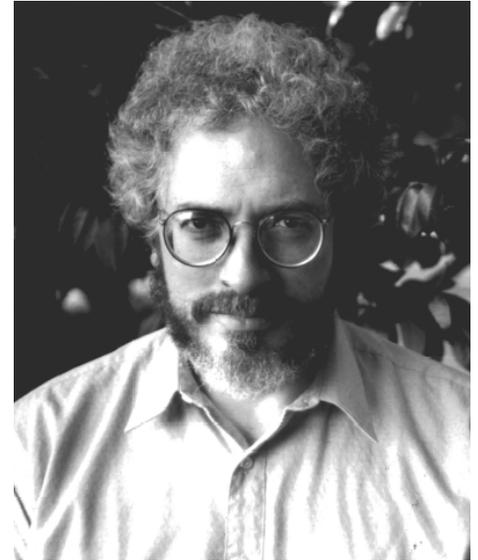
Especially worthy of note were the high level of the performances, the diversity of musical styles presented, and the quality of student participant's work.

Performers included at least ten of CSUN's accomplished faculty, numerous CSUN students and a wealth of exceptional guest performers, such as Los Angeles Philharmonic harpist Lou Ann Neill and the Los Angeles based Tambellan Ensemble (a tubular percussion ensemble that features instruments that can be microtonally tuned through the use of special tuning clamps developed by composer Ron George). Other medium sized mixed ensembles, with up to eleven performers were featured on each concert.

Memorable performances included guitarist Anton Machleder's virtuosic performance of Aurelio de la Vega's *Bifloro*, USC guitarists Eric Benzant-Feldra and Michael Kudirka's sensitive performance of Jeffrey Holmes' *Five Microtonal Studies*, and San Francisco pianist Janis Mercer's energetic interaction with effect devices in Brian Belet's (*Disturbed*) *Radiance*. But the stand-out performer was Conference Chair Daniel Kessner. In a Herculean display of

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## Jonathan Kramer, 1942–2004



Jonathan Kramer was a cherished friend and colleague and it is with great sorrow that I heard of his recent passing. We had been trading emails just a few weeks before his death and I had no idea of his illness. Jonathan's work as a composer, theorist, critic, and educator was widely acclaimed. Perhaps what I liked most about him was his deep passion for the music world in which we work.

I met Jonathan in the early 1980s when I was beginning my graduate studies. We met at a National Conference of the SCI being held at LSU in Baton Rouge. I was very fortunate that he found my work of interest as I knew of him and respected him greatly. We became very good friends after that initial meeting. Over the years he was very supportive of me and would always find the time to see me when I visited Cincinnati and later New York. I very much enjoyed our conversations which ran from music and aesthetics to local restaurants and everything in between.

His writings were of great relevance and importance. One of his most important books in my opinion, [The Time of Music](#), was ground breaking. When it came out

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**SCI Newsletter**  
**Bruce Bennett, Editor**  
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### Daniel Adams



Daniel Adams conducted the world premiere of his musical composition *Among Echoing Presences* on a concert presented by Continentes Percusion II on Sunday, June 6, 2004 at the Teatro National in San Jose, Costa Rica. Adams also conducted the world premiere of *Divertimento for Violin, Trumpet, and Percussion* by Costa Rican composer Francisco Castillo on the same concert. The performers were Jean-Christophe Dobrzelewski, trumpet, Jan Dobrzelewski, violin, and Stuart Marrs, percussion. *Among Echoing Presences* was also performed at the Centro Nacional de Politica Economica of the Universidad Nacional Costa Rica on Thursday, June 10, 2004.

### John Bilotta

*Entr'acte*, a virtuoso work in two movements for solo clarinet by John Bilotta, received its Canadian premiere on June 3 at New Music North 2004. The three-day festival of new music was held at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Confederation College, in Thunder Bay, Ontario. *Entr'acte* was beautifully and deftly performed by

E-Chen Hsu, clarinetist with the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra. This year's festival featured the music of twenty-four composers from Canada and abroad under the direction of Aris Carastathis and Darlene Chepil Reed.



