

Go to a Section

Go

Site Search:

Go

THE ARTS/CULTURAL DESK

MUSIC REVIEW; Young Writers And Players Trade Energy And Ideas

By ANTHONY TOMMASINI

Published: July 10, 2001, Tuesday

NORFOLK, Conn., July 6 -- Bringing composers and performers together is clearly a priority at the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, run by the Yale Summer School of Music in this bucolic town in northwestern Connecticut.

Since 1993 the festival has begun each summer with an intensive two-week contemporary-music workshop. This summer's brought six young composers together with a group of student performers, called fellows of the festival, as well as the members of the hot contemporary-music ensemble Eighth Blackbird, whose six players were themselves fellows here four years ago and are back as artists in residence.

Once the composers were selected, they each had only six weeks to compose a piece and prepare the scores. The six resulting chamber works were given their premieres on Friday night at the Music Shed before an enthusiastic audience of adventurous older listeners from the area and bright-eyed young festival participants.

The concert was preceded by a pep talk by Joan Panetti, the director of the school, who paid tribute to her colleague Joan Tower, the festival's composer in residence, and spoke effusively of the "twin necessities" of composing and performing.

All the works were inviting and accomplished. Dorothy Chang's "Light Fantastic" (played by the violinist Lynne Camenga, the cellist Elinor Frey and the pianist Rachel Jiménez) was an attempt to achieve a kind of "imbalanced balance," as Ms. Chang explained before the performance. In the first movement restless, tonally unhinged cadenzas for violin and cello interact with sparse, lucid and tonally grounded piano writing. There is off-kilter energy in the second movement, a fractured waltz, and ominous intensity touched by boogie-woogie in the finale, "Shake It Up."

Ms. Frey and Ms. Jiménez were joined by the flutist Paolo Bortolussi for an assured performance of Kati Agocs's intriguing "Charitas," in which well-behaved but oddly unsettling two-part counterpoint for flute and cello becomes discombobulated when the stark piano part begins. The Yale fellows also gave the premiere of Carlos Carillo's atmospheric and undulant "Continuidad de la Mirada" ("Continuity of the

ARTICLE TOOLS

 [Printer-Friendly Format](#) [Most E-Mailed Articles](#)

*"i always
knew
i wanted to
be a writer
and that
i wanted
to be
rich
and
famous"*

TRUMAN CAPOTE

- 1978

Gaze").

Eighth Blackbird offered a brilliant performance of Laurie San Martin's exuberant "Octurnal." Over a backdrop of shimmering, sustained sounds -- a tremolo pedal tone on the vibraphone; sputtering, repeated notes on the violin and cello -- other instruments dart and weave and constantly surprise you. This ensemble was also impressive in Shawn Crouch's jazzy paeon to youth, "Transitional Silence," in which passages of deceptively tranquil Neo-Classical counterpoint tease you, only to get pushed aside by music of gnarling atonal energy.

The concert concluded with Eighth Blackbird's scintillating account of Gregory Spears's "Soar-Stop," inspired by a night car ride this composer took in Copenhagen. Motoric doodles segue into cascades of crunchy harmony and hell-bent rhythms, though the music periodically is stopped cold, just as Mr. Spears was in Denmark by annoyingly persistent traffic lights.

Ms. Panetti invited the audience to "corner the performers and composers" during intermission and after the concert to ask questions and share reactions, good or bad. Many did, to the seeming delight of the musicians. It was the kind of interchange that you wish would happen at all contemporary-music concerts.

The festival runs through Aug. 26.

Published: 07 - 10 - 2001 , Late Edition - Final , Section E , Column 1 , Page 1



[Explore TimesSelect with a no-risk 14-day free trial.](#)

TOP10



**Top 10 most
popular
cellphones**

**The New York Times
Technology**
nytimes.com/tech

[Copyright 2005](#) [The New York Times Company](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Home](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [Help](#) | [Back to Top](#)