

**The 1960s: Not As Remembered, But As They Were**

"If you remember the sixties, you weren't there," announced La Monte Young at a 1989 concert in New York that revived the forgotten music of Richard Maxfield. We *don't* remember the sixties the way they happened. We look back and see the figures who emerged successfully from the sixties into the calmer seventies and buttoned-down eighties: Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Terry Riley. We see a movement called minimalism, which beamed out of sixties chaos on the intensity of its reduction to a few chords, a few notes, a motoric rhythmic persistence. We think of that movement as being the product of the handful of composers named above, when in reality, minimalism was a broad movement with many, many composers involved, some of whom didn't survive.

And by "survive," I mean in some cases literally. Among the little-sung names in early minimalism were Richard Maxfield, Terry Jennings, Tony Conrad, Angus MacLise, John Cale, Charlemagne Palestine, Dennis Johnson, Julius Eastman, Harold Budd. Several of them died drug-related deaths in their early forties (Maxfield, Jennings, MacLise); Eastman dropped out of the scene and died at age 50. Others abandoned music for greener fields: Conrad (experimental film and video), Palestine (visual art), Johnson (computer science); though Conrad and Palestine have recently made aggressive comebacks as composers. Others veered into rock. John Cale did very nicely with a little group called the Velvet Underground, while Harold Budd became an underground star of ambient rock.

And now that the minimalism of Reich and Glass has become a more or less permanent fixture on the musical landscape, many people, from musicologists to techno fans, are taking a closer look at what the 1960s were really about musically. The resurgence of forgotten figures shows us a sped-up era of tremendous complexity. And as illuminations of the twists and turns ideas took in that hotbed of creativity, the works on this disc are particularly revealing.

For someone nearly forgotten today, Maxfield had a tremendous impact—largely through his classes at The New School in New York, which attracted radically avant-garde musicians such as Joseph Byrd, Dick Higgins, and even John Cage himself. Born in Seattle in 1927, Maxfield had studied with Krenek, Babbitt, Sessions, and Dallapiccola, but left this Eurocentric background behind to move toward a Cagean experimentalism. Eventually he made contributions to minimalism, in works such as his once-well-known *Night Music*, by drawing gradual processes from simple electronic circuitry. The works here, however, predate the minimalist movement, while forecasting a wide range of developments in the future of electronic work.

Maxfield's *Pastoral Symphony*, appearing as it did in 1960, must be counted as avant-garde an achievement, and as prophetic, as Ornette Coleman's *Free Jazz* album which appeared that same year—both of them made "sixties music" before the sixties had really gotten started. Sharply diverging from the earlier careful assemblages of spliced sounds made by Stockhausen, Ussachevsky, Pierre Henry, and others, Maxfield at once took off into the world of continuously generated electronic tones. The work indeed has its pastoral moments, if briefer and less programmatic than Beethoven's work of the same title.

*Bacchanale* (1963) is quite different, a *musique concrète* collage containing no sounds of electronic origin. It opens juxtaposing jazz with Korean folk music; we hear Edward Fields narrating a text of his own over jazz played at the Five Spot in Greenwich Village. Along the way, Fährad Machkat scrapes on a violin, Robert Block and Terry Jennings play prepared violin and saxophone, and the composer Nicholas Roussakis plays underwater clarinet. A nice historical note is that all the folk music except the Korean was supplied by seminal American composer and ethnomusicologist Henry Cowell, who also taught at The New School, and who clearly never lost his willingness to experiment although he was in his mid-60s by the time this was recorded.

*Piano Concert for David Tudor* (1961) draws its multifarious noises from a single source—antedating in that respect Stockhausen's *Microphonie I* for amplified tam-tam (1964). Tudor, a legendary pianist of the avant-garde, plays live alongside a three-channel montage constructed from sounds made on the inside of the piano with chains, spinning a gyroscope on the strings, showering the strings with tiddlywink disks, and other unusual operations. Finally, *Amazing Grace* of 1960 mixes tape loops from two sources: a speech by revivalist James G. Brodie and electronic fragments from an opera Maxfield had made in 1958 entitled *Stacked Deck*. The loops play back at various speeds, causing the fragments to overlap in complex ways. The next year, Terry Riley would use tape loops in his piece *Mescaline Mix* (1961), considered the first minimalist piece based on repetition; and in 1965 and '66, respectively, Steve Reich would create the most famous tape-loop pieces, *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*. It is astonishing how many threads of 1960s music seem to begin with the ideas Maxfield explores in these pieces, and it is a tragedy that his early death, from leaping out a window at age 42, kept him from participating in the more rewarding scene that would later appear.