*John Bilotta and E-Chen Hsu at the Art Gallery*

### Robert Denham

The Los Angeles Flute Quartet gave the premiere of Denham's *Three-dogged Leg* at Biola University in La Mirada California at 12:00 PM on May 12, 2004.

Timothy Lees (Concertmaster Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra) gave the premiere of Denham's *Goldgräber* for solo violin at the Music04 New Music Festival at the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music at 5:30 PM on June 18, 2004 in Werner Hall.

Ron Blessinger gave the premiere of Denham's *Vein from Goldgräber* for solo violin at the Bloch Festival in Newport Oregon on June 30, 2004.

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### Visit our Web page

Peter Swendsen, assistant professor at the University of Virginia, is our webmaster. The URL is:  
<http://www.societyofcomposers.org>

Please visit the Web site and send comments and suggestions to [webmaster@societyofcomposers.org](mailto:webmaster@societyofcomposers.org)

### The SCI Newsletter

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### SCION

John Bilotta, *Editor*

SCION, SCI's on-line electronic news, provides information on opportunities for composers. News items, announcements, comments, and other material for publication may be sent via e-mail to:

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many of my theorist friends felt that it was not "theoretical" enough while my composer colleagues felt it too "theoretical." Given Jonathan's great intellect it was of no surprise that after several years the theorists and composers finally caught up to its relevance and importance. The book, like Jonathan, was in many ways ahead of its time.

Jonathan was a very inquisitive man and this impacted his musical aesthetics greatly as they were constantly in flux and evolving. His catalog includes works in a wide variety of aesthetics from earlier gestural works to minimalist works to the more recent eclectic pieces. In many ways this aesthetic search combined with his open and intellectual nature made him a great teacher. I have had the pleasure of hearing some of his former students works and the aesthetic worlds in which they write vary greatly while like in Jonathan's music, they all demonstrate a good deal of craft.

In retrospect, I can easily say that he was one of the people I have met in my life that have had a true impact not just as an artist or theorist or educator, but as an individual with a big heart. Jonathan was a class act and will sorely be missed.

*Orlando Jacinto García*

It is with a deep sense of grief, loss, and disbelief that we mourn the loss of our friend and colleague, Jonathan Kramer.

Jonathan was a rare combination of profound thinker, scholar, and artist who had something very fresh and original to say as a composer.

Jonathan had a strong, jovial personality, a very quick and lively wit, and a dedication to communicating music to people, whether it be through his strong, original, expressive, clearly written compositions, (often with whimsical or double entendre titles) or through his many books and articles.

I met Jonathan some thirty years ago, and we worked closely together in SCI when he was at the University of Cincinnati. I had the honor of his asking me to write a letter of support for his promotion to full professor there and we worked closely on the National Conference that he and Norman Dinnerstein hosted.

Through his compositions, his writings, his legacy to his students, and his many good acts in this life, Jonathan contributed richly to our art and our profession.

We miss him.

*Tom Wells*  
*President, SCI*

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virtuosity, versatility and verve, Kessner performed flute on nine compositions (one his own) and conducted three compositions, all equally well, and all while attending to organizational aspects of the conference. Kessner's flute technique and composer's sensibilities enabled him to render music with a vibrancy, immediacy and understanding rarely heard in new music. His performances reminded this author of another SCI composer/flutist stand-out in this regard—Geoffrey Kidde.

Each concert featured an array of musical styles programmed in a manner that allowed each to sound fresh. Compositional styles ranged from minimalistic (David Lefkowitz's additive work *With/Without [Con/Sol (-ation)]* (wherein one part is presented solo in its entirety, then another part added to it to make a duet, then a third part added to make a trio) to highly in-your-face aggressive dissonance (Liviu Marinescu's provocative *Sequences IV* wherein a propagandistic tune is played with disturbing zeal by a solo clarinet), to rhythmically charged (Sara Carina Graef's *Nottanosti* for piano which has a most compelling groove), to meditative (Ron George's *A Gull's Body*, based on the poetry of Judy Liggett and featuring a

tubular percussion ensemble), to electronic works (such as Michael Angell's *Asa Nisi Masa* which is based on a scene from a Fellini movie). How refreshing to hear such a diversity of styles presented side-by-side and with equal fervor and zeal.

