

## **ONCE and Again: The Evolution of a Legendary Festival**

by Leta E. Miller

Ann Arbor, Michigan, seems an unlikely site for the establishment of a major avant-garde festival that would shake the new-music community. Tucked away in America's heartland, the city is equally removed from the Eastern metropolises whose artists pride themselves on sensing the pulse of the times, and from the nonconformist West Coast. Yet during the 1960s Ann Arbor played host to one of the most extraordinary adventures in American music history: the annual ONCE Festival and its nexus of related activities.

In part ONCE was fostered by the cultural richness in Michigan: For instance, Gordon Mumma, one of its founders, played French horn in five amateur and semi-professional orchestras while he was still in high school. ONCE also benefited from its proximity to the University of Michigan, which offered a reservoir of talented performers and composers—although the Festival operated throughout its history independently of (and at times in opposition to) various constituencies within the School of Music. But mainly ONCE arose from the fortuitous and coincidental intersection of a group of enterprising young composers—Mumma, Robert Ashley, George Cacioppo, Roger Reynolds, and Donald Scavarda—who joined forces with an innovative community of visual artists.

The ONCE Festivals—four to seven performances per year in February and March—formed the centerpiece of the group's activities (see Table 1, page 34). Programs for the first five years (1961–65) list 170 works by 92 composers, most on the cutting edge of the national and international new-music scene. Although it operated on a shoestring budget, ONCE attracted artists from across the country, and even from Europe. The first Festival opened with Luciano Berio, Cathy Berberian, and musicians from Pierre Boulez's Parisian concert series, *Domaine Musical*. Pianist Paul Jacobs played solo concerts two years running. Terry Jennings, La Monte Young, Morton Feldman, John Cage, and David Tudor came from New York, as did the Camerata Quartet and the Judson Dance Theater. The Dorian Woodwind Quintet came from Massachusetts, Nancy and Bert Turetzky from Connecticut, Pauline Oliveros from California. Alvin Lucier brought the Brandeis University Chamber Chorus, Jack McKenzie directed the University of Illinois Contemporary Chamber Players, and Lukas Foss came to Ann Arbor with a new-music ensemble from SUNY Buffalo. A group of ONCE artists even performed at the Venice Biennale in 1964.

A cross-disciplinary musical-theatrical group (which began touring in 1964 under the name "ONCE Group") also developed around Ashley and his wife, Mary. Central to this group were several people associated with the University's art and architecture school: Joseph and Anne Wehrer, Milton and Caroline Cohen, Cynthia Liddell, and Harold and Ann Borkin.

Reviews of ONCE appeared not only in the local press, but also in the *Musical Quarterly*, *Toronto Daily Star*, *Arts and Architecture*, *Preuves* (Paris), the *Literary Times*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *National Observer*. By 1965 the Festivals had attracted such an enthusiastic following that the organizers staged a second one in the same year, mounted outdoors on the roof of a parking garage. By then, some of the original participants had left Ann Arbor, but Ashley continued to organize ONCE Festivals through 1968.

The winter festivals were only part of the ONCE phenomenon, however. Ancillary events also sprouted within and outside the community—ONCE Friends, ONCE Removed, ONCE a Month, ONCE-Off. Concerts took place in Detroit, Cape Cod, Toronto, Richmond, St. Louis, Hartford, Boston, and New York. Teams of ONCE participants also made guest appearances nationally and internationally, among them the Ashley-Mumma "Music for Pianos" series, featured in nearly two dozen concerts from Los Angeles to Rome between 1962 and 1967. Table 2 (see page 36) lists many of these events.

What separated ONCE from other local festivals—and led to its astonishing success—was the vision and

stubborn persistence of its founders. Although they followed distinctive aesthetic paths, all were motivated by a passion to hear and understand the latest developments in the musical world. Nurtured by mutual support and driven by youthful idealism, they refused to let financial or logistical barriers dampen their plans, and through dogged efforts—letter-writing, phone-calling, prodding, and cajoling—they brought to Ann Arbor the leading edge of musical experimentation.

### **ONCE's Cross-Disciplinary Roots**

Among the most remarkable features of ONCE are the interdisciplinary activities of its founders. The impact of extra-musical factors (the visual arts, politics, and science) on the creations of the founding composers added a richness to their productions that attracted the attention of reviewers and lured patrons to their programs.

Robert Ashley (born 1930) began his educational career in a traditional way, entering the University of Michigan as a freshman in 1948 and graduating four years later with a bachelor's degree in music theory. He then began the master's program in piano and composition at the Manhattan School of Music. In New York Ashley found lodging at the International House, across from the old Juilliard School at 122nd Street and Claremont Avenue. His room, in a tower, was one of only two on the floor. The other was occupied by the painter George Manupelli (born 1931), who was working on his master's at Columbia Teacher's College. Manupelli had grown up in Boston, and attended the Massachusetts School of Art while Ashley was at Michigan. A warm friendship developed between the two, which led to collaboration on more than a half dozen films in the 1950s and '60s.

In 1953 Manupelli was drafted and sent to New Jersey and Maryland, but he often traveled to New York to visit Ashley. He also kept in touch with a Boston girlfriend, Betty Johnson (born 1934), who introduced Ashley to her roommate, Mary Tsaltas (1931–96). "They were in each other's company for about thirty hours when Bob and Mary decided to get married," says Manupelli. "They thought I should come along; so I went, grudgingly."<sup>1</sup> On April 11, 1954, the two couples were married in a joint ceremony, the women dressed in leotards and skirts. "Mary and I got on the midnight bus to New York, married Bob and George, went back to Boston, and were in art school on Monday," says Betty.

The Army sent Manupelli to Puerto Rico, and Ashley followed after finishing his master's in 1954. But he was then assigned to Killeen, Texas, where he played bassoon and clarinet in the concert band, drums in the marching band, and piano in the jazz band. (Among the people he met there was clarinetist Richard Waters, whose works were later programmed by ONCE.) Meanwhile, Manupelli entered Columbia's doctoral program.

Ashley, too, decided to pursue doctoral work, returning to the University of Michigan in 1956 with traditional goals still in mind. "I wanted to complete a doctorate [in composition] so that I could get a teaching job to support my family," he recalls. "I was married; I had a three-year-old son." But the plan proved to be far from easy. The composition faculty, headed by Ross Lee Finney, were unimpressed by Ashley's music: "Three times I brought in a piece," he recalls, "and three times they said, 'It's not playable.' "

But Ashley's inquiries into electronic music resources led him to an intriguing center at the university, the Speech Research Institute, which would ultimately prove to be as consequential for him as a music degree. Funded by Bell Laboratories, the Institute's scientists were developing realistic speech syntheses. The director, Gordon Peterson, accepted Ashley as a "special student" while he petitioned the music department for acceptance. Ashley took anthropological courses in speech habits, linguistics courses, and logic. For three years he worked with a doctoral student on the cause of stuttering, aiding in ground-breaking experiments on the microsecond-delay between the impetus to speak and the sound-corrective feedback. When his mentor was hired by the University of Pittsburgh, he offered Ashley the project for his own thesis and Peterson prepared to schedule oral exams. Although the plan would have paved the way for a teaching position, Ashley declined. "Three years ago you were very generous with me," he told Peterson, "but I promised myself I would be a

composer.” And, he says, “I just walked out of there.”

In 1957, quite by chance, Manupelli secured a teaching position at Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant, two hours north of Ann Arbor. He had changed his focus to film, and for his dissertation he completed *The Image in Time* with electroacoustic music by Ashley. Five years later Manupelli joined the University of Michigan faculty.

Soon after arriving in Ann Arbor, Ashley met assistant professor of art Milton Cohen (1924–95), who was developing a light show he called the “Space Theatre”: Moving images were projected on large intersecting fabric screens. Working with Cohen on electronic musical accompaniment for his shows was Gordon Mumma (born 1935), who welcomed Ashley as a collaborator. By 1958 Mumma and Ashley had formed the Cooperative Studio for Electronic Music, using space in their homes and Cohen’s loft.

Mumma’s educational background, unlike Ashley’s, was highly unconventional. In 1951, during his senior year in high school, the orchestra teacher sent him to the principal’s office for punishment after discovering Mumma and his friends playing jazz instead of Haydn during a brass sectional rehearsal. Furious, she cursed jazz as “that nigger music,” prompting Mumma to storm out of the building swearing never to return, and knocking the door off its hinges on the way out. Fortunately, the principal recognized Mumma’s intelligence and talent, and facilitated his entry to the University of Michigan in January 1952 without a high school diploma.

At the University Mumma was welcomed into the composition department by Ross Lee Finney, who two years earlier had judged a high school composition contest in which Mumma’s string quartet took a first prize. But soon they began to bump heads. Even Finney’s staunchest defenders acknowledge his abrasiveness. “He could be imperious,” shredding student works mercilessly, “though you knew in your heart that what he said was true,” recalls Roger Reynolds. The final straw for Mumma came when he brought Finney a twelve-tone canonic trio to critique. Finney crumpled up the manuscript and threw it out the window of his eighth-floor office. Mumma transferred to the literature department.

Less than a year later, Mumma dropped out of the University entirely, though he remained in Ann Arbor, working as a record store clerk, a medical orderly, and a technical assistant in a seismology lab, while building electronic equipment for sound production and synthesis. To his credit, Finney bore no grudge, welcoming Mumma into graduate composition seminars and his “composiums” in Auditorium A, where student works were performed and critiqued. Finney had a strong impact on all of the ONCE founders except Ashley (who interacted with him only occasionally). Particularly important were the composer forums, held approximately once a semester, which were “recorded on a professional level and attended by hundreds of people,” says Reynolds. Even students who were not officially enrolled in the composition program were welcome to attend.

Through his connections in the literature department, Mumma began composing for one-act plays. Since the theater owned a monaural reel-to-reel tape recorder (increasingly common in the early fifties), the directors chose to record the music rather than employ live performers at every show. Mumma was fascinated by the machines. “I found that I could change their speed and I learned about tape editing,” he says. “I started out with a pair of scissors and Scotch tape.”

Mumma also frequented the College of Architecture and Design, where he met Cohen. Soon he began a homemade studio with a sine-wave oscillator assembled from a kit and a tape recorder. He taught himself electronics from books borrowed from the library and built his own mixer. The components for his equipment—vacuum tubes, switches, meters—were easily (and cheaply) available in second-hand and military-surplus stores. With a little ingenuity Mumma adapted them to his needs.<sup>2</sup>

Cohen also enlisted the help of architect Harold Borkin (born 1934), who had completed his bachelor’s degree in the spring of 1957 and entered the master’s program. Borkin designed structures to hold Cohen’s projectors

and mirrors and to support the large fabric screens, which were arranged into a twenty-sided hemisphere. "Milton was interested in light projection theater as sculpture," says Ashley. "Harold designed wonderful contraptions for making light fly around the room." By the 1958–59 year the Space Theatre was presenting shows, first to invited audiences, then to the public. Observers sat in the center of the screen assembly, watching projected images swirl around them, transformed into surrealistic patterns by rotating mirrors and prisms. The 60-to-90-minute presentation took the form of a series of "temps," which Cohen correlated with colors, shapes, parts of the body, the seasons, and the four ancient elements (earth, water, air, and fire).<sup>3</sup> Visual images included slides and films, some by Manupelli. "Cohen had a ball with front-surface mirrors glued all over," recalls Ashley, "and racks of slides. One was a beautiful picture of a cow. You'd look up and the cow would be on the ceiling and then the cow would be over there. And if you spun the ball, the cow would fly around the room." Meanwhile Mumma and Ashley filled the room with a wash of electronic sound: tapes created from natural or synthesized sources, and improvised live electronic music. They brought in an old piano, which they dismantled and played like a harp, and experimented with a weighted wire, which they pressed on amplified surfaces and released. Mumma attached transducers to toy instruments and glass medical tubes, wired them to his mixer, fed the output to a tape recorder, and then edited, reprocessed, and modified the sounds. He also experimented with gate-trigger-controlled envelope-followers by which he could alter a sound's attack and decay. Pieces such as Ashley's *The Fourth of July* and Mumma's *Sound Blocks* were developed for Cohen's light shows.

Borkin also collaborated with Joseph Wehrer (born 1926), an instructor in the architecture school. In 1958, the two won a prize in a competition to design the Toronto City Hall.<sup>4</sup> With his share of the prize money, Borkin embarked on a world tour; in his absence, Wehrer helped Cohen in the Space Theatre.

In 1952, soon after Mumma entered the University, the Royal Oak (Michigan) Symphony in which he played programmed an overture by a graduate student, George Cacioppo (1926–84).<sup>5</sup> Beginning in 1946 Cacioppo studied chemistry and music at the University of Michigan, completing both bachelor's and master's degrees in 1952. The overture was his master's thesis. He subsequently taught music in his hometown of Monroe (an hour southeast of Ann Arbor), then entered the doctoral program in 1956. In Finney's seminar he met Mumma, who had fond memories of playing his work. They became fast friends. (To this day Mumma can remember the taste of Cacioppo's mother's Sicilian pizza.) Both men worked at a music store owned by cellist Gretchen Dalley, whose husband, Orien, conducted the Michigan Youth Orchestra and whose son, John, later became a violinist in the Guarneri Quartet.

"George was a soft-spoken fellow," recalls Mumma, "who always sat in the back of the room." But the quiet exterior masked internal troubles. During the 1950s Cacioppo occasionally experienced unpredictable bouts of depression; in later years he developed Crohn's disease, which ultimately led to his death. Despite these difficulties, he was creative, imaginative, and even cheerful.

Cacioppo introduced Mumma to a classmate, Donald Scavarda (born 1928), who had completed his bachelor's (1951) and master's degrees (1952) at the University. The following year Scavarda studied with Philipp Jarnach in Germany on a Fulbright Fellowship; while in Hamburg he learned that his master's composition, *Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra*, had won the \$2,000 first prize in BMI's student composer contest. A year later Scavarda returned to Ann Arbor and entered the doctoral program. Two pieces from this period were later programmed by ONCE: *In the Autumn Mountains* (1959), a song cycle for soprano, baritone, and chamber ensemble on a series of love poems by the Japanese lyric poet Hitomaro (died 708); and *Groups for Piano* (1959), five intricate miniatures whose timings Scavarda envisioned in a symmetrical pattern of 7, 8, 10, 8, and 7 seconds respectively. In the summer of 1959, he studied at Tanglewood with Leon Kirchner, where resident pianist Paul Jacobs performed *Groups* to an astonished audience. Although Scavarda's training was centered on music, he later turned to film as a medium for stimulating or embellishing sound.