If the Maxfield pieces represent the state of new music in the months before minimalism was born, Harold Budd's works from 1970 reflect minimalism's initial impact. Budd (born in 1936 in Los Angeles) more happily survived the minimalist years, and distanced himself from the world of classical new music to attach himself to the fringes of rock. He eventually gained an enviable underground reputation as a composer of mellow ambient music, collaborating with such rockers as Brian Eno and the Cocteau Twins. Yet Budd taught at California Institute of the Arts from 1970 to '76, where he had an immense as-yet-unacknowledged impact on the West Coast history of minimalism. Radically intuitive, he has professed an aim "to make my music as beautiful as possible at every moment." Starting with *Madrigals of the Rose Angel* of 1972, his output has resembled a kind of aural incense, characterized by silky chords played on electric pianos, harps, and vibraphones.

However, the two works here predate *Rose Angel*, and reveal Budd's origins in a harder-edged minimalism with an affinity to his fellow West Coaster Terry Riley. *The Oak of the Golden Dreams* was made on the Buchla Electronic Music System. The so-called Buchla Box, developed by Donald Buchla in 1966 and also used by David Rosenboom, Morton Subotnick (in his ground-breaking *Silver Apples of the Moon*), and many other composers, replaced the popular Moog synthesizer in hipness and virtually defined the cutting edge of electronic music in the early 1970s. Budd uses it not for its highfalutin voltage-control capabilities, but as an electric organ capable of the kind of fast modal improv, over an unchanging E-flat drone, that Terry Riley and La Monte Young had been doing on saxophone and piano, drawn to it in imitation of John Coltrane's "sheets of sound" technique.

In *Coeur D'Orr*, conceived in 1969 for sculptor Eric Orr and recorded in 1970, we hear something of that sheets of sound approach applied to the soprano sax. The electronic background on organ was made in two tracks. One consists of another 1970 Budd work, the famous *The Candy Apple Revision*, whose conceptual score consists only of the instruction:

"D-flat major." The other track is a similar approach to B major, the B in the D-flat scale giving the feeling of Mixolydian mode until the D-flat abruptly drops out after nineteen minutes. The shimmering pulsations of the organ bring another early minimalist to mind, Charlemagne Palestine, whose all-night organ concerts would spend hours on one chord. Harold Budd was just months away from finding his true voice, and this link between Riley-esque modal improv and his later work fits another piece into the complex puzzle of minimalism.

—Kyle Gann

Kyle Gann, a composer, has been new-music critic for *The Village Voice* since 1986, and has taught music at Bard College since 1997. His books include *American Music in the Twentieth Century* (Schirmer) and *The Music of Conlon Nancarrow* (Cambridge University Press).

## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

### Richard Maxfield

*Night Music. New Sounds in Electronic Music.* Odyssey 32 16 0160. (lp)

### Harold Budd

*Ambient 2: The Plateaux of Mirror* (with Brian Eno). Editions EG EGS 202. (lp)

*By the Dawn's Early Light.* Opal/Warner 9 26649-2.

*In Delius' Sleep.* Zeitgeist. New Albion NALB 066 CD.

*Lovely Thunder.* Opal/Editions EG EEG CD 46.

*Luxa.* Gyroscope 6637.

*Music for Three Pianos* (with Ruben Garcia and Daniel Lentz). All Saints Carol 6603-2.

*The Pavilion of Dreams.* Editions EG EEG CD 30.

*The Pearl* (with Brian Eno). Editions EG EEG CD 37.

*The Serpent (In Quicksilver)/Abandoned Cities.* All Saints ASCD08.

*The White Arcades.* Opal/Warner 9 25766-2.

### Tony Conrad

*Four Violins.* Table of the Elements Cl 17.

*Outside the Dream Syndicate.* Table of the Elements 3 Li.

*Slapping Pythagoras.* Table of the Elements V23 cd.

### Philip Glass

*Music in Fifths.* Philip Glass Ensemble. Elektra Nonesuch 9 79326-2.

*Music in Similar Motion.* Philip Glass Ensemble. Elektra Nonesuch 9 79326-2.

*Music with Changing Parts.* Philip Glass Ensemble. Elektra Nonesuch 9 79325-2.

### Charlemagne Palestine

*Sliding Fifths.* Charlemagne Palestine, piano. Barooni BAR 014.

*Strumming Music.* Charlemagne Palestine, piano. Barooni BAR 019.

**Steve Reich**

*Come Out*. Nonesuch 79169.

*It's Gonna Rain*. Nonesuch 79169.

**Terry Riley**

*A Rainbow in Curved Air*. CBS/Sony MK 07315.