Of particular interest was the quality of the work by the student composers in attendance. Each displayed high level of craft, and almost all also seemed to be in the process of forming a unique musical voice reflective of their own generation, rather than simply imitating the style of their teachers or of a historic figure. Most notable in this regard was USC doctoral student Jeffrey Holmes' *Five Microtonal Studies* for two guitars tuned approximately a sixth of a tone apart. Holmes' use of microtones was one of the most creative and successful uses this author has heard in a long time. Other student standouts were UC Berkeley's Hubert Ho (*Stick Your Head in a Dryer* for flute, clarinet, piano, percussion, violin, and cello) and Brandeis' Grace Choi (in just spring for soprano, flute, clarinet, piano, percussion, violin, and cello). The hosts are to be commended for providing so many students an opportunity to have their voices be heard. The student works presented here bode well for the future of composition in the United States and SCI should be proud to be facilitating their development.

*Benjamin Boone is an Assistant Professor of Music at California State University, Fresno.*

### **Alert!**

If you teach in a department or school of music, please ensure that concert programs presented by your university are being collected and sent to ASCAP and BMI each on a regular basis. Each agency, which relies on these programs, extracts performance information and determines the amount of royalty credited to each composer based on a sample rate.

### **Lief Ellis**

Lief Ellis conducted the premiere of his *Elegy* for string orchestra at the Hartt School of Music in Hartford Connecticut on Sunday, June 13, 2004.

### **Joel Feigin**

*Echoes From the Holocaust*, by Joel Feigin, was performed by the ECM-Ensemble for Contemporary Music in its 2004 Primavera Festival program entitled "The Mimetics of Time." The concert took place on April 22nd in Lotte Lehmann Concert Hall at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

### **Jeffrey Hoover**



Jeffrey Hoover's *Soul and Fire*, a setting of four poems by 12th-century Persian poet and mystic Jalaluddin Rumi, were performed by Arkansas State University faculty on April 1, 2004 at the Fowler Center, Arkansas State University, Jonesboro: Julia Lansford, soprano, Ken Hatch, clarinet, and J.D. Kelly, piano. The individual movements are "The Power of Love," "Alchemy," "Memories of Love," and "Flame."

Hoover was a guest composer at the Contemporary Music Festival at Wichita

State University, April 5–April 9. His string trio *Nightlife*—"Breathless" and "Streetwise"—was performed by WSU faculty members Nancy Luttrell, violin, Catherine Consiglio, viola, and Andrew Kolb, cello. *Spectrum*, for solo trumpet, was performed by WSU faculty Judith Saxton, and students Nate Boone, Russ Callahan, and James Henry. Each movement of *Spectrum* is inspired by a visual color. For this specific performance, the trumpeters alternated movements, wearing clothing that matched the title of the movement. *Spectrum* is one of several works by Hoover that is either inspired by the visual arts, or a joining of his own compositions and paintings. Hoover also gave a lecture "Eliminating Barriers to Composition," about ways of working, planning, and personal habits that can help to move composers forward in their creative work.

*Into the Night* for trumpet/flugelhorn and marimba was performed by Neal Berntsen, (trumpet with the Pittsburgh Symphony, and faculty member of Duquesne University and Carnegie Mellon University) at Trumpet Day in Pittsburgh at Duquesne University on April 24, 2004. The symbolist-style poem that Hoover had written was also recited at the performance.