Also studying in Ann Arbor at the time was Roger Reynolds (born 1934), who had transferred there in 1953 after spending a year at Wayne State University in Detroit preparing a major solo recital. "My teacher

[Kenneth Aiken] felt that in spite of my very late start in piano (I didn't begin until I was 14), I was a possible candidate for the Curtis Institute," says Reynolds. But "the counsel of older and wiser people in my family circle indicated that to be a musician was a quixotic quest, and music would be more appropriate as an avocation. So [at Michigan] I went into the engineering program." Reynolds completed a bachelor's degree in engineering physics in 1957 and moved to Southern California to work for the Marquart Ram Jet Company in Van Nuys. But he spent most of his free time practicing the piano at the local Unitarian church. After a few months he returned to Michigan for a music degree.

Reynolds had taken no music courses during his undergraduate years and thus faced the prospect of starting from scratch. Fortunately, he connected with an imaginative mentor, assistant professor H. Wiley Hitchcock (later president of the American Musicological Society and author of numerous articles and books, including a seminal study of music in the United States). Hitchcock encouraged Reynolds to explore the School of Music's new honors program, through which advanced students could take independent studies courses. But he mistakenly assumed that an entire program could consist of one-on-one instruction. To Reynolds's delight, Hitchcock convinced the dean to accept this unorthodox study plan. "I worked with Paul Cooper on orchestration, studied the Beethoven quartets with Oliver Edel, took piano lessons with Robert Hord, and composition and analysis with Finney," he recalls. He also became editor of the University's arts magazine *Generation*, which published musical scores, among them Scavarda's *Groups* and *Matrix* and Mumma's *Suite for Piano*. Finney's course "Composition for Non-Composers" proved to be decisive for Reynolds: It convinced him to abandon his goal of teaching piano at a liberal arts college in favor of a career as a composer. In 1961 Reynolds completed his master's degree in music composition.

### **Catalysts**

By 1958, the Ann Arbor scene was ripe for a major undertaking. Karlheinz Stockhausen lectured at the University that year and urged young composers to assume responsibility for performances of their own works rather than relying on institutional support. The poet Keith Waldrop, a literature student at the time, urged Mumma to follow the model of the theater students: "When they couldn't get space at the University, they'd put on their own productions in people's basements." Scavarda explored such ideas with George Crumb, who was completing his doctorate. "We talked about doing public concerts unaffiliated with the university," he says, "but the time was not right."

What made the time right were several catalytic events in 1960, among them the residency of Spanish (later British) composer Roberto Gerhard in the spring semester. When Finney took sabbatical leave to work at the American Academy in Rome, he invited Gerhard (whom he had met in Cambridge, England, during the war) to replace him. A protégé of Arnold Schoenberg and the principal force behind the 1936 Barcelona festival at which Alban Berg's *Violin Concerto* was premiered, Gerhard had moved to London in 1939. He was receptive to an eclectic array of musical styles, "wide open," says Mumma, "enthusiastic about differences." Scavarda says simply, "Gerhard was the catalyst."

Reynolds saw Gerhard as a father figure, "intellectually deep, emotionally vulnerable, enormously musical." He took a deep interest in the students, who "hung on his every word." His wife Leopoldina sought to protect him. "We were unaware that Gerhard had had a number of serious heart attacks," says Reynolds. "He could have gone at any moment. Poldi tried to moderate the young people's intensity and Gerhard's excitement."

On May 17, 1960, Gerhard delivered a public lecture, "Is New Music Growing Old?", the title adapted from the last chapter in Theodor Adorno's *Dissonanzen* (1956). He countered Adorno's view that twentieth-century composition had declined from a pinnacle thirty years earlier, asserting, in contrast, that music's "contemporary confusion" was healthy, "rather what one would expect from a social body deep in ferment and teeming with creative energy. It would seem a poor show if an epoch does not manage to develop its 'contemporary' ideas fully in all directions, to the utmost limits of contradiction." In fact, Gerhard concluded, "we are witnessing nowadays a vigorous effect of stimulation of the older generation by the younger generation."<sup>6</sup>

In the same month, John Cage, David Tudor, and Luciano Berio all came to Ann Arbor— without support from the School of Music. Cage and Tudor gave two concerts on the weekend before Gerhard's lecture, the first in the Architecture School auditorium, the second at Ann Arbor High School. Mumma and Reynolds had already met Cage—Mumma in Illinois in the late 1950s, Reynolds in New York in 1960. Reynolds had been traveling to New York regularly after a composer-musicologist friend, Sherman Van Solkema, invited him there to look at art. "I don't believe I'd ever been in an art museum," says Reynolds.

Standing in front of an [abstract expressionist] painting by William Baziotis, Sherman asked, "What do you see?" I said, "I don't know anything about art." But I started talking about the painting and he said, "Exactly; that *is* what there is to see." He showed me the catalog, which said almost what I had. In this critical moment I understood that at some level it was all about trusting what one sees and hears.

At a New York concert on April 11, 1960, Reynolds watched a performance of La Monte Young's *Poem for Chairs, Tables, Benches, Etc.* The participants, including Cage, pushed metal-footed furniture around a tile floor. "I was fascinated and dumbfounded," says Reynolds, who approached Cage to express interest in his music and ideas. He was immediately invited to Cage's home at Stony Point.

Reynolds later told Peter Yates that he "arranged to bring Cage and Tudor [to Ann Arbor] for two programs."<sup>7</sup> The first, part of the College of Architecture and Design's third annual open house on May 14, featured *Indeterminacy*; Cage read one-minute stories while Tudor provided electronic music accompaniment.<sup>8</sup> According to Mumma, the performance included 128 tales, in contrast to the 90 Cage recorded: "Some were scandalous. Cage never did them again, and asked me not to tell them." He and Tudor also visited Cohen's loft, where Mumma demonstrated his electronic works.

For the second concert (Monday, May 16), which included works by Sylvano Bussotti, Christian Wolff, Stockhausen, and Cage, the duo's \$200 performance fee was paid by the Dramatic Arts Center (DAC), a community organization devoted to bringing high-quality events to Ann Arbor. DAC had been founded in 1954 to establish a local repertory theater, an endeavor that succeeded for three years: Six to seven productions were mounted annually at the Masonic Temple. When DAC lost its lease on the theater in 1957, it began to sponsor a half-dozen events annually, including music, dance, poetry readings, and theater. Its board included many faculty (though none from music) and community members such as Wehrer's wife, Anne Opie Counselman (born 1929), a model, actress, and writer.<sup>9</sup> Anne was secretary of DAC in 1960–61 and would become one of the major forces assuring ONCE's success: She arranged venues, housing for guests, and numerous logistical details.

On April 27, 1960, Van Solkema and Ed Coleman (another music graduate student) approached DAC's board for support of the Cage-Tudor concert in the high school's Little Theater. DAC's contribution set a precedent for future avant-garde musical events, including ONCE, which it funded annually, beginning with the first festival.

The driving *financial* force behind DAC was Wilfred Kaplan (born 1915), a professor of mathematics who nearly single-handedly financed the overrun on DAC projects from royalties on his influential calculus textbook. Kaplan was a pianist and violinist who had studied composition and minored in music at Harvard. "As a faculty member [at the University of Michigan], I was on several doctoral committees for composers," he recalls. He contributed a few thousand dollars a year to keep DAC programs solvent, but hastens to add that "with good audiences, we didn't need much."

The high school performance had a profound effect on the ONCE composers. Ashley and Reynolds were astounded by Tudor's pianism. "I thought that concert was the best piano playing I'd ever heard," says Ashley. "When David finished the first half of that concert, I was breathing hard. I realized I'd been holding my breath for forty-five minutes." Reynolds had heard Tudor warming up on the Debussy *Etudes*. "I had no idea David would play music like that—or that he could. I admired his fanatical commitment to everything. At that moment it was clear to me that I wasn't going to be a pianist."

Luciano Berio also came to Ann Arbor in May 1960.<sup>10</sup> Ashley persuaded Uolevi Lahti ("a Finnish fellow who manufactured lovely small loudspeakers with a very clever design," says Mumma) to sponsor his appearance. At Lahti's record store, Berio played and discussed his *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*, composed two years earlier.

Three months later (August 7–14, 1960) Mumma, Reynolds, Ashley, and Cacioppo drove to Stratford, Ontario, for an international composers' conference presented by the Canadian League of Composers and sponsored by the Canada Council, CBC, BMI, ASCAP, and other organizations. The conference attracted sixty-three delegates from twenty countries, among them Aurelio de la Vega (Cuba); Josef Tal (Israel); Henri Dutilleul (France); Jan Matejcek (Czechoslovakia); Rodolfo Halffter (Mexico); Henk Badings (Netherlands); Roy Harris, Ernst Krennek, Otto Luening, George Rochberg, Gunther Schuller, Vladimir Ussachevsky, Edgard Varèse (U.S.A.); and Luciano Berio (Italy). Presentations covered "The Public and the Composer," "The Training of a Composer," "The Composer and his Métier," "Opera, Ballet, and Theatre," and "Music by Synthetic Means." Five concerts featured contemporary works performed by the National Festival Orchestra, the CBC Symphony, various soloists, and chamber groups. An entire evening was devoted to electronic music.<sup>11</sup>

The Ann Arbor visitors were exposed to a whirlwind of opportunity. But they also found the experience frustrating. Although Mumma recalls interacting briefly with Badings, Krennek, Schuller, and Varèse, most of the delegates were sheltered. "We couldn't get in contact with the people we'd gone there to meet," says Reynolds. "At the moments we might have been able to walk up and speak to them, they were somehow closeted off. On the way home, I think probably Bob said, 'We could do a better festival than that.' So ONCE

hatched right there in the car.” Finney tells the same story in his autobiography: “While we were still in Europe, there was a special conference of avant-garde composers in Stratford, Ontario, which Robert Ashley, Roger Reynolds, George Cacioppo, and Gordon Mumma decided to attend. On returning, . . . they thought they could do a better job . . . and forthwith organized . . . ONCE. . . .”<sup>12</sup>

The Stratford experience was ONCE’s final catalyst. But the Festivals would not have taken shape without the intensive artistic activity and resources in Ann Arbor and the community of mutually supportive composers whose interactions created a climate that fostered creative solutions for their ambitions.

### **The Birth of ONCE**

On October 16, 1960, Ashley and Reynolds brought to DAC’s board of directors a plan for a contemporary music festival, projected to include six concerts: three with local artists, three with guests. They had already reserved space at the YMCA (ultimately not used). Preliminary ideas for guest artists included Berio, Tudor, Paul Jacobs, and dancer-choreographer Paul Taylor. DAC agreed to underwrite the endeavor with \$750 if an equal amount could be raised from ticket sales or contributions.

By November, the group had secured commitments from Jacobs (\$250) and Berio (\$550 for the composer, four instrumentalists, and singer Cathy Berberian), and two weekends in February and March had been booked at the Unitarian church. Though small, the church proved ideal for this first festival: Since it was used only on Sundays, there was ample time for rehearsal. In fact, long after ONCE moved to larger venues, the performers continued to rehearse there. “One night [in 1965] we were rehearsing [the theater piece] ‘Combination Wedding and Funeral’ and I was the minister,” recalls Joseph Wehrer. “I had ministerial garb and a Bible in my hand when the police came to the door saying it was odd that this activity was going on. I assured them (with the Bible clearly visible) that everything was all right.”

The first festival included four concerts instead of the projected six, but brought in more income than had been anticipated. Mumma’s handwritten notes record \$1,175 in ticket sales against costs of \$1,300. Advance publicity (including a poster sale at the Forsythe Gallery) and reasonable ticket prices (\$5 for the series, \$1.77 for single events) attracted capacity audiences. “We filled the church,” says Mumma. “People were standing outside in the snow waiting to get in.”

The concerts by Jacobs and Berio (February 24 and March 3, 1961) featured European composers: Paolo Castaldi, Roman Haubenstock-Ramati, Ernst K enek, Olivier Messiaen, André Boucourechliev, Berio, Bussotti, Stockhausen, Webern, Schoenberg, Debussy, and Varèse. Of the sixteen works on these programs, fully half were written in 1958 or later. The other two concerts contained music by the five principals (Ashley, Cacioppo, Mumma, Reynolds, and Scavarda), a film by Manupelli with music by Ashley, and works by University doctoral students Van Solkema and Bruce Wise.

Wise (born 1929) had completed a bachelor’s degree at Wayne State University, and then a master’s at the University of Michigan (1954). After military service in Missouri and Kentucky, he returned to Ann Arbor and entered the doctoral program in 1956. Although he spent the year 1959–60 in Freiberg and Breslau (where he studied with Wolfgang Fortner), Wise was back in Ann Arbor before the first ONCE Festival, at which two of his works were programmed: *Songs of Autumn*, settings of four Rilke poems for soprano and piano, and ***Two Pieces for Piano and Chamber Group***. The first of the *Two Pieces* is an introspective dialogue between the pianist (Wise) and an ensemble of (mostly) wind instruments, with occasional percussion interjections. The second forms a contrast in mood but not in language: Flighty motivic snippets are tossed among the players, building to an outburst of piano clusters and then a quiet coda that recalls the movement’s opening. The work was directed by Wayne Dunlap, a former UM orchestra conductor who left the University when the School of Music hired Josef Blatt in 1952. Dunlap moved to Plymouth, Michigan (northeast of Ann Arbor), where he taught at Schoolcraft College and conducted the local symphony. Wise was active during the first two ONCE

Festivals, after which he took a faculty position at the University of Missouri at Columbia.

Dunlap also conducted Mumma's *Sinfonia for 12 Instruments and Magnetic Tape* and three of the nine songs from Scavarda's *In the Autumn Mountains* (1958–59). Although the songs are twelve-tone—a compositional technique Scavarda would soon abandon—they show stylistic continuity with his later non-serial works, such as the clarinet solo *Matrix* (discussed below). The emphasis is on sonority: Long tones and timbral contrasts highlight techniques such as glissandi, double stops, and harmonics.

For his *Sinfonia* Mumma combined an electronic work developed for Cohen's Space Theatre with an instrumental composition. He customarily labeled his ever-evolving pieces for Cohen "Sound Blocks." The sixth of these blocks fascinated him enough that he transformed it into the work *Densities*, which he inserted in the *Sinfonia*'s third movement. The instrumental portions of the work also explore densities, both textural and temporal. In the intricate first movement, diverse "sound blocks" interact in complex rhythms. The contrasting second movement is sparse and pointillistic. It moves without break into the third, which begins with a duet, then a trio, then a quartet, gradually building in density to the entrance of the tape, which overlaps the instruments and then continues alone for two minutes. A series of repeated notes in the trumpet announce the finale, which eventually winds down to a whispered pianissimo.