*In C*. Buffalo New York State Univ. Center of the Creative and Performing Arts members, Terry Riley conducting. CBS/Sony MK 07178.

*Olson III*. Organ of Corti 3.

*Poppy Nogood & the Phantom Band*. CBS/Sony MK 07315.

*Reed Streams*. Organ of Corti 2.

**Terry Riley and John Cale**

*Church of Anthrax*. Columbia C 30131. (lp)

**David Rosenboom**

*And Out Come the Night Ears*. 1750 Arch S 1774. (lp)

*How Much Better if Plymouth Rock Had Landed on the Pilgrims*. 1750 Arch S 1774. (lp)

**Morton Subotnick**

*Silver Apples of the Moon*. Wergo WER 2035.

**La Monte Young**

*The Well-Tuned Piano*. La Monte Young, piano. Gramavision GRMV 5-79452.

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———. "Ear and Mind," *The Village Voice*, September 8, 1987 (Vol. XXXII No. 36, p. 78).

———. "Les Tapes Perdu," *The Village Voice*, June 27, 1989 (Vol. XXXIII No. 26, p.86).

Jackson, B. "Harold Budd." *BAM Magazine*, Feb. 12, 1982.

Nyman, Michael. *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*. Cambridge University Press (London: 1999).

Schwartz, E. and B. Childs, eds. *Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music*. New York, 1967.

Young, La Monte, ed. *An Anthology of Chance Operations*. New York, 1963, revised 1970.

The music on this compact disc was originally issued on LP by Advance Recordings, a nonprofit educational project for the presentation of new American music. Advance Recordings was begun in 1962 by Dr. Barney Childs, Jonathan Elkus, and Brook Lee Furr. Later, Philip F. Dering II joined as production engineer. In 1983, the label was moved to Redlands, California, and put in the care of Dr. Childs, Phillip Rehfeldt, and W. Scott Vance.

Over the past three decades, Advance has issued first recordings by some of America's finest

musicians: composers George Crumb, Harold Budd, Richard Maxfield, Ben Johnston, Edwin London, and Elliott Schwartz; virtuoso performers Bertram Turetzky, Phillip Rehfeldt, and David Burge; and the founding composers of the ONCE Festival: Robert Ashley, George Cacioppo, Gordon Mumma, and Donald Scarvada.

Richard Maxfield's *Electronic Music* and Harold Budd's *The Oak of the Golden Dreams*, both out of print for decades, are two of the most important releases from the Advance Recordings catalog. This reissue was mastered from the original tapes according to the composers' original specifications. Special thanks to New World Records, without whom this current reissue would not exist.

—Gino Robair

*Richard Maxfield:*

Recording engineer: Richard Maxfield

Production engineer: Philip F. Dering II.

*Harold Budd:*

*The Oak of the Golden Dreams* was realized on the Buchla Electronic Music System at California Institute of the Arts (then in Burbank) in 1970. The two-track organ tape for *Coeur D'Orr* was recorded in April 1970 at Immaculate Heart College, with the assistance of Dorrance Stalvey and Robert Chadwick. The version on this disc was recorded by Ken Heller in Los Angeles in December 1971.

Reissue coordinator: Gino Robair

Reissue mastering engineer: Myles Boisen, Headless Buddha Mastering Lab

For Advance Recordings: Dr. Barney Childs (Director Emeritus), Dr. Phillip Rehfeldt (Artists & Repertory), and W. Scott Vance (Sound Engineering Consultant).

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**Richard Maxfield (1927–69)**

- |   |   |       |
|---|---|-------|
| 1   | <i>Pastoral Symphony</i> (1960)             | 4:03  |
| 2   | <i>Bacchanale</i> (1963)                    | 8:14  |
| Edward Fields, narration; Fhrad Machkat, violin; Robert Block, prepared<br>Violin; Terry Jennings, saxophone; Nicholas Roussakis, underwater clarinet |   |       |
| 3   | <i>Piano Concert for David Tudor</i> (1961) | 12:29 |
| David Tudor, piano  |   |       |
| 4   | <i>Amazing Grace</i> (1960)                 | 3:26  |

**Harold Budd (b. 1936)**

- |   |  |       |
|---|--|-------|
| 5   | <i>The Oak of the Golden Dreams</i> (1970) | 18:44 |
| Harold Budd, Buchla Electronic Music System |  |       |
| 6   | <i>Coeur D'Orr</i> (1969)                  | 19:46 |
| Charles Oreña, soprano sax                  |  |       |

Richard Maxfield's *Electronic Music* was originally issued on LP as Advance Recordings FGR 8.  
Harold Budd's *The Oak of the Golden Dreams* was originally issued on LP as Advance Recordings FGR  
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