### **David S. Lefkowitz**

Lefkowitz' double concerto for oboe, clarinet, and wind ensemble, *Of Love and Loss*, was premiered by Marion Kuszyk, oboe, Gary Gray, clarinet, and Tom Lee conducting the UCLA Wind Ensemble at UCLA's Schoenberg Hall on Wednesday, May 26 at 8:00 PM.

### **Charles Norman Mason**

Charles Norman Mason's *All Four One* was performed by the Atlas Saxophone Quartet at Birmingham-Southern College, Alabama on May 13, 2004 at 7:30 PM in Hill Recital Hall. The Chicago-based Atlas Saxophone Quartet is a dynamic chamber ensemble committed to the performance of contemporary music and the promotion of

new works by today's composers. Their diverse musical backgrounds have combined to create a unique blend of color, expression, and dazzling technique.

### **Shirley Mier**

Shirley Mier's *Theme and Deviations* for concert band was performed by the Seventh Annual National Wind Ensemble, with H. Robert Reynolds conducting, at Carnegie Hall on Sunday, May 30, at 8:00 PM.

### **Mike Murray**

Mike Murray's song cycle "*The Wild Winds Weep*" was given its world premiere in Norway for the Bergen International Festival at the Grieghallen on the evening of May 26, 2004 at 8:00 p.m. by Pearl Yeadon, soprano; Lisa Casey, horn; and Peter Collins, piano. The American premiere work was given at the New Music Recital of the Amadeus Piano Festival on Saturday, June 26, 2004 at 3:00 in Tyrell Hall on the University of Tulsa campus.

### **Kirk O'Riordan**

Kirk O'Riordan's *Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra* (1997) was performed by the Williamsport Chamber Chorus and Orchestra on Friday, May 21, 2004 at 7:30 PM. The soloist was Dr. Gail Levinsky, Assistant Professor of Saxophone at Susquehanna University, with the composer conducting.

### **Andrián Pertout**

Andrián Pertout recently won the First Prize in the 2004 ISU Contemporary Music Festival/Louisville Orchestra Composition Competition (Indiana, USA). Part of the prize is an invitation to attend the performance of his winning orchestral work by the Louisville Orchestra and to conduct a 50-minute talk at the 3-day Indiana State University Contemporary Music Festival, November 10–12, 2004.

Other awards in 2004 include the Judges' (joint-winner) and Audience Prize of the Oare String Orchestra Third International Music for Strings, Composing Competition (Faversham, UK).

### Timothy Polashek



A concert of music by Timothy Polashek was presented at Merkin Concert Hall, New York City on Thursday June 10, 2004 at 8:00 PM. *Porcupine Quest* (2002) for solo piano received its New York premiere by pianist Joanne Chang. Matthew Polashek performed *Centipede* (2003) *Fabrications* (2004), both for baritone saxophone and tape. Pianists Steve Beck and Eric Huebner performed the world premieres of *Sockets Nocturne* (2004) for two pianos and *Micronality* (2004) for two pianos and interactive electronics, they also played *Kite Sonata* (2003) for two pianos. The composer himself performed the world premier of *Saltate* (2004) for solo piano and interactive electronics.

### Laura Schwendinger



The Chicago Chamber Musicians, Chicago's foremost chamber music ensemble, gave the premiere of Laura Schwendinger's *Nonet*, commissioned by the Fromm Foundation, on June 14, 2004 at 8:00 PM on WFMT (98.7 FM).

### Erich Stem



Erich Stem recently had his music performed by the Richmond Symphony as part of their 2004 Masterworks series season finale. The performance of his work, *Escape*, was broadcast live on WCVE 88.9FM, which featured a radio interview with Stem and host, Bobbie Barajas, during the intermission. Excerpts of the interview and music can be found at: [www.erichstem.com](http://www.erichstem.com).

His piece, *Windows*, for saxophone quartet, was also given its world premiere at the 2004 Biennial North American Saxophone Alliance at UNC-Greensboro. This performance featured the Excalibur Saxophone Quartet from the University of South Carolina.