The March 4 concert in which these works were played required considerable organization and rehearsal: Included were twenty-three musicians and a conductor. The other local composers' concert was more modest in terms of personnel, but equally challenging musically. Ashley played four difficult piano works on the two programs: Mumma's *Suite*, Scavarda's *Groups*, Reynolds's *Epigram and Evolution*, and his own *Sonata*, attesting not only to the skills of their composers but also to his own pianism. *Groups*, though extremely short, requires formidable technical skills and extraordinary attention to detail. The piece "demands supreme concentration by both the pianist and the listener," says Scavarda. Tempos, rhythmic proportions, the lengths of the silences, and dynamics (in some places on nearly every note), are precisely specified. Ashley's performance is astonishingly accurate in all of these details.

Reynolds's *Epigram and Evolution* opens with a three-measure introduction (the "Epigram") played twice, leading into four movements of varied development (the "Evolution"). The first begins pointillistically but soon evolves into a fearfully difficult fantasia. The second focuses on resonance—though notated strictly, the aural impression is arhythmic, individual pitches intersecting to create aggregates of sound. The same texture continues into the third, though the meter is transformed into measured quarter notes occasionally broken by loud interjections using other rhythmic figures. The final variation recalls elements from previous material.

While Mumma's *Sinfonia* explored changing textural densities, Ashley's *Sonata* dealt with changing *rhythmic* densities—from sections with notes piling rapidly one upon another to spacious extensions of single sonorities—coupled with extreme contrasts of dynamics. Phrases in the *Sonata* were determined by the length of time a note or an aggregate of tones could be sustained. The *Sonata* is the last work in which Ashley prescribed every note. He projected it in three movements, but did not complete the last two until 1979. The later movements are "shadows" of the first; they may be played in either order, or recordings of them may be sounded simultaneously with a live performance of Movement 1.

The concerts of local works also featured chamber music, including two virtuosic string pieces: Reynolds's *Continuum* for viola and cello and Cacioppo's *String Trio*, whose materials are "fragmentary, combined as in a mosaic."<sup>13</sup> The *Trio*'s indebtedness to the expressionist language of the second Viennese School is apparent from the outset: In the opening movement, the interweaving of individual pitches creates intensely dramatic, rhetorical lines interrupted by violent outbursts. The work's virtuosity lies not so much in the individual parts (though these are far from easy) as in their intersection: The ensemble must be so tight that the three players coalesce into a single voice. Hints of Cacioppo's later preoccupation with extended techniques appear in later movements.

The most unusual pieces on these concerts were Manupelli's film in progress, *The Bottleman*, and Ashley's *The Fourth of July*. *The Bottleman*, a black-and-white silent film documenting the actions and dreams of a gentle hobo who spends his days collecting empty bottles, was shown in a version with simultaneous projection on two screens. At the film's end, the bottleman flees from two playful teenagers, running headlong into an oncoming car. Ashley created an electronic soundtrack reflecting the film's mood. Using a mechanical transducer he had designed, he recorded a loudspeaker broadcasting a 60-cycle hum, which he mixed with vocal and "found" sonorities played at various tape speeds. *The Fourth of July* is a single-channel electronic work first presented in Cohen's Space Theatre. On July 4, 1960, Ashley tested a new parabolic microphone by recording the sounds of a friend's Independence Day party. He combined these party sounds with a previously composed electronic work built from a series of tape loops, creating a dramatic eighteen-minute composition that begins with a jumble of nature and party sounds—background instrumental music, animal noises (birds, cat), talking, laughter, children playing, glasses clinking—that rise in a gradual crescendo until they are overtaken and then superseded by electronic noise.

The entire festival was recorded by the university's radio station, WUOM (where Cacioppo had begun working as an engineer and program host in 1960). Excerpts were broadcast in succeeding months. The concerts were also reviewed in the *Ann Arbor News*, the *Michigan Daily* (the student newspaper), and the *Detroit Free Press*. Collins George mixed praise with criticism: "The music they played . . . used to start fistfights a few decades ago," he said. "Now an audience of about 300 packed the tiny First Unitarian Church" and listened "intently, intelligently." From the second concert he singled out Reynolds's *Continuum* and judged the Mumma, Ashley, and Scavarda piano works "interesting" though "cerebral." But George was less generous in his assessment of Manupelli's film and Ashley's electronic scores, comparing *The Fourth of July* to a "faulty . . . radio circuit."<sup>14</sup>

H. Wiley Hitchcock, who wrote a mostly sympathetic piece for the *Ann Arbor News*, was particularly captivated by the piano works in the second concert: Scavarda's *Groups* were "tiny, tart but tasty hors-d'oeuvres"; Ashley's *Sonata* was "interesting texturally"; and Mumma's *Suite* "took off bravely." But he was also upset by *The Fourth of July* and left "in a huff" before it was over. Nevertheless, he concluded that "ONCE is by all odds the most exciting musical series Ann Arbor has heard in years."<sup>15</sup>

Not everyone panned Ashley's piece, however. Waldrop called *The Fourth of July* "a work of great imagination, in perfect control,"<sup>16</sup> noting that it had already become "rather famous" after Cohen's light show. Ashley emphasizes that the essence of the piece is its varying pulse rates, "some very fast, some slower."

Finney actively supported the Festival this first year, arranging for the loan of percussion instruments from the University's band.<sup>17</sup> But relations with the University soon began to sour. The first conflict arose when ONCE players used metal glockenspiel hammers instead of padded mallets on the vibraphone, mottling the surfaces of the soft metal bars. In later years, as some of the students became more heavily committed to ONCE than to their classes, the relationship became increasingly strained. Mumma "rather lovingly" ascribes the conflict to "two cultural things bumping into each other: one was an old institution and the other was a gang of renegades." What had begun with cooperation devolved, in some cases, into territoriality.

But the Festival's success assured continued financial backing from DAC. On May 22, 1961, its board considered eleven proposals for the following year and supported four, among them ONCE. The entire 1962 Festival was projected to cost \$1,300, \$300 of which might come from the musicians' union for local artists. (The ONCE principals have no recollection of paying local performers, but surviving documents record minimal remuneration: \$1.50 per person per concert, \$3 for the leader.)

Among other events, DAC supported a performance by the Merce Cunningham Dance Company at Ann Arbor High School on December 4, 1961. When Cage, Cunningham, and Tudor arrived for the event, Reynolds interviewed Cage (at Ashley's house) about his recently published essay collection *Silence*. The

interview appeared in *Generation*; the following year Cage asked that it be republished in C.F. Peters's catalog of his music.<sup>18</sup>

### **The 1962 Festival**

By autumn the 1962 Festival was falling into place. Jacobs agreed to return for another recital and La Monte Young was scheduled to perform with Toshi Ichianagi (who canceled at the last minute and was replaced by pianist-clarinetist-saxophonist Terry Jennings). Reynolds, who had been at Tanglewood the previous summer, arranged for a program by the Dorian Woodwind Quintet and a \$100 grant from Margaret Lee Crofts (the benefactor of his Tanglewood scholarship). Two concerts featured local composers and one presented electronic works. Thus the second festival fulfilled the ONCE organizers' original vision: six concerts, three with guest artists.

Ancillary events had also developed after the first Festival. On March 22, 1961, Cohen presented a Space Theatre demonstration at Central Michigan University, accompanied by a lecture on electronic music by Ashley. A concert version of *Heat* (which Ashley developed for Cohen's shows) premiered at Wayne State University later that year.

In Fall 1961 the first of a group of Texas musicians who would figure in ONCE's activities arrived in Ann Arbor. After graduating from high school, Philip Krumm (born 1941) had pursued his interest in avant-garde music by staging concerts in San Antonio. A series at the McNay Art Institute (April–May 1961) featured single composers: Richard Maxfield, Philip Corner, Cage, Krumm, and Robert Sheff (born 1945), a San Antonio high school student at the time. Krumm also composed music for a theater production at Fort Sam Houston; the director, Bill Larsen, had studied with Finney in Michigan. On Larsen's recommendation, Krumm sent scores to Finney, who invited him to Ann Arbor.

Krumm borrowed money for train fare from an uncle, arrived in Michigan with \$39 in his pocket, and went to see the dean to announce he'd come to study with Finney. Housing was arranged in a cooperative unit and he was permitted to audit classes. Finney invited him to sit in on the graduate composition seminar, where Krumm met the ONCE composers. By Spring 1962 he was composing for Cohen's shows (*Axis* and *Mumma Mix*, created in Mumma's studio) and participating in ONCE events.

Krumm wrote to Sheff (an outstanding pianist who later adopted the name "Blue" Gene Tyranny), urging him to come to Ann Arbor. When Sheff graduated in the spring of 1962, he went first to Juilliard, in part to please his family, in part to satisfy himself about his abilities. Although he passed the entrance tests, he decided to go to Ann Arbor, where he arrived in September. Thereafter he assumed a leading role in organizing "ONCE Friends" concerts and other ancillary events.

The second ONCE Festival opened on February 9, 1962, with one of the most controversial performances in its history: the concert by LaMonte Young and Terry Jennings. Collins George of the *Detroit Free Press* had anticipated the Festival eagerly, writing that it was "one of the most important musical developments of the year."<sup>19</sup> But George was sorely disappointed by the Young-Jennings event, which included *Words* (Robert Morris), "Jennings repeating the word 'words' tonelessly for about 10 minutes"; *Licorice Stick* (Walter DeMaria), in which a "buxom young lady" passed out candy to the audience; *Work Such That No One Knows What Is Going On* (Henry Flynt); *Mudai #1* (Ichianagi), during which Young threw an oversized string bean to the audience; and *923*, in which he banged 923 times in measured strokes on a frying pan. Paul Cooper from the University of Michigan faculty was furious. In a review for the *Ann Arbor News*, he called Young and Jennings "two over-aged juvenile delinquents" and the performance a "thoroughly degenerate evening."<sup>20</sup> But the concert also included Richard Maxfield's *Wind* (saxophone and tape, composed for Jennings), Christian Wolff's *Duet 1*, and Terry Riley's *Concert for Two Pianists and Five Tape Recorders*, which prompted substantive review.

In stark contrast were the concerts by the Dorian Quintet and Paul Jacobs, featuring recent European and American works of a more traditional nature. Jacobs played Reynolds's *Epigram and Evolution* (premiered by Ashley at the first Festival) and *Syzygy I* by Gordon Gidley, who is described in the program as having written the piece especially for the ONCE premiere. The Dorian Quintet presented works by Gerhard, Berio, Cage, Ralph Shapey, Elliott Carter, Gunther Schuller, and others. Local performers played works by ONCE composers, as well as pieces by Pierre Boulez, Carl Ruggles, and Morton Feldman, who came from New York to play piano and celesta with them in his *Durations 1, 4, and 5*. Wise's "Revolving Spectrum" (a movement from his doctoral composition) was programmed, as well as a piano sonata by doctoral student Gregory Kosteck and a ten-minute film by Manupelli (*The House*) with a score by Ashley using processed instrumental sounds (inside-the-piano effects, harmonica, and others).

Reynolds's *Wedge* and Cacioppo's *Bestiary I: Eingang* are studies in metric, timbral, and textural contrasts. Reynolds deals with two layers of sound moving at different speeds and densities, one mostly winds (flutes, trumpets, trombones, tuba, double bass), the other, percussion (vibraphone, glockenspiel, cow bells, cymbals, wood blocks, chimes, gongs, piano, and drums). At two points the layers coincide, delineating a three-section form. A dialogue between the two groups opens the work, active lines in one accompanied by transparent halos in the other. Reynolds's sensitivity to orchestral color is much in evidence: Near the opening, for instance, an ethereal effect is created by halo tones sounding simultaneously in the piccolo and string bass; timbral modulation also appears in several places. Out of the two instrumental clusters, soloists at times emerge in concerto style: The middle section, for example, features virtuosic cadenzas for piano, vibraphone, flute, trumpet, trombone, and percussion.

Cacioppo's eight-minute cantata, *Bestiary I: Eingang* contrasts the lyricism of the human voice with a brittle instrumental ensemble: five percussionists, celeste, and piano. Composed a year after his *String Trio*, the work shows Cacioppo's interest in extended instrumental techniques and transparent textures—characteristics of his later music. He uses Rilke's text as a basis on which to juxtapose metric and non-metric approaches to musical time. The time values of the poem's phonemes, when the text is read aloud at 175 words per minute, establish a fixed metric frame. The contrasting non-metric frame (analogous to reading the poem silently) relies on the decay characteristics of the various instruments. Despite the intellectualized rationale, the cantata exhibits an expressionism reminiscent of the *Trio*—a dramatic intensity exquisitely conveyed by soprano Karen Lovejoy and the ONCE players.

The second Festival involved a large number of personnel. The eight pieces programmed on February 10 utilized twenty-one performers and a conductor (David Sutherland, a graduate student in musicology). Among them was flutist Karen Hill, a UM undergraduate who would become Reynolds's life-long collaborator and spouse. The February 16 concert included thirty-four players and two conductors (Dunlap and Scavarda).

Scavarda's *Sounds for Eleven* (ten players and conductor) was inspired by processes of growth and decay in living things. Woodwind instruments are used to illustrate growth, percussion instruments decay (though the decay rate varies according to the instrument's acoustical properties and the type of attack). Scavarda's notation delineates growth and decay curves as well as silences of variable (and sometimes indeterminate) length. He conducted the work using gestures to control the amplitude changes, adding a compelling visual element to the performance.

Mumma's two works also had strong visual components. In *Meanwhile, A Twopiece* (for two performers and tape), four scores are placed at various locations on the stage: for piano; for seven objects inside the piano (six non-pitched and one long-decay); for vibraphone or other mallet instrument; and for a non-keyboard instrument that one player performs with proficiency (in this case, Mumma on horn). The players begin at different stations, performing—along with the tape—a short section of the work. They then move to another station (which prompted delighted laughter from the audience). The process continues for the duration of the tape. Score 3 specifies pitches without durations; the other scores are graphic, showing only the density of events

in time.

***Gestures II***, six sections of a projected twelve-section piece, was “conceived as a vast interplay between two pianists and two pianos.”<sup>21</sup> The work opens with six minutes of inside-the-piano and on-the-keys sonorities spaced leisurely in time. In the following section (“Onslaught”) Mumma and Ashley covered the piano strings with blankets and played on them vigorously, at the same time activating a two-minute tape prepared in advance by splicing and mixing recordings of themselves playing on the same instruments in the same room. A virtuosic (traditionally notated) duet follows, and the performance ends with a short percussive section in which the players strike various locations inside the piano at precisely specified time intervals.

The festival ended with a ground-breaking program of electronic works by Bruno Maderna, Milton Babbitt, Gottfried Michael Koenig, Conlon Nancarrow, André Boucourechliev, and others. The world premiere of Gerhard’s *Caligula* (1961) was presented, as well as Ashley’s *Public Opinion Descends upon the Demonstrators*, in which a sound controller activated electronic materials in response to audience activities: walking around or leaving the auditorium, speaking, laughing, or whispering. The audience soon caught on and actively participated in the game. Ashley’s motivation, as usual, was social commentary: “Rituals in society such as attending church or the opera are rapidly dying,” he says. “My interest is the kind of ritual in which audience participation is unpredictable.”

