

ALEA III
January 29, 1981

"The word 'alea' is derived from the Greek word (ἀλεΐα) which means to wander about, or roam. In Latin it refers to 'a die or dice used for playing at games of chance.' The term 'aleatoric music' indicates music based upon the principles of 'indeterminacy' as evidenced by certain random and/or statistical procedures of composition. In regard to an ensemble, 'aleatoric music' is concerned with the expression of a multiplicity of musical directions, historical styles, and performance practices."

—Theodore Antoniou

Milko Kelemen: ABECEDARIUM

Milko Kelemen says about his work: "ABECEDARIUM is an attempt to penetrate the media of expression employed in modern composition, embracing musical contexture, systems of notation, improvisation, rhythmic context and tone color, using simple technical devices contained in concise examples. Primarily it has been my aim to make such means intelligible to the younger generation of musicians and audiences while retaining the artistic aspects involved."

The piece is divided into 26 sections, each represented by a letter according to the international alphabet. The sections may be performed in any order, not necessarily including all 26. In this performance eighteen will be performed, all based on different compositional techniques and characteristics such as "Broad rhythmic measures, Rhythmic variants, Marginal notation, etc."

Milko Kelemen, a Yugoslavian composer, has studied in Zagreb with Stjepan Sulek, in Paris with Olivier Messiaen, and in Freiburg with Wolfgang Fortner. He has received the Humboldt Scholarship for study in Munich, and has been composer-in-residence in Berlin. Mr. Kelemen presently teaches at the State Academy for Music in Stuttgart, and is President of the International Music Festival for New Music in Zagreb.

Barry Vercoe: SYNAPSE FOR VIOLA AND COMPUTER

SYNAPSE, written in 1976 for violist Marcus Thompson, was the first major work to emerge from the MIT Experimental Music Studio, established in 1971 by Mr. Vercoe. The piece is a serial work, contrapuntal in nature, in which the computer-generated sounds interact with the sounds of the viola.

Mr. Vercoe, Associate Professor of Music and Technology at MIT, was a Ford/Contemporary Music Project composer-in-residence in Seattle in 1967 when he wrote his first large-scale work for orchestra, choir and computer-generated sounds. Follow-up research at Princeton University saw the design and release in 1969 of his MUSIC 360 language for computer synthesis, now the most widely used such language in the world.

Leon Kirchner: QUARTET NO. 3 FOR STRINGS AND ELECTRONIC TAPE

Mr. Kirchner remarks: "Before beginning my Third String Quartet I gave considerable thought to the particular attributes of electronic music. The electronic medium is frequently spoken of as being absolutely unlimited in possibility. In general, I would say that music has gained new insights from the manipulations of electronic sounds, but the supposed lack of limitation is really quite deceptive. Theoretically, it would seem to be unlimited, and yet I think this is the area which is most problematic—and with computers, even more so. There is no 'characteristic limit' or instant accommodation to a brilliant whim or 'accident.' The subtle manifestations that are subject to human control in the great performer have little or no life at all in the electronic medium.

"More interesting to me are combinations of instruments with electronic sounds and filters. The instrumental qualities are then somehow reflected, extended and enlarged. 'Human involvement' is, of course, essential, for the problems of composition remain the primary factors. My Third Quartet was written with all of this in mind. I set out to produce a meaningful confrontation between 'new' electronic sounds and those of the traditional string quartet—a kind of dialogue-idea in which the electronics are quite integral. My QUARTET NO. 3 is not concerned with systems, rules, procedures—or that monstrosity known as 'total control.' I composed the work because of sheer musical urge. It was fun, and while I composed it I was very conscious of the joy of creating music."

Leon Kirchner has distinguished himself as a pianist and conductor as well as a composer. He has been honored twice by the New York Critics Circle, received the Naumburg Award, and has been commissioned by the Ford Foundation, Fromm Foundation, and the New York Philharmonic. STRING QUARTET NO. 3 was commissioned by the Beaux-Arts Quartet as part of the disposition of a Naumburg Foundation grant, and was awarded the 1967 Pulitzer Prize in music.

Joseph Castaldo: STRING QUARTET

Joseph Castaldo says about his work: "While each section of the work is seemingly new and different, it nevertheless emerges from and shares material with the preceding section or sections. This procedure is similar to that which can be observed when a crystal forms from a liquid, or a flower from a seed."

Castaldo's technique has developed from highly structured to more dramatic and free forms of composition. His STRING QUARTET represents his second in the medium, written twenty years after his first string quartet. It is a technically difficult work and is performed in one movement. The piece employs a new formal principle conceived by Castaldo, which he terms Emergent Form and uses as a method of development as he describes above.

Mr. Castaldo began his musical career as a clarinetist. In the 1950's and 60's he directed a series of composers' forums in Philadelphia and taught composition. He is presently President of the Philadelphia College of the Performing Arts.

Witold Lutoslawski: PRELUDES AND FUGUES FOR 13 SOLO STRINGS

Witold Lutoslawski is internationally recognized for the development of aleatoric counterpoint, a technique especially prevalent in PRELUDES AND FUGUE. The piece was commissioned by Mario di Bonaventura and is dedicated to him.

In the introductory notes to the published score Mr. Lutoslawski says: "Any number of Preludes in any order can be performed with or without a shortened version of the Fugue. The Preludes are always to be played without rests between them. They are composed in such a way that the overlapping of the ending of any Prelude and the beginning of any other one is possible."

Mr. Lutoslawski began his musical studies in Poland as a pianist. At the age of fifteen he began studying composition with Maliszewski, first privately and later at the conservatory, as he simultaneously studied mathematics at the University of Warsaw. Occasionally since 1952 he has conducted his own compositions. He has taught composition and analysis in the U.S. and Sweden, and has given many lectures internationally.

ALEA III, performing arts ensemble in residence at Boston University, was founded in 1978 by Theodore Antoniou and several young, talented musicians from the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood. Critics have acclaimed the group for its selective and adventurous programming, which emphasizes the concert music of our time. Alea III commissions new works on an annual basis as part of its commitment to serve contemporary creative artists around the world. Recently the group has performed a concert for the International Society for Contemporary Music in Carnegie Recital Hall, New York City, and in April will be the performing ensemble for the Politis International Composition Competition as it was last year. For further information concerning the group and its activities contact E. Amelia Rogers, (617) 497-1184.