### Brandon C. Vaccaro

The premiere Brandon C. Vaccaro's *Die Morgensheutegesternwelt*, a microtonal piece for eight guitars was performed by the Lamont Guitar Ensemble on May 25, 2004 at 7:30 PM at the Newman Center for the Performing Arts in the Lamont School of Music at the University of Denver.

### ASCAP 2004 Chorus Awards for Adventurous Programming

New York, NY, June 17, 2004: The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) honored four choral ensembles for adventurous programming during the 2003-04 concert

season, at the Chorus America Annual Conference at the Omni Franklin Hotel in Pittsburgh last week. The Awards, offered annually to constituent members of Chorus America, are presented in appreciation for performances of music written within the past twenty-five years.

In presenting the Awards, ASCAP's Vice President of Concert Music, Frances Richard commented: "2004 marks the twelfth year ASCAP has presented these awards, and the 90th anniversary of the founding of ASCAP. In 1914, our courageous founders, with Victor Herbert in the forefront, fought to protect their rights as creators all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States, where Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote the historic decision affirming their rights. Today ASCAP has over 180,00 members and these awards are presented in their name, to those whose excellent performances of the music of our time enriches and replenishes the great choral repertory. On behalf of the composers whose music you presented this past season, we thank you."

For the second year, the ASCAP/Alice Parker Award was presented. The prize was established in 2003 to honor legendary ASCAP choral composer and conductor, Alice Parker, in celebration of her 75th year. The award is presented annually to the choral ensemble that expands the mission of the chorus by presenting challenging repertory to its audience in new ways. The ensembles honored with plaques and cash awards were:

Youth/Children's Chorus Category: San Francisco Girls Chorus Susan McMane, Artistic Director

Alice Parker Award: Bella Voce (Chicago, IL) Anne Heider, Artistic Director

Adult Chorus Awards (two awards): Opus 7 (Seattle, WA) Loren Pontén, Artistic Director

South Bend Chamber Singers (Notre Dame, IN) Nancy Menk, Conductor Roberta Q. Jackson, Artistic Director

## **ASCAP 2004 Orchestra Awards for Adventurous Programming**

New York, NY, June 16, 2004: For the 47th consecutive year, orchestras demonstrating exceptional commitment to contemporary composers were honored at the American Symphony Orchestra League's National Conference, which was held last week in Pittsburgh. The annual ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) Adventurous Programming Awards recognize American orchestras whose concert programs prominently feature music composed within the last twenty-five years.

The Awards were presented at the David L. Lawrence Center at the annual conference of the American Symphony Orchestra League. Introducing the Awards presentation, Frances Richard, ASCAP's Vice President of Concert Music, said, "These awards recognize the most vital advocates of the music of our time. Just as we rebuild our concert halls and replenish the ranks of our orchestras, ASCAP congratulates those orchestras and their music directors who enrich the repertoire and keep our great concert music tradition vibrant and alive."

Richard introduced ASOL Board member Michael Morgan, an exciting, young American conductor and strong advocate of the composers and music of our time, who presented the 2004 ASCAP Awards. Morgan is currently the Music Director of the Oakland East Bay Symphony, the Sacramento Philharmonic, the Oakland Youth Orchestra, and Artistic Director of the Festival Opera of Walnut Creek (CA).

In her remarks, Richard announced that 2004 marked the 90th Anniversary of the founding of ASCAP. The Society was established in 1914 by founders including Irving Berlin, John Philip Sousa and Victor Herbert, who was at that time was the Music Director of the Pittsburgh Symphony. Today, ASCAP is the world's largest performing right organization with over 180,000 composer, lyricist and music publisher members. ASCAP is committed

to protecting the rights of its members by licensing and collecting fees for the public performance of their copyrighted works and distributing royalties to the Society's members. ASCAP's repertory includes the entire spectrum of music - from pop to symphonic, rock to gospel, Latin to country, to jazz, rhythm and blues, and music for theater, film and television. ASCAP's Board of Directors is comprised solely of writers and publishers, elected by the membership.