The second Festival prompted ONCE’s first national review, an extensive essay by Hitchcock in the *Musical Quarterly*.<sup>22</sup> “Do we assume that the only natural habitat of the musical *avant-garde* in the U.S.A. is one of the coastal urban centers . . . [or] that a music festival in a small midwestern town. . . is likely to be a rather tame affair?” he asked. “We had better revise our views: ONCE. . . belied both assumptions.” Noting that the enterprise had been floated successfully for two years without institutional support, Hitchcock praised both the undertaking and individual pieces. In contrast to his comments on *The Fourth of July*, he highlighted Ashley’s “witty, forceful, and evocative” *Public Opinion Descends Upon the Demonstrators*, pegged Reynolds’s *Wedge* as “the most powerful new work of the festival,” and spent a full paragraph praising Scavarda’s *Sounds for Eleven* (“one of the most successful premieres”).

Guest appearances and ancillary concerts became far more numerous after this second Festival. A group of ONCE principals appeared at Michigan State University on May 25 and then at the Ann Arbor Public Library the next day. In August ONCE Friends presented “ONCE in the Sun” in Provincetown, Cape Cod, and in December they staged a performance at the Ann Arbor Community Center.

On the Michigan State concert, John Morgan premiered Scavarda’s ***Matrix for Clarinetist*** (1962), in which Scavarda explored extended techniques, most notably multiphonics. “When I heard a squeak,” he says, “I heard the potential in the clarinet and began my search for the multiphonic. I went through six intensive weeks of working and coaching and searching and controlling and learning fingerings, embouchures, breath, the lips, everything to produce the multiphonics.” Scavarda foresaw the expressive potential of these sounds if only they could be harnessed and controlled. Once he discovered a usable palette of multiple pitches, he organized them into a matrix of 36 squares, which the performer may play in any order, repeating or omitting them at will. “I found that it was essential to use a very long sustained sound in order to showcase the beauty of the multiphonic. That long sound became intrinsic to the piece.”

Scavarda’s innovative work on clarinet multiphonics was carried out independently of experiments by Bruno Bartolozzi, whose influential book *New Sounds for Woodwinds* did not appear until five years after *Matrix* was published.<sup>23</sup>

Robert Sheff joined the group for the first time on the December ONCE Friends concert, playing Krumm’s *Paragenesis*, Scavarda’s *Groups*, and Ives’s *Eleven Songs* (with soprano Peggy Ericson). Also programmed was his first graphic piece, ***Ballad***. The score, for any number of players, is arranged in three columns, the first indicating

the number of simultaneous events; the second showing changes in intensity, density, or timbre; and the third describing large sections or phrases. Pictorial material (photos and calligraphy) provided “subjects for balladic commentary.”<sup>24</sup> On this occasion, the work was realized by a trio: Krumm (flute), violinist Karin Fierce (another San Antonio transplant), and pianist Larry Leitch (who had come to Ann Arbor from Oberlin).<sup>25</sup>

On the same program, Mumma and Ashley performed Ashley’s *Details* and Leitch played Mumma’s *Large Size Mograph. Details* for two pianists (Ashley at the keyboard, Mumma at the piano strings) is “a pair of simultaneous monologues, simultaneous decisions,” says Ashley. “Where these interact coincidentally, sounds are produced that neither one of us could create alone.” At times, aural cues from one player direct the other to certain areas of the score, but the compositional objective was controlled improvisations intersecting by chance.

Mumma’s various sized *Mographs* for piano (Very Small, Small, Medium, Large) developed from his job at the seismology lab. The musical architecture of the pieces (whose titles are puns on seis-[=size]-mograph) reflect wave forms on seismographic maps. The rhythmic figures and durational sequences in the *Large Size Mograph* (one of the earliest of the set) reflect the wave-front arrivals from the Mount Rainier underground explosion tests and other earthquakes.

### The Events of 1963

In 1963 the ONCE Festival moved to larger quarters in the Ann Arbor Community Center. Guest artists included the Hartt Chamber Players (from Hartford, Connecticut), the Camerata Quartet (from New York), and Cage and Tudor, all of whom performed alongside local artists. Reynolds, who had moved to Germany on a Fulbright Fellowship, returned to take part as well. The four concerts between February 9–17 included a few classic contemporary works (for example, Berg, Webern), but mainly featured pieces by prominent avant-garde figures (Wolff, Berio, Feldman, Earle Brown) and locals. Ichiyanagi’s *Sapporo* (1962) was given its American premiere (conducted by Cage) and Tudor played Cage’s *Variations II*, whose score is prepared by laying transparencies with lines and dots over one another and using them to determine sound parameters.

Scores for other works were totally or partially graphic as well, such as Brown’s famous *December 1952* (a series of horizontal and vertical lines of different lengths and thicknesses), Sheff’s *Meditation Nine* (five open staves containing single notes and pitch aggregates “occasionally joined by dotted and solid lines suggesting directionality and connection”),<sup>26</sup> and Ashley’s *Maneuvers for Small Hands* (110 index cards combining verbal and graphic notation that “is intentionally complex and arcane”).<sup>27</sup> Some of Cacioppo’s *Pianopieces*, such as *Cassiopeia*, use the distinctive notation shown in Figure 3. The player may follow any given path from one note to another. (For paths with undefined pitches, the player chooses them.) Volume is proportional to the size of the black circle, note lengths to linear space. Convex paths indicate a slowing of tempo, concave ones an acceleration. Asked to explain the advantages of this notation, Cacioppo replied that it gives the performer “an opportunity for his eye to roam about the score and stimulate him to find perhaps a more unique way of realizing the notes.” He compared the experience to seeing “a cloud go by or a sunset, knowing that every time you see it, the experience and the images will be different.”<sup>28</sup>

On February 16, the Canadian pianist Donald Bohlen, who was working on a doctorate in composition at the University of Michigan, played a set of Cacioppo’s *Pianopieces*, including *Pianopiece 1*, *Cassiopeia*, and *Pianopiece 2*. *Pianopiece 1* is conventionally notated; the work is an intricate study in timbres, textures, and dynamics, featuring complex metrical relationships. Special effects include tone clusters and harmonics produced by silently depressing keys while striking others. In *Pianopiece 2*, Cacioppo presented four sound structures using different types of graphic or semi-graphic notation. Time frames are specified for each structure, but the performer is free to ignore them.

Krumm was inspired to compose *Music for Clocks* (nine players, conducted by Scavarda) after a Space Theatre performance he attended with Christine Cooley, the single character in Manupelli’s film *The House*.

That evening Cohen focused a portion of his show on a clock mechanism, whose image migrated around the theater. Afterward Cooley said to Krumm, "You should write a piece for clocks to listen to." The work is a study in "multiple overlapping time systems—rhythmic and arrhythmic," he says. Its 24-page flexible score consists of graphic notation derived from laying transparent manuscript paper over star charts. During the performance, clocks were placed on stage, but were silent; as Cooley had suggested, they merely listened. Bernard Folta praised the work in the *Michigan Daily*: "The work is, as Krumm is, unbelievably original and imaginative," he wrote, "and Scavarda gave it a beautiful shape."<sup>29</sup>

One of the most novel approaches to notation was Scavarda's *Filmscore for Two Pianists*: Moving configurations of colored abstract shapes stimulated improvisatory reactions by the performers (Mumma and Ashley), who transformed visual images into aural representations of texture, density, color, or direction. Scavarda did not define any relationship between the aural and the visual, allowing the film's "moving, expanding, disappearing, approaching, and receding configurations to become mobile notational symbols for live performance." He used similar images in his four-minute film *Greys*, shown on a Mumma-Ashley tour and then at a ONCE Friends concert (November–December 1963). He ran a single roll of film through his camera 12–18 times, re-exposing parts of it. Mumma developed an electronic score from synthesized and acoustic sounds, using similar methods. By disconnecting the erase head on his tape recorder, he could superimpose various sequences of sounds. Re-recording over the same piece of tape slightly erased the earlier sounds, creating a layered effect.

More traditional is Cacioppo's *Two Worlds*, in which specified sounds are presented in space = time notation, the exact durations determined by the performers and conductor. The work, for textless voice and seven instruments, is a veritable catalog of extended techniques: muted piano sounds created by pressing the string with one hand and hitting the key with the other; inside-the-piano effects using mallets; breathy wind sounds; simultaneous singing and playing of wind instruments; knocking the body of string instruments with the knuckles; bowing below the bridge; and many others.

Ashley's *Fives* is named for its main compositional parameter: the number 5. The version performed on the 1963 ONCE Festival featured two ensembles of five percussion instruments, two pianists (each using five fingers), and five string players. Pitches are indeterminate within certain ranges; rhythms are indeterminate within certain combinations. The composition, says Ashley, "exploits the effects of new kinds of virtuoso (solo) playing on an ensemble form."<sup>30</sup> But the flexibility permitted in this type of score does not imply that Ashley subscribes to a philosophy of purposelessness. "I'm a control freak," he says. "I give the performer a lot of latitude, but he or she has enormous responsibility to the score. I have never written, 'Do what you want.' You have to do what I want you to do, though it may differ from what you think of as music."

Mumma, Ashley, and Leitch played three of Mumma's *Mographs* and the Hartt Chamber Players performed *A Quarter of Fourpiece*, which they had premiered at Smith College on January 30. Each part of this quartet (the other three "quarters" were never completed) was projected to have four subsections. The score features "rhythmically unstructured musical events," some lyric, others pointillistic, "within strictly-controlled time blocks";<sup>31</sup> prescriptive notation is mixed with improvisational performance choices.

Reynolds was represented by *Mosaic* (flute and piano) and *A Portrait of Vanzetti* (narrator, instruments, and stereo electroacoustic sound). *Mosaic* was written for John Perras of the Dorian Quintet; at ONCE it was played brilliantly by Karen Hill and Bob James. The virtuoso score opens with timbral modulation and then calls for numerous extended techniques: The pianist uses knuckles on the keys and plays glissandi on the strings; a buzzing timbre is created by placing paper inside the instrument. The flutist performs key slaps, harmonics, and whistle tones. The dramatic duet builds to a climactic set of cadenzas, then falls back to a quiet conclusion.

*A Portrait of Vanzetti* includes an electroacoustic element that was a product of Reynolds's work with Gottfried Michael Koenig at the West German Radio's electronic music studio in Köln. The piece honors Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, Italian anarchists who had emigrated to the U.S. and were convicted of

two murders in Massachusetts in 1921. Although another man confessed to the crime four years later, the courts refused to reopen the case and the two men were executed on August 23, 1927. Reynolds developed his text from Vanzetti's poignant letters. The tape part consists of processed live sounds. A high piercing sonority, for instance, was produced by slowly pushing a steel block across the piano strings. As a result, electronic and live sonorities do not stand out as distinct entities, but meld in a seamless, complementary blend. Scavarda conducted the moving performance and Jack O'Brien, now head of the Old Globe Theater in San Diego, narrated.

As in past years, the festival came close to paying for itself: DAC's minutes (February 23, 1963) record a shortfall of only \$500. DAC also sponsored a new venture in May 1963: the Ann Arbor Film Festival directed by Manupelli, which continues to the present day.

By 1963 Mumma and Ashley were touring regularly as a duo (Smith College, Wayne State University, Roosevelt University) and appearing as guest artists (SUNY Buffalo, the Brodie School in Toronto). ONCE Friends, organized by Sheff, was also active: four concerts in that year alone (March 1, October 27, November 24, and December 3). But others left Ann Arbor (and ONCE), among them Reynolds. He and Karen moved first to Paris, where they presented performances of Scavarda's *Sounds for Eleven*, Mumma's *Gestures II*, and Ashley's *Maneuvers for Small Hands* in 1964, and later to Japan, where they brought ONCE composers for guest appearances. Krumm also left Ann Arbor in 1963. He moved back to San Antonio, where he has lived ever since, except for a period of study with Stockhausen in California in 1966.

After the third Festival, ONCE's programming became increasingly cross-disciplinary and theatrical works appeared more frequently on the programs. Ancillary activities also pointed in this direction, particularly Mary Ashley's "unscheduled private events in the midst of an unsuspecting public audience"—called *Truck*. The first one took place on May 11, 1963: Patrons leaving a concert came upon the Ashleys, Borkins, Wehrers, and others engaged in odd activities. A pianist performed in the back of a VW van, a woman put curlers in her hair, slides were shown on the sidewalk, a man painted a flag on the inside of a car window, Ashley was draped over the seat of a black Pontiac as if dead. "Truck at the Beach" (July 21, 1963) featured Walter DeMaria's *Beach Crawl*: Performers crept along the sand, moving three stones in triangular patterns. Such ideas soon began to influence and alter the balance of works presented at the ONCE Festivals and on tours.

## 1964

In 1964 ONCE virtually mushroomed. In addition to a seven-concert Festival, participants traveled to Virginia, New York, Missouri, Massachusetts, and Italy. A cross-disciplinary group interested in the theater (the Wehrers, Borkins, Ashleys, Mummas, and Caroline Cohen) began calling themselves the “ONCE Group” and appeared at festivals throughout the country. At the Red Door Gallery in Detroit and the Bang Bang Festival in Richmond, they staged “sporting events” such as a sonic inversion of a Ping-Pong game: The “crisp clicks of the hard shell ball against paddle and table were replaced by the soft puff of tissues yanked from a box and released to float gently to the ground,” an effect one might derive from playing a tape of a Ping-Pong game backwards.<sup>32</sup> These productions, literally “built” at brainstorming sessions at the Ashleys’ house, became increasingly daring through the years; the initial ideas often came from Mary Ashley.

On September 1, at the Second Annual New York Avant-Garde Festival, Ashley presented the premiere of *The Wolfman*, a tape collage excerpted from radio and television broadcasts overlaid with live amplified vocal sounds whose timbre evolved through slow changes in pitch, volume, vowels, and mouth formation. The resemblance of the sustained vowel sounds to a howling wolf gave the work its title. Critics attacked *The Wolfman’s* ear-battering roar, but the piece cemented Ashley’s national reputation. “Mr. Ashley, a most harmless-looking man . . . stood stolidly motionless for twenty solid minutes whistling, shouting, screaming, humming, blowing and blasting away at a microphone which, naturally, veered off into its own realm of harmonics, squeaks and piercing rasps,” wrote Faubion Bowers in *The Nation*.<sup>33</sup> When the piece ended, one audience member cried, “Assassino!”; others shouted, “Encore!”

