The Contemporary Group

William O. Smith and Robert Suderburg, Directors

Wednesday, February 14, 1973

Room 210, Kane Hall, 8:00 P.M.

PROGRAM

JENNIFER IN VERRALL 8:54
SONATA for Oboe and Piano (1958) CH 2-25-73.

Laila Storch, Oboe
John Verrall, Piano

JAMES BEALE 9:05
TRIO (1947) RH 3-1-73.

Irwin Eisenberg, Violin
Charles Brennand, Cello
Jane Beale, Piano

JOHN VERRALL 10:52
SONATA For Flute and Piano* (1972) CH 2-25-73.

Felix Skowronek, Flute
John Verrall, Piano

INTERMISSION

JOSEPH GOODMAN 25:20
QUINTET for Wind Instruments (1954)

Felix Skowronek, Flute
Laila Storch, Oboe
William McColl, Clarinet
Christopher Leuba, Horn
Arthur Grossman, Bassoon
MEL POWELL
(b. 1923)

FILAGREE SETTING for string quartet

THE PHILADELPHIA STRING QUARTET

Veda Reynolds, Violin
Irwin Eisenberg, Violin

Alan Iglitzin, Viola
Charles Brennand, Cello

EDGAR VARESE
(1885-1965)

IONIZATION for percussion ensemble (1931)

Percussionists

Peter Molner, Thomas Collier
David Avshalomov, Greg Haldeman
Peter Bruck, Philip Carlsen
Robert Eberle, Phillip Hanson
Scott Thomas, Phillip Stewart
Steven Van Meter, Steven Boyd
Casey Wamble

David Shrader, Director

* Premiere
JAMES BEALE: TRIO

The Beale Trio, Opus 5, was completed in 1947. The first two movements were given a premiere performance (before the third movement was completed) at the Juilliard School in New York in the spring of 1947. Upon completion of the third movement, it was awarded the Woods-Chandler Prize in composition by Yale University the same year. The first complete performance was given the following year at the Second Festival of Contemporary Music at the University of Louisville. Jane Beale was the pianist in both these premiere performances.

Since that time, the Trio has been performed numerous times on the West Coast, particularly Seattle, by various performing groups, the most recent being at the concert of the New Cornish Trio in December, 1971, with Martin Friedmann, violin, Raymond Davis, cello, and Joseph Levine, piano. The work is in three movements, the first an adagio-allegro mixture, the second a scherzo with trio, and the third a slow movement.

JOSEPH GOODMAN: Quintet for Wind Instruments

Joseph Goodman, a native New Yorker, studied composition with Paul Hindemith, Walter Piston, and Gian Francesco Malipiero. He is a faculty member of both Union Theological Seminary and Queens College in New York. His compositions include numerous anthems and motets for chorus, organ works, and various chamber works. Many have been performed in Europe, South America, and the United States.

The Quintet for Wind Instruments was completed in 1954. It is a formidable work of challenging proportions, and received its first performance in 1962 at Queens College on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the school's founding. Soni Ventorum was the performing ensemble, subsequently recording the work as well.

Each of the three movements of the Quintet is based on a tonal center; however, tonality as such is used only in a broad sense. The relationship of the tonal centers, when taken as a motive (B-C-Bb) provides a unifying element throughout the entire work, appearing in one form or another in every movement. The first is constructed in sonata form with implications of traditional key relationships, while the other two involve rhythmic considerations of differing character. The second movement's 8/8 basic meter is grouped in 3-3-2 and 3-2-3 patterns, while the theme and variation of the last movement are based on a concept of shrinking measure lengths, 5-4-3-2-1. As the variations unfold, and as the accompanying note values become shorter, the result produced is an effect of sustained melody and rhythm fused into an almost continuous shifting line.

EDGAR VARESE: Ionization

"Ionization", the wonderful, terrifying new composition by Edgar Varèse which was performed for the first time at the third Pan-American concert in New York under the leadership of Nicholas Slonimsky, appears to have been not at all fantastically named by its author. By reason of their excessive hardness, excessive indeterminacy and other points of dissimilarity from the more humanly vibrating sonorities of string and wind instruments, the tones of the forty-one percussion and friction pieces for which it is cast—triangles, Chinese blocks, rattles, snare-drums, cymbals, lion-roars, gongs, tom-toms, bells, piano tone-clusters and the rest—in themselves do suggest the life of the inanimate universe. The illusion, if illusion it be, of an analogy between the music and events or processes in the physio-chemical fields, is reinforced by the volumes of the extremely simplified, skeletonized form, which, explosive, curiously timed and curiously responsive to one another, further suggest incandescent manifestations of material entities in space. And the terrific conciseness of the style, telegraphically succinct in the themes, rapid in the developments,
overleaping connective steps, nervously alive with dialectically generated new
ideas; and the acute high timbres, the abrupt detonations and tremendous
volumes of sound which figure almost incessantly, quite specifically evoke the
picture of some intensely dynamic process of the sort imperceptible to the
senses, but not to the penetrating organs of science: say, the famous one by
which gas is transformed into a conductor of electricity; with its separation
of neutral molecules into ions by the impact of the swiftly mobilized ions
originally present in the gas subjected to the electro-static field; and its
mobilization and generation of further ions by the newly formed particles.

But the strange and daring new composition by our mystic of brute and
mechanical sounds is not dependent for effect upon the imaginative associations
roused by the title he has given it. Like the designations of other of
Varèse's pieces borrowed from the vocabularies of science, "Hyperprism," "Integrals," the name "Ionization" is an appendage, in all probability an
afterthought; attributable to the circumstance that, educated for engineering,
the composer possesses some familiarity with the perspectives of science, and
perceives the relationships between his conceptions and those of the technicians.
The new work is a complete if singular piece of music: as complete a one as
any of the best of its prodigious elder brethren, Varèse's compositions for
mixed orchestra; and their solidity, let it be here affirmed, is by no means
apparent only to members of what will vulgarly be called Varèse's clique. It
is perfectly visible to as independent a musician as Leopold Stokowski, author
of the significant remark that Varèse with Schönberg constitutes the actual
forefront of the musical advance.