The complete list of award winners are:

John S. Edwards Award for Strongest Commitment to New American Music: American Composers Orchestra, Steven Sloane, Music Director and Conductor, Robert Beaser, Artistic Director

Morton Gould Award for Innovative Programming: Los Angeles Philharmonic, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Music Director

Leonard Bernstein Award for Educational Programming: San Francisco Symphony, Michael Tilson Thomas, Music Director

Awards for Programming of Contemporary Music:

Orchestras with Annual Operating Expenses more than \$13.6 Million: First Place - Seattle Symphony, Gerard Schwarz, Music Director; Second Place - The Cleveland Orchestra, Franz Welser-Möst, Music Director; Third Place - Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Daniel Barenboim, Music Director

Orchestras with Annual Operating Expenses \$5.2-\$13.6 Million: First Place - Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Marin Alsop, Music Director Laureate; Second Place - The Buffalo Philharmonic, JoAnn Falletta, Music Director; Third Place - The Nashville Symphony Orchestra, Kenneth Schermerhorn, Music Director and Conductor

Orchestras with Annual Operating Expenses \$1.625-\$5.2 Million: First Place - Brooklyn Philharmonic, Robert Spano,

Music Director; Second Place - Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra, Neal Gittleman, Music Director and Conductor; Third Place - Tucson Symphony Orchestra, George Hanson, Music Director and Conductor

Orchestras with Annual Operating Expenses \$420,000-\$1.625 Million: First Place - Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Gil Rose, Artistic Director; Second Place - Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, Kent Nagano, Music Director and Conductor; Third Place - Albany Symphony Orchestra, David Alan Miller, Music Director and Conductor

Orchestras with Annual Operating Expenses \$420,000 or less: First Place - Camellia Symphony Orchestra, Eugene F. Castillo, Music Director and Conductor; Second Place - Meridian Symphony Orchestra, Claire Fox Hillard, Music Director and Conductor; Third Place - Northwest Symphony Orchestra, Anthony Spain, Music Director

Collegiate Orchestras: First Place - University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra, Kenneth Kiesler, Music Director; Second Place - Brown University Orchestra, Paul Schuyler Phillips, Music Director and Conductor; Third Place - Lamont Symphony Orchestra, Lawrence Golan, Music Director and Conductor

Youth Orchestras: First Place - Orange County High School of the Arts Chamber Orchestra, Christopher Russell, Music Director; Second Place - Etowah Youth Orchestras, Michael R. Gagliardo, Music Director and Conductor; Third Place - New Jersey Youth Symphony, Barbara H. Barstow, Artistic Director

Festival Orchestras: First Place - Cabrillo Music Festival, Marin Alsop, Music Director and Principal Conductor

Award for American Programming on Foreign Tours: First Place - Minnesota Symphony Orchestra, Osmo Vänskä, Music Director

To start with, I should state that my perspective is based on the assumption that the Pulitzer prize for music was originally created with the intention of recognizing (as well as encouraging and promoting) American concert music. My original listerv posting was written in obvious support of this assumption. Before writing the current article, however, it occurred to me that I hadn't gathered any proof to support this assumption. So I did a quick on-line search and found the following quote from a statement written by the Pulitzer board regarding its first prize for music (which was awarded to William Schumann in 1943) at the following web site: <http://www.american.edu/heintze/Pul1.htm>.

"For distinguished musical composition in the larger forms of chamber, orchestral, or choral work, or for an operatic work (including ballet), first performed or published by a composer of established residence in the United States, Five hundred dollars (\$500)."

Although my search and my assumptions are by no means exhaustive or scholarly, it does appear that recent changes in the prize's scope and the discussions surrounding them indicate that the validity of this original intent has been questioned. By extrapolation, one can further conclude that doubts concerning concert music's validity are now coming from the people who write, perform, teach and/or promote concert music, and not only from people outside of that sphere. It is for this reason that I originally felt compelled to write a listerv posting discussing this matter.