For the fourth Festival (February 25–March 1, 1964), ONCE moved to still larger quarters in the Veterans’ Auditorium. Mary Ashley designed a purple and gray 10 x 16 poster, folded accordion-like into a pocket-sized 10 x 2, showing a voluptuous nude sprawled on the lunch counter of Red’s Rite Spot, a cake dish discreetly shielding the nether parts of her body. Behind her lurked four Mafioso-like figures in dark shirts and hats: Mumma, Scavarda, Cacioppo, and Ashley. On the reverse was the entire program for the seven-concert series. The document predictably created a scandal and then became a collector’s item.

Robert Ashley notes that the poster was ONCE’s “tribute to the Judson Dance Theater, which had recently restaged Manet’s *Olympia* to great critical dislike in *The New York Times*.” The Judson dancers presented two performances in a single evening at the fourth ONCE Festival. Other guests that year included the Brandeis University Chamber Chorus, the Bob James Trio with Eric Dolphy, and the University of Illinois Contemporary Chamber Players. On a program of Ashley and Mumma’s “New Music for Pianos,” five works were given their premieres, including Wise’s *Music for Three*, written for them. The score calls for three “sound sources,” which in this case are two pianists and tape. In the first movement Wise prescribes pitches and timings for sections ranging from 2 to 12 seconds, but within each section the length of individual notes or aggregates is free. Dynamics and phrasing are notated but optional. The second movement consists of twelve musical events that may occur in any order and last as long as the players wish. The performance latitude is wide enough to admit vast differences in length. (A version Mumma and Ashley played in Missouri later that year was far shorter than the one at the Festival.) Wise provides the option of performing the two movements separately, sequentially (as on the present recording), or simultaneously.

Theatrical works appeared on several concerts. On February 29, for example, eight couples performed Ashley’s *in memoriam Kit Carson (opera)*, a mixed-media production based on social interaction at a party. Eight men sat in chairs arranged in a circle; their wives were perched on the arms. The score details 81 moments, each with a given task: Tell an anecdote, turn equipment on (or off), cough, laugh, throw rice, etc.

The previous evening, Ashley, Borkin, Cohen, Wehrer, and Mumma had performed the premiere of Mumma’s *Megaton for William Burroughs* for ten channels of electronic sound: eight pre-recorded, two live. The four

performers, wearing aircraft helmets, placed themselves around the auditorium, communicating by headset; Mumma, the pilot, gave instructions. Affixed to amplified overhead wires were projectiles with flashing red lights that the performers set in motion. Thin metal sculptures by Cohen provided additional aural input: They were bent backward and released, springing freely. In one section Mumma invited the audience to use clickers he had bought at a game store in Detroit. *Megaton* climaxed with taped airplane noises and scrambled conversations of pilots that Mumma had extracted from a British war film. The roaring air raid eventually devolved into a quiet denouement with a single drummer in the lobby playing riffs for more than ten minutes.

Ashley's *in memoriam ... Crazy Horse (symphony)* did not involve theater, but did utilize elements of musical space. The chamber orchestra of twenty or more players is divided into five or more subgroups, each with four or more members. Each group aims to create sounds of uniform tonal density. Players read from a graphic score with symbols representing duration and direction arranged in a wheel. As they move around its circumference, they concentrate on achieving "pure" (homogeneous) textures or "noisy" (dissimilar) ones within their group. The piece deals with "circular time," says Ashley. "In less than eight moves each group gets trapped in a repetitive set of choices. The piece becomes a set of interlocking wheels."

In the same concert were premieres of Scavarda's *Landscape Journey* and Cacioppo's *Advance of the Fungi*. In *Landscape Journey* (for clarinet, piano, and multiple film projection) Scavarda extended principles he had explored in *Filmscore* and *Greys*. The film alternates with the music but is now integrated into the structure—an extension of instrumental timbres featuring multiphonics and sympathetic resonance.

In an article in the *Musical Quarterly*, Udo Kasemets praised *Advance of the Fungi* (for male chorus, winds, and percussion). Cacioppo took his title from a book by Ernest Charles Large that traced the human battle against fungi from the potato blight of 1845 to 1940. (Was he perhaps drawing a parallel to ONCE—or at least to his own music—as a wild fungus invading the neatly cultivated musical landscape?) There was "nothing gimmicky" in the work's extended instrumental and vocal techniques (including simultaneous singing and playing, glissandi, and whistling), wrote Kasemets. "They are employed with logic, consistency, transparency, economy, and most of all with great aural sensitivity."<sup>34</sup> Cacioppo notated the score in a series of timed sections, some as short as six seconds, others as long as thirty; some separated by silence, others contiguous. Within each section he specified the precise entry time for every figure in every instrument. Scavarda, the conductor, handled the complex task of controlling this array of staggered entrances, which creates dramatic contrasts in density.

Music by George Crevoshay, who had come to Ann Arbor with Larry Leitch, appeared for the first time this year. In *7PTPC* long tones are set against brittle interjections, some produced with inside-the-piano techniques. Sheff's *Diotima* for flute and tape also involved timbral contrasts. Inspired by a dialogue from Plato in which Socrates recounts what he learned about love from the woman Diotima of Mantinea, the composition features five taped sections. Each, says Sheff, has "a unique kinetic energy or temporal mood." The five sections are "mood-associated ideas which Diotima encounters and considers"; silences were paced so that each mood "erased itself." During these silences—and bridging the tape's entries and endings—Anne Aitchison played flute, alto flute, piccolo, and household percussion, including coins dropping into a piggy bank. *Diotima* concludes with 63 unvaried repetitions of a two-second motive.

Among the highlights of 1964 was a trip by the Cohens, Mummas, Ashleys, Borkins, and Manupellis to the Venice Biennale, where they presented three performances of the Space Theatre at La Fenice on September 11–13. Ashley made the initial contact by sending ONCE publicity to Luigi Nono; Cohen secured funding for transportation from the University. Although travel placed severe restrictions on available equipment, the aural complexity of the music was not compromised. Mumma rigged up his own four-track machine (not commercially available at the time) to assure that the tapes ran synchronously. Nono, who had just finished his own four-track piece (*La fabbrica illuminata*), was fascinated; he had Mumma copy the work onto this idiosyncratic device. The theater was jammed, recalls Mumma. Because of the limited time frame, the group created a more

structured work than usual. “We defined beginnings and endings as well as places of arrival.”

The events of 1964 attracted national and international attention in the press. Kasemets reviewed the fourth Festival in the *Musical Quarterly*; and in the *Literary Times* he singled out the “firebrands from Ann Arbor” who came to Venice. André Boucourechliev wrote in *Preuves* that “in Europe the ONCE Festival is always followed with the greatest attention.”<sup>35</sup> At the same time, local reviews became *less* prominent. The *Michigan Daily* and *Detroit Free Press* continued their coverage, but the *Ann Arbor News* sent its drama critic instead of a musician. The following year, the *News* declined to review the Festival at all, though ONCE received extended coverage in the *Boston Globe*. Boucourechliev noted this phenomenon in his July 1964 article. Will ONCE’s cross-Atlantic reputation “break the indifference of a community and a great university?” he asked. “It’s time for Ann Arbor to show effectively some concern for the specific American message that this group’s events carry.” Boucourechliev may have been right about the indifference of the press and the university. But the community response was anything but indifferent. Attendance doubled from the previous year. Kaplan pegged it at 1,500, noting that it “undoubtedly was a result of a more varied and ambitious program.”<sup>36</sup>

## 1965

In 1965 the Festival was less ambitious (four concerts between February 11–14) but no less innovative than in past years. The program was printed on a packet of bubble-gum cards: text on one side, photos of personnel on the other. The opening concert included theatrical works such as *My Piece* by Richard Waters, performed “in slow motion behind a large plastic screen”;<sup>37</sup> and Mary Ashley’s *The Jelloman*, in which Sheff made an unintentional nude appearance (“I was on a table getting a massage from a guy dressed as an astronaut; the towel came off.”) Percussionist Max Neuhaus came from New York and performed Feldman’s *The King of Denmark* (“music of an extraordinary softness and delicacy”)<sup>38</sup> as well as Corner’s *Everything Max Has, Including Beforehand and Afterward* in which Neuhaus tore apart his percussion set-up, wrapping up delicate instruments and dumping others into boxes.

The next two concerts featured the ONCE chamber ensemble and electronic music. Ashley performed *The Wolfman* and Scavarda unveiled his 25-minute film *Caterpillar*, in which he contrasted “the beauty of nature with the ugliness of man.” The sound component was a narration on the life of the caterpillar with musical interjections, including a quote from a Beethoven violin sonata. In Cacioppo’s *Time on Time in Miracles* (soprano, two horns, two trombones, cello, piano, and percussion), the textless voice is treated as another instrument whose timbre varies as a function of its phonemes. The work operates primarily on a soft dynamic level, with occasional extroverted outbursts. As in *Advance of the Fungi*, Cacioppo notated the score in a series of timed sections in which individual events are precisely situated. In his *Boston Globe* review Robert Falck called the work “the most delightful surprise of the weekend” and highlighted its “delicately chosen . . . configurations of pitch and color” and “coherent formal structure.”

Mumma continued to explore the interface between electronics and live performance. *The Dresden Interleaf 13 February 1945* opens with a chorus singing the Dresden Amen, electronically modified so drastically that what remains is but the three-fold form and a hint of vocal moaning. In the middle of the work, sporadic electronic sounds are followed by the roar of alcohol-burning model airplane engines activated by the performers. A quiet electronic elegy in the aftermath of the bombing brings the work to a close.

David Behrman (born 1937), who would later join Mumma, Ashley, and Alvin Lucier to form the Sonic Arts Union, appeared at ONCE for the first time. His *Track* features instrumental interjections (horn, piccolo, strings) within a background of taped sounds, including excerpts from movies, radio, and television. The first electronic sounds in the piece, he recalls, were created by recording a fan with a piece of paper in its blades “to create a kind of chugging sound. I was very interested in collage that year. But I did not own much equipment. Being able to record something on tape was a new experience!”

On February 14 students from SUNY Buffalo presented an evening of works by Morton Subotnick, Richard Dufallo, Mauricio Kagel, Haubenstock-Ramati, and Lukas Foss. “They came for nothing but bus fare,” recalls Mumma. “When they got there they called Foss and said, ‘There are microphone stands all over the place. You’d better get out here. This might be important!’ Foss jumped on a plane to Michigan.” The next day Peter Yates delivered his “composite lecture” at the University, overlapping narration, music, and visual material in an interactive presentation. Examples ranged from an eighth-century shakuhachi piece to Mumma’s *Densities* and Ashley’s *Heat*.

The momentum of the 1965 Festival prompted a follow-on event in September: three performances, called ONCE AGAIN, on the roof of the Maynard Street Garage, near the University. At the time, the structure had five levels and the roof’s boundaries were guarded only by a two-foot wall—low enough to sit on.<sup>39</sup> Despite potential liability, the city granted permission for a festival that attracted hundreds of patrons.<sup>40</sup>

The first night featured the ONCE Group in *Unmarked Interchange*, a multimedia visual and sonic extravaganza

illustrating the theme of anomalous activities superimposed on a social event—in this case a drive-in movie. Borkin and Wehrer designed a giant projection screen, six feet thick and twenty feet high, divided into three levels and fitted out with doors, drawers, louvers, and platforms that served as sites for various activities. A documentary on Mexico—a reddish-brown film that picked up the hues of the setting sun—preceded a showing of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers's *Top Hat* (1935), chosen for its two-dimensional, black-and-white imagery. "It matched—or served as the model for—the geometry of the projection screen," recalls Ashley. A few minutes after *Top Hat* began, a weather balloon gradually emerged from the screen, then was cut away and floated off the edge of the structure. Panels, doors, and louvers began to open. Mumma, dressed in white, stood in a doorway reading excerpts from *The Story of O*, Pauline Réage's sadomasochistic tale of female slavery. Caroline Cohen emerged from another door, crossed a platform, and planted a meringue pie in his face. A woman in a white slip put on a white trench coat, picked up a white suitcase, and walked along the black and white movie. At the other end she changed to a black trench coat, picked up a black suitcase, and walked back. In the center, a set of six-foot louvers opened to reveal Jackie Mumma hanging up white sheets. On the lowest level a six-foot-deep drawer on tracks slid forward to reveal people in white lying on a bed reading a play. In a center room, Larry Leitch stood at an upright piano playing Grieg.

The projection screen formed the backdrop for two other events the same weekend. On Saturday night the Judson dancers presented "A Concert for Ann Arbor." The following evening featured Cage's *Talk I*: Cage talked with Rauschenberg and Ashley, while Tudor and Mumma modified the conversations electronically.

Between the two 1965 Festivals, ONCE artists made numerous guest appearances: in Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, California, New York, Minnesota, and Missouri. Many presentations included musical-theatrical works such as *Combination Wedding and Funeral* and *Kittyhawk (An Anti-Gravity Event)*, a work by Robert Ashley in which the women were made (precariously) airborne by the men. One woman tied herself to a plank which was hoisted atop a tripod; another walked blindfolded across planks laid on ladders; a third was taped to a wall and bombarded with paper airplanes. *Kittyhawk* has predictably given rise to diverse interpretations. Several writers cast it as a condemnation of the oppression of women,<sup>41</sup> though most of the participants merely recall it as a piece about flight. Caroline Cohen, who walked across the planks trusting that Mumma would keep her from falling, recalls Mary Ashley joking that its theme was "men elevating women." At the same time, she worried about its implications. So did Manupelli. "I was disturbed and frightened by it," he says.

In April in Ann Arbor, Mumma and colleagues premiered *Horn*, in which three sound sources—French horn (Mumma) and two voices (Ashley and Cacioppo)—were subjected to what Mumma termed "cybersonic" procedures: The sounds each artist produced in performance actively modified those of the others. The result was a piece that sounded neither like a horn nor like voices, but rather like an electronic work with a texture so dense from the superimposition of short articulations that it developed "an abrasive, gritty character." Working the electronic equipment was engineer William Ribbens, who had collaborated with Mumma since the early 1960s on controlled distortion of natural sounds. The two men even set up a small company, Cybersonics.

### **The End of ONCE**

In Spring 1966 Tudor, Cage, and Cunningham invited Mumma to accompany them on a tour of Europe. They offered him a commission for a new piece (*Mesa*) and sought his expertise for their production of *Variations V*, a work in which the actions of Cunningham's dancers activated sound through an elaborate system of electronic sensors.<sup>42</sup> That summer Mumma left Ann Arbor to begin a collaboration with the Cunningham company that lasted eight years and led to numerous innovative works.

Thereafter Ashley kept ONCE alive, but on a vastly reduced scale. In March 1966 he organized the ONCE Recording Concerts, the first featuring David Tudor and Pauline Oliveros, the second presenting the ONCE ensemble and Tudor in works by Cacioppo, Mumma, Ashley, Crevoshay, and Behrman. Oliveros's **Applebox**

**Double**, performed on the first concert, is an extension of a solo work in which she tapped, struck, scraped, rubbed, banged, and bowed various objects attached to an amplified wooden box. Typical items included springs, metal tongues, “Halloween crickets,” and car curb scrapers. For the ONCE presentation Tudor prepared his own box, hence the name *Applebox Double*. There was no score; the players listened to one another and improvised.