As one should be able to glean from my original post, I appreciate the fact that a lot of people feel music beyond the scope of "concert music" is important and worthy of an award—in fact, I agree with that sentiment (as do the people who created the many other awards for which non-concert types of music are eligible). But if the music in question is of radically different structure, technique, or intent, is it

really fair to directly compare it with what we would normally consider concert music? Wouldn't it be more fair to spin-off separate awards for various types of music (film, Broadway, pure jazz, pure electronic, etc.)? Although it is true that the original Pulitzer's wording doesn't include the term "concert music", it seems logical to assume that the words "musical composition" and "larger forms of chamber, orchestral, or choral, or for an operatic work" really do imply what I am referring to here as concert music. At any rate, I'm concerned that people, in an effort to be fair and all-inclusive, will forget that there really is beauty and unique value in many different music genres, styles, traditions, aesthetics, and techniques—including pure concert music. In other words, different types of music really aren't the same and they really ought to be listened to, valued and judged according to their own standards or "rules" when appropriate or possible. For that reason, it seems unwise to include music styles and genres of radically different intentions in a single catch-all award.

It's similar to the old question about diversity: is it really appropriate to judge a person by the mores of a culture with which that person has no real experience? Recent discussions surrounding the Pulitzer give me the impression that many people are willing to ignore the extreme differences between certain types of music for the stated purpose of promoting diversity of musical culture. But I believe that lumping too many types of music into one category—with the implied assumption that all styles are based on the same philosophical-traditions and/or that they aspire to similar goals, have similar "rules" and use similar materials—will breed even more musical misunderstanding and intolerance. For this reason one could even question whether or not people who "know better" might be willfully clouding the musical waters, intentionally making it difficult to easily recognize the complete diversity of musical life that American culture, in spite of its puritan beginnings and bare-bones-rugged-individualist, industrialist, anti-intellectualist, and market

oriented leanings, can miraculously generate.

Finally, this current debate about the Pulitzer does tend to give one the feeling that much of what lies behind it (and the wider debate about what types of music are significant enough to merit a blip on America's radar screen) is still focused on the tiresome arguments left over from camps of mid-twentieth-century modernism—the predominantly consonant camp now called minimalism included. I can't help but think that, while concert music is still arguing over matters that could have (should have?!) been laid to rest thirty years ago, the rest of the world has happily moved on. I think that we missed the boat a long time ago, culturally speaking. Remember, "popular music," exhibiting varying degrees of popularity, has already developed its own decidedly unmelodic, as well as unharmonic, stubbornly repetitive, rambunctiously raucous, and sometimes even suspiciously dissonant strains, but nobody seems to have condemned the whole lot of them. Maybe we did bring all this condemnation down on ourselves. After all, who keeps telling the majority of Americans that American composers have been writing bad music ever since World War II? Since most Americans aren't even aware that there are any American composers of (what they would call) "Classical" music who actually lived past World War II, I doubt that they came up with such an idea on their own! I don't think that this predominantly stultifying and negative atmosphere surrounding new concert music can be blamed entirely on players and music directors either.

At any rate, as composers of concert music, we now find ourselves in a tight spot, but I've heard it said that adversity often leads to creativity. In the bigger picture, American concert music should be able to survive without the Pulitzer prize for music as an ally (it should go without saying that composers, players, and audiences are more important than competitions, prizes, and awards for the survival of a musical culture). It would be helpful, however, if that particular award

would continue to give us a bit of moral support while we collect our bearings and try to get out of this quagmire.

What follows is the bulk of my original listserv posting:

Popular culture can and does create worthy music. But let's be honest, it's not the same as a major composition. A three minute song, or even a twenty minute improvisation (which isn't really popular!) are quite different in structure, style and technique from a 30 or 40 minute orchestral work. Rap is cool, but if you're into melodic counterpoint and colorful orchestration using real orchestral instruments in their fullest technical capacity it won't get you very far. Film music usually ends up being chopped into bits and pieces and mixed into other elements of a sound track, so it's not always a complete and coherent artistic experience in and of itself unless it is removed from the film and restructured.