On the second concert the ONCE ensemble presented Ashley’s **Quartet**, commissioned by Selmer as a beginner’s piece. The graphic score containing 64 events uses five symbols. Pitches are indeterminate, and all notes are to be played softly. A blackened circle indicates a short note, a hollow circle a long one in which the pitch bends up or down. A circle with three horizontal lines represents a long tone with slow, wide vibrato. “V” indicates a combination of voiced and instrumental sounds (singing and playing simultaneously), and “N” calls for a noise, neither instrumental nor vocal. A small dot indicates a rest.

There was no Festival in 1967. Mumma and Ashley had teamed up with Lucier and Behrman and were touring as the Sonic Arts Union. The theatrical ONCE Group toured as well, on occasion prompting unplanned (and sometimes undesirable) audience response. At a Brandeis University presentation of *Night Train* (January 7, 1967), for example, audience members were given onions to illustrate how an alien culture might “feel”; soon onions were sailing throughout the university’s new carpeted performance hall. Brandeis cancelled the Group’s scheduled residency.

A more disturbing reaction greeted the ONCE Group’s appearance at a dinner at the Washtenaw Country Club near Ann Arbor on March 29, 1968. Professor Marc Ross from the university’s physics department hired them for an educational-artistic presentation in conjunction with a conference of theoretical physicists. The Group developed a version of *Unmarked Interchange* in which events occurred out-of-phase. The delegates’ entertainment was a lecture by Stanford physicist Martin Perl; the Group’s (to follow his) was a film in which twenty-four hours of television programming was condensed to thirty minutes. But the film was never shown. The distraction of the ONCE members eating dinner during Perl’s lecture prompted threats and then physical attack. One delegate smashed a glass on Ashley’s head; another broke Manupelli’s glasses. The table holding projectors and food was overturned and the film unwound into the liquid.

The Group’s motivation was not to provoke controversy, however. “The idea,” says Borkin, “was to break down different ideas of performance.” Their multimedia works dealt primarily with male-female relationships, unlike most political theater of the time, which addressed problems in the public forum. According to program notes from 1968, the pieces were “collections of images, things we remember,” blurring “distinctions between public and private events.” Ashley “looked for poetry in the mundane,” says Wehrer.

The last ONCE Festival, supported by the Michigan State Council for the Arts, consisted of three performances on February 8–10, 1968, in the Michigan Union Ballroom. The Sonic Arts Union, dedicated to “producing a repertory of works based on electronic devices especially designed to be *performed* in concert situations,” presented works by Mumma, Cacioppo, Behrman, and Lucier. Two evenings were devoted to Ashley’s *That Morning Thing* “a theater piece for voices and lights” in which he grappled with the tragedy of three suicides by friends within the course of a few months. *That Morning Thing* was “a structural piece about the difference between extreme rationality and extreme irrationality, an alternation of two frames of mind—one discursive and rationalizing, the other non-verbal,” Ashley says.

The ONCE Group’s last work was *The Trial of Anne Opie Wehrer and Unknown Accomplices for Crimes Against Humanity* (1968). Wehrer sat with her back to the audience, souvenirs from her life on display, while two couples shot questions at her—as in a police interrogation. A year after its premiere, Ashley accepted a position on the faculty of Mills College in Oakland, California, and ONCE came to a quiet end.<sup>43</sup> Its resonance, however, continued to reverberate for the founders, the participants, the guest artists, and the new-music community. Out of a small coterie of local artists hungry for the opportunity to hear their music, the first Festival (which Ashley’s

son had quipped might only happen “once”) had blossomed into a vibrant international collaboration that generated new works and new alliances.

The primary aim of ONCE’s founders was to create a forum for the presentation of cutting-edge music. To this end they were phenomenally successful. Performers and composers— whether little-known or renowned— embraced the endeavor, demanding almost nothing in return. Perhaps most importantly, however, ONCE acted as a creative stimulus for its organizers. Scavarda describes the adventure as an explosion of pent-up energy: “Suddenly we could write anything we wanted and have it heard.” And they did. The ONCE composers—and many guest artists—wrote a host of new works, some experimental, others more traditional.

The most significant legacy of ONCE, of course, is this music, exemplified by the works on the present set of compact discs. These pieces are as diverse in style as they are compelling in expression. In ONCE’s early years, the diversity was stably balanced on three legs: compositions using traditional notation for familiar instruments (though often played in non-familiar ways); electronic music; and works veering toward the theatrical. As the years progressed and various composers left or came to Ann Arbor, the orientation shifted gradually, but decidedly, toward the theatrical. By the later Festivals, aural and visual elements were intricately interwoven. “There was a true reciprocity of music and action,” says Caroline Cohen. The work of individual participants evolved along similar lines. Scavarda, for example, turned increasingly toward film as an agent in the musical composition (*Landscape Journey*) and even as a guide to the aural content (*Filmscore*). Mumma’s electronic works, initially stimulated by dramatic productions and light shows, evolved into increasingly theatrical pieces such as *Megaton for William Burroughs* and *Hornpipe* (1967), in which the visual element was as integral to the performance as the aural. Ashley’s theater works built on his interest in music and text, which can be traced back to his work at the Speech Research Laboratory. Reynolds, too, created works with theatrical elements during the 1960s, including *The Emperor of Ice Cream* (1961–62; text by Wallace Stevens) for eight voices, vibraphone, percussion, and bass, and *Ping* (1968), which combines the text of a short story by Samuel Beckett shown on 160 slides with a film, electronic music, and live instrumental sounds. *The Emperor of Ice Cream* was written for ONCE, though never performed there.

The ONCE composers, like so many others, grappled with the appropriate balance between performance freedom and compositional control. In some works, such as Scavarda’s *Matrix*, sounds are precisely described through notation and/or verbal instructions, but their arrangement is left to the performer. Mumma’s *Meanwhile, A Twopiece* exemplifies the opposite approach: Pitches, durations, volume, and articulation are determined by the performer (in response to the tape and the sounds made by the second player), but the order of events is specified in the score. Similarly, Ashley’s *Quartet* allows pitch to be a performance variable, while tone quality, timbre, volume, and note lengths are predetermined. The unique notation Cacioppo used in *Cassiopeia* and other piano pieces permits extensive performance latitude while reflecting compositional determinacy. He established a framework (in the case of *Cassiopeia*, the actual pitches) and rules of interaction (the way to progress from note to note), which he arranged in a score whose visual aspect implies a non-metrical interpretation. The precise durations, as well as the intersection of the pitches, are left indeterminate.<sup>44</sup> Scavarda aimed for a similar balance between freedom and control in his *Filmscore*: He does not predetermine a mandatory relationship between the film and particular pitches, rhythms, or textures, allowing performers to interpret the visual images. Yet the work develops a stylistic consistency through the compositional act of creating a pattern of abstract moving circles that guide the aural output. “Why write a piece indeterminate in its performance?” Cacioppo was asked in 1977. He responded that it creates “a situation that is fresh and surprising every time it happens.”<sup>45</sup>

What united the ONCE composers was their exploration of sound, whether through the medium of extended techniques on traditional instruments, electronic (or electronically modified) timbres, or the intersection of musical sounds with those of the environment. This quest produced works that explored individual pitches or aggregates extended in time (Scavarda’s *Matrix* or *Sounds for Eleven*, for instance), those in which alternative performance techniques function to define closed musical forms (Reynolds’s *Mosaic*, Cacioppo’s

*Two Worlds*), those in which natural and electronic sounds interact (Mumma's *Sinfonia* and *Meanwhile, A Twopiece* or Reynolds's *A Portrait of Vanzetti*), and those in which the sounds of everyday life impact the musical world (Ashley's *The Fourth of July*).

Mumma characterizes the ONCE organizers as "renegades," and the Festivals as a controversial endeavor reflecting a tumultuous social and political climate:

Joseph McCarthy, the civil rights movement ... a wonderful crazy time. And annual military parades in the streets of Ann Arbor. I refused to play in military bands, even for money. Instead we'd set up loudspeakers in the windows of apartments along the parade route and try to drown them out. Their marching became a mess; they'd get lost. Talk about street theater!

Ashley disagrees. "ONCE was not controversial," he says. "It was new. It became famous overnight because there was nothing like it in the whole country. It was like inventing penicillin, or the hula hoop." In some sense, however, opposition is inevitable with any newness. The solution, wrote Reynolds in 1961, is participation: "The acceptance of any new approach to or in art eventually becomes a public concern. The basic problem is unfamiliarity and the best solution is personal involvement."<sup>46</sup>

Increasingly during its nine-year history, ONCE explored new approaches to personal involvement, including creative interactions with its audience—whether through programmed participation, invited response, or direct control of the sound. As early as 1962 Ashley, Borkin, and Wehrer had proposed the establishment of a Performance Arts Research Laboratory, a space they could reconfigure to alter performer-audience relationships. An advisory board of fourteen artists from around the country (among them Peter Yates) convened in Ann Arbor for an initial meeting, but the project died from inadequate funding.

Above all, the ONCE phenomenon testifies to the productive and energizing power of community—the interactions and cross-influences of the artists who created it, and the reactions of the patrons who attended its productions. The most direct descendants of ONCE continued to draw on this communal nourishment. The Sonic Arts Union is the most obvious example: four composers actively collaborating and touring. Karen and Roger Reynolds's work in Japan is another. Several years after their Parisian concerts, they mounted "Cross Talk" in Tokyo. Six performances in 1967–69 brought together American and Japanese composers in productions that, in the 1969 Intermedia series, attracted 3,000 people per concert to Kenzo Tange's Olympic gymnasium. Included was music by Reynolds, Mumma, Cacioppo, and Ashley (including *That Morning Thing* in Japanese).

ONCE's self-defined purpose was not in itself radical. "ONCE is an informal organization of young composers and performers concerned with recent and innovative music and with encouraging those professional performers whose involvement makes this music possible," the organizers stated in 1963.

In spite of the acknowledged growth of interest in contemporary artforms in the United States, there is still a serious lack of opportunity either for the younger composer to have his work performed with distinction, or for the performing musician to find a sympathetic and discriminating audience for a contemporary repertoire.<sup>47</sup>

As with any successful endeavor, ONCE evolved, its character shaped both by outside forces and by its changing mix of personalities. But the organizers never lost sight of their original focus: to provide a forum for the latest trends in contemporary music. The artists enriched their community and, in turn, were stimulated by its response—whether supportive or critical. "It is a rare creative artist who survives, or even attempts to work, in isolation from the world," wrote Mumma in 1967. "The greatest nourishment for the artist comes from the cultural community in which he lives, not only because that community . . . is the consumer of his art, but because it reflects back to him . . . the basis for his own artistic insights."<sup>48</sup>

Leta Miller, a professor of music at the University of California, Santa Cruz, is co-author (with Fredric Lieberman) of *Lou Harrison: Composing a World* (Oxford University Press, 1998). Her recent articles on Harrison, John Cage, and Henry Cowell have been published in *Perspectives on American Music, 1900–1950* (Garland, 2000), *John Cage: Music, Philosophy, and Intention, 1933–50* (Garland, 2002), and the journals *American Music*, *Journal of Musicology*, and *Musical Quarterly*. Miller is also an active flutist who has been featured on more than fifteen compact disc recordings on modern and baroque flute.

## **Table 1**

### **The ONCE Festivals**

**1961: Festival 1: Four concerts (February 24–25, March 3–4)**

1. **Domaine Musical Ensemble of Paris (Luciano Berio, Cathy Berberian, et al.)**  
Works by Paolo Castaldi, Roman Haubenstock-Ramati, Sylvano Bussotti, André Boucourechliev, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Berio, Claude Debussy, Edgard Varèse
- 2: **Instrumental and Electronic Music**  
Works by Gordon Mumma, Robert Ashley, Donald Scavarda, Roger Reynolds; film by George Manupelli (with music by Ashley)
- 3: **Paul Jacobs, piano**  
Works by Arnold Schoenberg, Ernst Klenck, Pierre Boulez, Stockhausen, Anton Webern, Olivier Messiaen
- 4: **ONCE Composers (chamber and orchestral works)**  
Works by Reynolds, George Cacioppo, Sherman Van Solkema, Bruce Wise, Scavarda, Mumma

**1962: Festival 2: Six concerts (February 9–11, 16–18)**

1. **The New York Avant-Garde (La Monte Young and Terry Jennings)**  
Works by Richard Maxfield, Toshi Ichianagi, Jennings, Robert Morris, Henry Flynt, Terry Riley, Walter DeMaria, La Monte Young
- 2: **Once Chamber Ensembles**  
Works by Reynolds, Gregory Kostek, Boulez, Mumma, Carl Ruggles; film by Manupelli (with music by Ashley)
- 3: **Paul Jacobs, piano**  
Works by Schoenberg, Stockhausen, Richard Rodney Bennett, Gordon Gidley, Reynolds, Aaron Copland, Igor Stravinsky
- 4: **Chamber Orchestra and Ensembles**  
Works by Scavarda, Ashley, Reynolds, Mumma, Morton Feldman, Cacioppo, Wise
- 5: **Dorian Woodwind Quintet**  
Works by Wolfgang Fortner, Gunther Schuller, Elliott Carter, Roberto Gerhard, Berio, John Cage, Bo Nilsson, Ralph Shapey
- 6: **Electronic music**  
Works by Bruno Maderna, Gerhard, Gottfried Michael Koenig, Milton Babbitt, Mumma, Conlon Nancarrow, Boucourechliev, Ashley

**1963: Festival 3: Four concerts (February 9–10, 16–17)**

**Guest Ensembles: Hartt Chamber Players (Hartford, Connecticut), Camerata Quartet (New York)**

1. **Works by Alban Berg, Mumma, Christian Wolff, Philip Krumm, Ashley, Scavarda**
2. **Works by Ramon Sender, Reynolds, Michael Von Biel, Morton Feldman, Earle Brown, Cacioppo**
3. **Works by Berio, Scavarda, Mumma, Von Biel, Webern, Cacioppo, Reynolds**
- 4: **John Cage and David Tudor (with ONCE personnel)**  
Works by Ashley, Robert Sheff, Krumm, Cage, Ichianagi

1964: Festival 4: Seven concerts (February 25–29, March 1 [afternoon and evening])

1. Three World Premieres

Works by Scavarda, Cacioppo, Ashley

2: New Music for Pianos (Ashley and Mumma)

Works by George Brecht, Jennings, Wise, Udo Kasemets, Mary Tsaltas, Barney Childs

3: Judson Dance Theater (two performances)

4: Brandeis University Chamber Chorus; ONCE chamber ensemble (Alvin Lucier, cond.)

Works by Kazuo Fukushima, Haubenstock-Ramati, Michael Adamis, Henri Pousseur, Cage, Sheff, Mumma

5: Brandeis University Chamber Chorus; ONCE chamber ensemble

Works by Feldman, Webern, Joseph Byrd, George Crevoshay, Ashley

6: University of Illinois Contemporary Chamber Players (Jack McKenzie, cond.)

Works by Lejaren Hiller, Pauline Oliveros, Herbert Brun, Ben Johnston, Charles Hamm, Salvatore Martirano

7: Bob James Trio with Eric Dolphy; ONCE chamber ensemble

Works by Wolff, Krumm, Bob James, Robert Pozar, Eric Dolphy

1965 (1): Festival 5: Four concerts (February 11–14)

1. Music and theater pieces by Robert Falck, Richard Waters, George Wilson, Harley Gabor, Feldman, Philip Corner, Jackie Mumma, Mary Ashley

2. Works by Aurelio de la Vega, Kasemets, Russell Peck, Ashley, Crevoshay, Edward Zaida, Cacioppo, Malcolm Goldstein, Sheff

3. Works by Luigi Nono, Sheff, Scavarda, David Behrman, James Tenney, Gerald Strang, Mumma, Cage, Nam June Paik

4. An Evening of New Music under the Guidance of Lukas Foss in Conjunction with the Center of the Creative and Performing Arts in the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Works by Morton Subotnick, Haubenstock-Ramati, Mauricio Kagel, Richard Dufallo, Foss  
Ancillary event: Peter Yates, "A Composite Lecture," co-sponsored by the UM School of Music and the Dramatic Arts Center

1965 (2): ONCE AGAIN Festival (September 17–19)

Three performances on the rooftop of the Maynard St. parking structure

1. The ONCE Group: *Unmarked Interchange*

2. Judson Dance Group: *A Concert for Ann Arbor*

3. John Cage and David Tudor (Cage: *Talk 1*)

(Performers: Ashley, Cage, Mumma, Robert Rauschenberg, Tudor)

1966: ONCE Recording Concerts

Mar. 28: Pauline Oliveros and David Tudor, guest artists (works by Oliveros)

Mar. 29: ONCE ensemble with David Tudor (works by David Andrew, Cacioppo, Mumma, Ashley, Crevoshay, Behrman)

1968: Three concerts (February 8–10)

1. ONCE Group: Ashley et al., *That Morning Thing*

2. Repeat performance of *That Morning Thing*

3. Sonic Arts Group

Works by Mumma, Cacioppo, Behrman, Lucier

1969: January 31–February 1: The ONCE Group presented *The Trial of Anne Opie Wehrer and Unnamed Accomplices for Crimes Against Humanity*.



**Table 2**  
**Selected ancillary performances associated with ONCE or its principals, 1961–1969**

**1961**

- Jan. 11–Feb. 8. Manifestations: Light and Sound (Milton Cohen's Space Theatre; music by Ashley and Mumma)
- March 22. Central Michigan University (Ashley and Cohen: light projection and electronic music)
- November. Wayne State University

**1962**

- March. Wayne State University
- April. Detroit Institute of Arts
- May 1–29. Manifestations: Light and Sound (see above)
- May 25. Michigan State University (works by Ashley, Cacioppo, Mumma, Reynolds, Scavarda, et al.)
- May 26. ONCE Friends: Two Concerts of New Music (Ann Arbor Public Library)
- Aug. 18. ONCE Friends presents ONCE in the SUN (Provincetown, Cape Cod)
- Dec. 16. ONCE Friends: A Concert of Real Music (Ann Arbor Community Center)
- Winter 1962–Spring 1963. Manifestations: Light and Sound (see above)

**1963**

- Mar. 1. A Free Concert of Music by ONCE Friends (Ann Arbor Public Library)
- Mar. 17. Brodie School of Music, Toronto: Men, Minds and Music (Mumma, Ashley, Manupelli)
- May. *Truck* (ONCE group: multi-media street event devised by Mary Ashley)
- July 21. *Truck at the Beach*
- Oct. 27. Once a Month with ONCE Friends (First Unitarian Church, Ann Arbor)
- Nov. 24. Once a Month with ONCE Friends (First Unitarian Church, Ann Arbor)
- Dec. 3. Once a Month with ONCE Friends (First Unitarian Church, Ann Arbor)

**1964**

- Jan. 13. Detroit: Hylozoist Arts Festival (ONCE Festival Chamber Ensemble)
- Jan. 21. Detroit: Hylozoist Arts Festival (Cohen's Space Theatre with electronic music)
- March. Detroit: Red Door Gallery (ONCE group)
- Apr. 9. RPI, Richmond: Bang Bang Festival (ONCE group; electronic music concert)
- Apr. 14. Harvard: New Music from the ONCE Festival (presented by the Adams House Music Society) (Ashley, Mumma, ONCE Chamber Ensemble)
- Apr. 26. University of Missouri: Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia presents ONCE Removed (Ashley, Mumma, Manupelli, Cacioppo)
- May 5 et al. Paris: Centre de Musique of the American Students' and Artists' Center (concert series arranged by Karen and Roger Reynolds, including ONCE composers and works)
- Sept. 1. New York: 2nd Annual New York Avant-Garde Festival (Ashley, Mumma, Cacioppo)
- Sept. 11–13. Venice: Biennale di Venezia (Space Theatre: Cohen, Borkin, Wehrer, Mumma, Ashley, et al.)
- Dec. 11, 12. Dramatic Arts Center Membership Program (Ann Arbor Library; Ashley, Mumma, Manupelli)

**1965**

- Jan. 21–22. Detroit: Second Hylozoist Arts Festival (ONCE group; electronic music)
- Feb. 7. Detroit: Artists' Workshop (ONCE Festival preview)
- Mar. 21. St. Louis: ONCE Group, presented by New Music Circle
- April 10. Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio (ONCE Group)
- May 4. Case Institute of Technology, Cleveland (Ashley, Mumma, Manupelli)
- May 8–10. New York: First New York Theatre Rally (ONCE group)
- June 16. Walker Art Center, Minneapolis: Here 2 Festival (ONCE group)
- Spring. *All-Star Truck*

**1966**

- Apr. 9. ONCE-Off: Ann Arbor High School (ONCE group)
- Apr. 22. Rose Art Museum, Brandeis: Electronic Theatre Music

**1967**

- Jan. Fine Arts Foundation, Hartford, CT (ONCE group)
- Jan. 7. Spingold Theater, Brandeis (ONCE group)
- Nov. 13. Cross Talk, Tokyo (Karen and Roger Reynolds)

**1968**

- Jan. 22 and Mar. 16. Cross Talk, Tokyo (Karen and Roger Reynolds)
- Mar. 29. Midwestern Conference of Theoretical Physicists (Ann Arbor; ONCE group)
- April. University of Wisconsin, Sheboygan (ONCE group)
- May 10. Grand Valley State College, Michigan (ONCE group)

**1969**

- Performances of the ONCE group at University of California, San Diego; Newport Harbor Art Museum, Los Angeles; Electric Circus, New York; Colorado College, Colorado Springs; Bay de Noc Community College, Michigan; Cranbrook Institute, Michigan; Indiana State University, Terra Haute; Festival of the Arts, UC Davis; Muskegon Community College, Michigan; Student Art Festival, UC Santa Barbara.
- Feb. 5–7. Cross Talk Intermedia, Tokyo (Karen and Roger Reynolds)

Mumma and Ashley also formed a duo that toured and performed on the 1964 festival.

1962. March. Oberlin College

1963

January. Smith College

January. WUOM-TV, Ann Arbor

Feb. 7?. WXYZ-TV Detroit

Feb. 27. Wayne State University: A Concert of Real Music from the series "New Music for Pianos"

Nov. 13. Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University (two different programs on the same day)

1964

Apr. 12. YM-YWHA, NY: Music in Our Time

Apr. 27. Central Missouri State College: Program of Contemporary Music

1965

Mar. 9. Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University

1966

**Feb. Wesleyan University**  
**Feb. Brandeis University**  
**Feb. 23. YM-YWHA, NY: Music in Our Time**  
**Mar. 5. Harvard University**  
**Nov. 26. Saville Theatre, London**  
**Dec. Marietta College**  
**Dec. 18. SUNY Buffalo**

1967. (Some of these as part of the Sonic Arts Group: Mumma, Ashley, David Behrman, Alvin Lucier)

Feb. 9. Tulane University

Feb. 21. Boston Winterfest

Feb. 25–26. Isaacs Gallery, Toronto

March 2. Massachusetts Institute of Technology

April 4–13. Athens, Rome, Brussels

April 29. Richmond: Bang Bang Festival

May 19. Antioch College

Dec. 5. Los Angeles: Pomona College

Dec. 11. Los Angeles: Monday Evening Concerts

## COMPOSERS' NOTES

### Robert Ashley

*The Fourth of July* was finished in 1960. I had built a studio at home with three tape transports, head assemblies that I could interchange, a separate tape recording amplifier with all of the characteristics (bias frequency, etc.) available to change, an oscillator, a five-channel mixer that I had adapted from a consumer preamp, and a monophonic sound system. The plan of the piece was to make a large number of tape loops mixing five sine-waves at different proportional frequencies (mathematically determined, but not in any of the conventional tuning systems). Then there was a grand plan to layer these loops in a hierarchy of different speeds, durations, repetitions, and sectional groupings. The plan was much too ambitious for the technology. The tape noise buildup and the sheer audacity of the number of stops and starts, fades, and other ingredients in the plan made it clear to me—after I had built the tape loops—that I couldn't do the piece. But I had the loops. So, I just started playing around with them on the three machines—a few weeks of “free improvisation”—until I had something that I almost liked, but that definitely needed something to give the piece some kind of drama.

Meanwhile, I was experimenting with a parabolic microphone (which trades the distance the microphone can “hear” against the microphone's frequency response). On the afternoon of the national holiday I heard a party starting in our neighbors' backyard (which was about 50 feet away). So I pointed the microphone toward the party to hear it on my own system. I recorded about an hour (so that I could listen again later). I didn't feel in any way that I was eavesdropping, because these were my close friends. In fact, I might have been at the party, if I had gone to the back fence and said hello. I was simply testing the microphone.

Listening to the party tape later (many times) I realized that the frequencies of the microphone were amazingly like the sounds I had on my “free improvisation” tape, so I simply mixed the two together, beginning with the party and very gradually cross-fading to the tape loop composition. Both tapes are present most of the time through the middle six minutes or so, until I took away the party sounds entirely. I wish I could have played the finished tape composition for the people at the party, but then it was months later and I never got around to it. I hope they would have liked it.

The first movement of the *Sonata* (finished some twelve years later and titled “Christopher Columbus Crosses to the New World in the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria Using Only Dead Reckoning and a Crude Astrolabe”) uses a 36-note row made up of four nine-note rows with transpositions for each of the nine-note units. The characteristic of the row in all four versions is a combination of half-steps and whole steps, making a very dissonant harmony for any combination of pitches. The row also had a schedule for the point of occurrence assigned to each pitch, so I started working freely on octave and loudness distribution of the pitches with the idea that phrases would be determined by how long a note could be held in the hands or with the pedal—and what the combination of pitches (the “chord”) sounded like. This took about a year. The goal was

to make a kind of “kaleidoscope” of very rapidly changing “harmonies,” depending on how loudly a note was played, how long it was sustained, and how many notes sounded with it.

A curious fact, maybe of some interest to composers, is that even after a year of hard practice on the piece I could never make it come out to the six-minute duration specified by the tempo indications. And I was a relatively good pianist. It never came out to less than seven minutes, even when I thought I was playing it to a metronome. This has been a total mystery to me for years. The only explanation I can come up with is that there are *unrecognized*, very small “dead times” that happen between physically difficult phrases (probably in all music) that simply accumulate over the course of the performance. The solution to the total duration problem would seem to be—practice at a faster tempo. But then the piece would be going at a faster tempo and not do justice to the “accumulated” harmonies. I have since made the piece in MIDI on the computer at exactly the right tempo. It comes out to six minutes but sounds “duller,” because the MIDI sequencer cannot do the selective release of dampers that is possible on the piano and which is, in fact, the whole point of the composition.

***Details (2b)*** is a composition for two pianists, one at the keyboard and one playing on the strings. It is “derived” from the composition “Fives” in a way that I hope will be clear from the explanation of “Fives.”

***Fives*** is, in its original form, a huge compilation of number tables of every combination and order of the proportions of the numbers one through five that I could imagine. I thought of it as a kind of encyclopedia of proportions and combinations that I could make available to anybody (if I could find a publisher) who might want to use it—or any part of it—to make a performance piece, giving the person a nice set of possibilities without the person having to do the calculations. When I looked at the tables and the instructions on how to use them, I realized that no one would touch it. So I scored it (for two pianos, two percussion batteries, and string quintet) knowing that the score would be impossible to play—unless we took it at a hopelessly slow tempo and made it last a long, long time. But I was right that seeing it as a score of rather conventional musical symbols made it more likely to be used. (I wouldn’t touch the tables myself today.) It has never been published, so it exists only in the form of the score I made, and only I have used it three or four times to make other pieces. (*Details (2b)* above is one.)

For the ONCE Festival performance I could tell the players only to “play what you can play, when it occurs in the tempo,” and the result will be a version of one realization of the piece as though heard through a very coarse on-off filter.

It is interesting to me that the “impossible” score can be done now on the computer. One of these days. . . .

***in memoriam . . . Crazy Horse (symphony)*** is one of a group of four pieces (a quartet, a trio concerto, a symphony, and an opera) that I hoped were pure and accurate *abstractions* of those musical forms as I understood them from the European tradition. (Each of these forms was given the name of a “New World” hero from different times in our history, because it seemed from my reading of European musical history and American social history that there was a remarkably curious coincidence between the emergence of a musical form in Europe with the emergence of a very “similar” social idea represented by the American hero. It was as if the same “idea” happened on both continents at the same time, but had to be represented differently in the two places, because the form of the idea had to come from what was available to be changed: in Europe, in music; in America, in social organization.)

At the time (1962) many composers were working with “graphic notation” as a way of guiding performers to see music in a different way. When I started working with graphic notation, I learned a simple but important (at least to me) fact: One kind of music could be notated only in a circular graph; another (the other) kind of music could be notated only in a linear graph of synchronous events (like an orchestra score.) *in memoriam . . . Crazy Horse (symphony)* is of the circular kind, with 64 points on the circle, each point with a notation indicating how to

play (“relate”) as a member of a four-piece ensemble (of which there can be any number over five) and where to go (to what point on the circle) next. The circle is divided, in agreement among the four members of the ensemble, into two equal parts. If your assignment takes you to a point on one part of the circle, your job as a member of the ensemble is—starting to play without knowing what any other member is going to play—to distinguish yourself as completely as possible from the other four. If your assignment takes you to the other half of the circle, your job—again, starting without knowing—is to make yourself as *indistinguishable* as possible from the other members of the ensemble. In short, one job for the ensemble is to develop four different characters, the other job is to develop some sort of unison characteristic.