So what's wrong with acknowledging that there are different styles of music, different levels of refinement, and different standards of what constitutes worthy technical virtuosity in music?! I'm not a snob, and I know that a lot of other concert music composers aren't either. Most of us grew up listening to (or even playing) some of whatever was popular when we were kids (jazz, rock, rap, pop, folk, country, whatever). This fact doesn't necessarily make us unique or special, just normal.

Popular music awards **\*\*ALWAYS\*\*** include different categories for different styles of music. So why should the Pulitzer people assume that all music can be measured by the same yard stick? The differences between R and B and rock are far less than the difference between a multi-movement orchestral work and a jazz improvisation. To me, the fact that the Pulitzer people fail to recognize the difference between the two latter categories is mind boggling. Maybe popular culture actually does have its collective \$^!# together while the standard bearers of the learned elite are hopelessly confused.

I tried to "enlighten" people as a guest in a college Music Appreciation course one time (in an American university). I explained that writing a fully-developed symphony is actually a much more involved task than writing a song. I saw daggers in the stairs of certain students as I said that because, I assume, they thought I was being a Classical snob and denying that their music was technically sound. I was not trying to convey that message, but I think that's what they wanted to hear somebody "like me" say. I get the feeling that we are not even allowed to explain our own expertise without becoming known as heavy-handed snobs who refuse to acknowledge other people's creativity. But if I'm so omnipotent and controlling, why am I always the underdog in these sorts of discussions?

Unfortunately, the writing of American concert music doesn't seem to be included in the modern version of the American Dream. When Americans want "Classical" music for fourth of July celebrations, for example, they usually reach for bits of Tchaikovsky. This is a fact. The only remaining argument is whether or not one believes that American concert music deserves to be ignored and pushed aside (... and there is American concert music that I think most people could "put up with", if only they would care to listen). I think it was short sighted of John Adams to condemn the Pulitzer for not including "popular" music in its considerations. If the committee begins to seriously lean in the direction of mass-market-oriented significance, people like him may not be winning the prize either. Let's be honest, the most popular composers of concert music are still no match for the "cultural significance" of a pop-culture phenomenon.

I know some people might say "Well, if you want Americans to listen to concert music then start writing concert music that Americans want to hear." But I don't buy that argument because I don't think that most Americans really want to hear concert music of any stripe. Even Duke Ellington's "concert music" was less successful (market-wise) than his more

"accessible" hits, for example. Similarly, certain rockers of the 70s put together long-winded or odd records that only achieved cult status because they were trying to create something akin to a concert "Art" music experience. Critics will often consider such people artistic geniuses who bravely stood up for their expression in the face of greedy record execs and in defiance of the dumber outside world. When we (concert music composers) do that, those same critics won't even listen much less speak in terms of artistic freedom and genius. Sometimes it seems like condemnation is the only form of respect we get.

... and I'm not complaining because people aren't calling us geniuses! I would simply like people to acknowledge that modern American concert music exists, and to recognize that its composers aren't all the same.

I should probably add one final blurb here. It's true that the Pulitzer prize isn't the beginning or the end of concert music in America, but I think it is a worthy symbol. If that bit of recognition is effectively taken away from the world of concert music, it becomes a negative symbol for us. It becomes yet another example of how little Americans appreciate—and even fail to recognize the existence of, much less the potential importance of— their own concert music tradition. If composers are upset over changes in the Pulitzer, I believe that is the reason why. We aren't trying to control the world of music, we know better than to delude ourselves into believing such impossibilities. We also know that changes in the Pulitzer won't change the way anybody writes music (not even those who aspire to mass-market recognition will do that, I believe). It's just disheartening, is all.

My bottom line: With all due respect to John Adams and company, I think it's a mistake to make the Pulitzer prize into a one-size-fits-all sort of honor. It's likely to cause even more divisions and prejudices between adherents of various genres, styles and techniques.

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