So, each point on the circle is only the beginning of a “process” among the four members of the ensemble. (All of this irrespective of what any other ensemble in the orchestra is doing.) As you can imagine, this requires continuous listening and adjustment (and may be practically impossible, except over a long period of time).

The conductor is simply beating the tempo of the progress around the 64 points of the circle. If the tempo is fast, the difference between one kind of “process” goal and the other is probably impossible to recognize. On the other hand, the tempo can be very slow—or the conductor can simply stop the tempo for any length of time—to allow the process goals to “mature” and become recognizably distinct.

There are 32 different performance parts for four-piece ensembles. Thus, a minimum full orchestra of 128 players is in a constant “process” of adjustment toward an idealized goal. This is not aleatoric music in any way that was understood then—as I have tried to explain to many interviewers. It is *purposefulness* to an almost impossible level of achievement. (It might not be impossible if one had, say, a hundred hours of rehearsal with an orchestra of dedicated players. It might be fun.)

A peculiarity of the score, much too difficult to explain, but coming from the fact of the circle having 64 points, is that within less than eight “moves”—changes of assignment to different points on the circle—every ensemble gets into a *repetition* of moves—that is, to a repetition of moving from one point on the circle to another. In short, repeating what one has been doing for, say, the first five moves. At this point the piece becomes a set of giant “wheels” (ensembles) all turning in synchronization. This is the point at which I think the fun might begin.

***Quartet (for any number of wind or string instruments)*** was commissioned by the Selmer Musical Instrument Company for their magazine that went to young instrumentalists. All players play from copies of the same part, but there is no synchronization among the parts. The players are independent in their performance (for any number of times) of a series of 64 sound events. The events (including one event of silence) mainly have a duration of one full breath or one full bow (although there is one short event) and are joined in sequence by instructions about “spacing”—“the time interval between the note indicated and the note that follows it.” The choice of pitches is free, with the instruction that “all sounds are to be played very softly.” The idea of the piece was to encourage the young players to make unusual kinds of sounds (slow vibrato, slow glissando, addition of the voice to the instrumental sound, a noise sound) and to listen to what other players were doing (“Once during the performance a player may interrupt his own program of actions to imitate as closely as possible the actions and sounds of any player on an instrument different from his own”—I should have said “his or her.”). There are also instructions to “think through” a series of events without making sounds. And, to encourage the players to think of the performance of music as a dramatic event, there are the instructions: (1) “During the instrumental performance a chorus may read aloud from any variety of texts—as quietly as possible” and (2) “If actors or dancers are used, they should be seated among the players, as though asleep.” A few years after the commission I changed the title to “Waiting Room.”

---

Because I was one of the organizers of the ONCE Festival from beginning to end, because I was a musician in Milton Cohen’s Space Theatre throughout its life (1956 to 1964), because I devoted all of my creative energies

to the ONCE Group from its first concert in 1964 to its last concert in 1972, and because I lived in Ann Arbor from 1956 to 1969, I would like to say a few words about the “social” context of the Festival itself and about the many people, other than the composers represented here, who made Ann Arbor a sort of center of what was going on in music and the other performance arts during that time.

When representatives of New World Records came to me a few years ago to discuss the possibility of a collection of recordings from the ONCE Festival, I said first off that to represent the Festival only in pieces which could have been recorded as sound compositions—as beautiful and as historically valuable as they might be—seriously would misrepresent the nature of the Festival, the reason it became famous almost overnight, the extent to which the Festival related to and was influenced by other wonderful artistic activities in that small college town, and, most important, would leave out the importance of the couple of dozen people who actually made the Festival possible—who did most of the *work*: finding the performance places, designing the mailers and programs, renting the equipment, setting up the chairs, cleaning up after the performances, finding places for visiting artists to sleep, be fed and driven to rehearsals and performances, dealing with the antagonisms of the local university music department, etcetera, and giving the parties. Giving the parties!

For some reason, for about twelve years that small town was the site of a more or less on-going party, of which the Festival was certainly one of the highlights, but not the only one. Many of the same people made the Ann Arbor Film Festival (under the titular direction of George Manupelli), which happened every year a month after the ONCE Festival and is still going strong forty years later. Many of the same people participated in (and made possible) Mary Ashley’s *Truck* events, which were wonderful art and invariably large-scale social disturbances. The same people made possible single performances and concerts throughout the year (ONCE a Month): a visiting artist comes to town—find a space, put up the money, set up the equipment, go to the performance, and then go to the party. A few of the same people performed in Milton Cohen’s “Space Theatre,” which was an important precedent for the possibility of an annual festival of music and performance. (The composer Roberto Gerhard, who is mentioned by every ONCE Festival composer as a great influence and inspiration, told me shortly before he left to return to England that while he was in Ann Arbor he had never missed a single “Space Theatre” performance, which took place twice a week.) And, finally, the ONCE Group, a core bunch of eight to twelve people (who were the ones mentioned above who did most of the work), which took its name from its performances at the Festival and went on to make quite a reputation of its own.

In other words, the ONCE Festival was not just a few days of underfunded Darmstadt. (Rumor had it that Darmstadt had the CIA behind it. A lot of the ONCE activities had the local police and the FBI behind it.) Audiences grew because of the new music, but also because of pieces like Mary Ashley’s *Jello Man*, Jackie Mumma’s *I Spent the Whole Day Shopping*, George Brecht’s *To Piano Event*, the ONCE Group performance of John Cage’s *Variations IV*, the ONCE Group’s performances of *Kittyhawk (An Antigravity Piece)* and *Unmarked Interchange, The Wolfman* (my picture is included in this package, but in the meantime I gave the music to another record company), the almost yearly presence of John Cage and/or David Tudor, Morton Feldman, various visiting European and American composers, ensembles from various universities (who paid their own expenses to be part of the Festival) and, of course, the great Judson Dance Theater performances. And these are just a few of the wonderful moments that don’t go on a compact disc.

I would like to dedicate my work in these recordings to those people (or the memory of those people) who were artists but not composers and who worked continuously for the Festival and everything it came to represent: Mary Ashley, Anne Opie Wehrer, Jackie Leuzinger, Cynthia Liddell, Caroline Blunt, Betty Johnson, Ann Borkin, Annette Tsao (girls first), and Harold Borkin, Joseph Wehrer, George Manupelli, Nick Bertoni, and Makepeace Tsao. Thank you.

—Robert Ashley, 2003

## **Gordon Mumma**

### ***Sinfonia for 12 Instruments & Magnetic Tape* (1958–60)**

Following the classic four-movement template, *Sinfonia's* title indicates its structure and brevity, and echoes my classical origins. The chamber ensemble of only twelve instruments is joined by an electronic music sequence in the last part of the third movement.

Each of the four movements is of substantially different character. The first movement squeezes the busy instruments into a two-octave range. The pointillist second movement spreads over five octaves. The complex thematic counterpoint of the third movement evolves into a sound-specified quasi-improvisation that absorbs into electronic music. The fourth movement overlaps the third as a dramatic scene change—a quietly sustained instrumental soundscape with occasional isolated motifs. Although the *Sinfonia* has had subsequent performances, I think none has matched the careful preparation and enthusiastic energy of the ONCE Festival premiere.

### ***Meanwhile, A Twopiece* (1961)**

Sometimes I compose music to which I later invent a title. With *Meanwhile*, the title was invented first. The impetus for the composition came from Robert Ashley, who said the title was too good not to put on a program. Having to put up or shut up, I composed the piece for both Ashley and me to perform. It employs a collection of instruments—topless piano, percussion sets, an unspecified instrument (I played horn), and a recorded accompaniment to thicken the plot. The individual scores from which we performed included both musical and choreographic specifications, such that we took care not to bump into each other as we ran about changing instruments. In this ONCE Festival premiere, the laughter and related sounds are entirely the activity of the responsive audience.

### **From *Gestures II* (1958–60)**

Composition of *Gestures II* began in the late 1950s as a grand concept for the diverse virtuosity of two pianists. The sections are structurally independent: The pianists decide on the performing order.

Each section has dramatically different characteristics, variously performed: on the keyboard, directly on the strings, and on the resonating metal and wooden structures inside the piano. Some sections have very rapid articulation, others are sparsely distributed over time. In the section titled “Onslaught,” the pianists perform mostly inside the instruments, with percussion apparatus, accompanied by a de-synchronized recording of the same percussion-piano sounds.

The special “section X,” on a single page, encodes coordinated activities in a condensation of hundreds of possible combinations, none of which is to be repeated. The pianists choose how far to take this “game.” In performing only a few combinations “section X” could last only a few seconds; and with many combinations it could last an hour (depending on the speed of the pianists). This ONCE Festival performance lasts about 10 seconds. Some years later David Tudor performed it with me; several minutes into the “section X” game I got lost and we gave up.

### ***Large Size Mograph 1962***

This solo piano work is from a series of different-sized pieces for various combinations of pianos titled *Mographs*. The activities of each *Mograph* were derived from seismograph-recorded P-wave and S-wave patterns of earthquakes and underground nuclear explosions. I was intrigued with the relationship similarities between the time-travel patterns of P and S waves and the sound-reflection characteristics of musical performance-spaces. The title-pun should be accessible.

### ***A Quarter of Fourpiece* (1962)**

The extraordinary contrabass virtuoso Bertram Turetzky asked me for a chamber-ensemble work for his Hartt Chamber Players. Knowing they were such skilled and imaginative musicians, I combined in this piece both specific notated elements and fields for choices by the performers. The entire work was to have been in four sections, for four performers, and was conceived as one of a group of four related compositions to be titled *Fourpiece*. Each section would be *A Quarter of Fourpiece*, but the other three were never finished.

### ***Greys* (1963)**

The composer and visual artist Donald Scavarda invited me to compose a soundtrack for his short film titled *Greys*. Admiring his compositions, I followed a characteristic of his work: limiting my sound materials and developing them with restricted but complex procedures. Thus, my electronic music for *Greys* employs very few sound sources but develops with an overlapping process from an unusual tape-recording technique. I disconnected the tape-recorder “erase-head” function, combining the sound sources with magnetic-overlapping rather than the standard “mixing.” Donald and I had not discussed our individual creative procedures for *Greys*, and knew nothing of what each of us was doing, except for an agreement on the duration of the piece. It wasn’t until after the premiere, when I asked him how he had made his mysteriously hypnotic light-images, that our unknown parallel thinking was revealed.

-----

That mysterious wind-in-the-sky, parallel or nearby flowering of artistic ideas, occurred often during the ONCE Festival era, and its related ONCE group activities. We were usually so busy with the creative work that I didn’t often recognize what was happening. This was the first such long-term energetically shared multi-cultural experience of my creative life. It sometimes happened later in my work with others, notably with the choreographer/dancer Merce Cunningham, and composers such as Ashley, David Behrman, John Cage, Alvin Lucier, Pauline Oliveros, David Tudor, and Christian Wolff.

There were other important aspects of this extraordinary cultural interaction and nourishment. Along with the momentum of social change in the 1960s, we freely celebrated and supported our creative and cultural differences. We were in a climate with others similarly enthusiastic and broadly supportive, in particular three Ann Arbor families: the Kaplans, the Wehrers, and the family of Makepeace Uho Tsao. My gratitude to them is reflected in specific dedications of some of my compositions. George Cacioppo has my special gratitude for recording the ONCE concerts and for saving those recordings from destruction.

By healthy instinct, perhaps more than “rebellion,” we climbed over the restrictive institutional and cultural fences and developed supportive communities of shared differences and activities. We took primary responsibility for the development and production of our work, and ONCE was the takeoff into the windy sky.

## **Roger Reynolds**

### ***ONCE then ... what was needed***

I entered the musical world at the relatively advanced age of fourteen, when an encounter with the flamboyant mastery of Vladimir Horowitz captivated me, mind and emotions. But, although I then began to study piano seriously, it was not until an unsatisfying episode as a systems development engineer in California that I determined to devote myself exclusively to the study of music. Composition itself began almost by accident, as a result of enrolling out of curiosity in what proved to be the mesmerizing seduction that Ross Lee Finney practiced in his University of Michigan course, “Composition for Non-Composers.”<sup>1</sup> Although the School of Music was, then, decidedly vibrant, opportunities to discuss and sample the more adventuresome new art were often to be found at the outskirts of the University, primarily through interactions with the cadre of former students who found its resources essential though they were without formal ties to it.

I don’t remember exactly how I came into contact with Bob Ashley and Gordon Mumma, but I do know that I was struck by their inventiveness, particularly in regard to technology. We began to interact, shared experiences, and eventually set out, with Donald Scavarda and also George Cacioppo, to organize a music festival. ONCE did not begin as a long-term project, but as an immediate response to the interwoven sense we all shared: of opportunity *and* frustration. I don’t think that any of us expected it to continue—hence the name—and, indeed, there was a certain perplexity when the success of the first set of concerts propelled us into consideration of further activities.

I remember many long sessions at the Ashleys when Bob and I discussed not only what should be done, but, perhaps more urgently, how to make it happen. The main goal—behind the platform that ONCE was to become—was simply to present publicly the music that we believed to be deserving. I knew some of the more adventuresome performers at the University, and, as a result of a scholarship to Tanglewood, had come into contact with the Fromm Fellows there. (They were performing new music with astonishing passion and skill.) Thus, nurturing a performing resource became part of my role in ONCE. But it was *music* itself that was what was driving me then, the emotion that sound could arouse. Though engineering studies had engendered in me a respect for orderly procedures, the value of planning, the intellectual dimension of things was always less significant for me than the totality of musical experience itself.

As a result of my foreshortened musical background, I found it natural to negotiate directly with sounds as themselves, and not as components of a well-defined tradition. This provided a convenient bridge to the views of Cage, with whom I soon became familiar. And I accepted serialism immediately, as a seemingly natural means to provoke one’s aesthetic sensibility. ***Epigram and Evolution*** (for piano) was, I think, the second piece I composed, and I can see from the sketches—rife with revision—that, although a belief in what I would now term *principled procedures* was there from the outset, so was a willingness to alter details in the interest of a more satisfying result. Not rigor, but impact, was primary.

The three-measure *epigram* was a source in a variety of explicit ways. It laid out the basic row and parsed the twelve chromatic tones into four gestures: an upward flourish, a downward slur, an explosive low-register *sf* and a pair of almost simultaneous dyads. The temporal structure of the following *evolution* was realized as a proportional expansion of the *epigram*, wherein each thirty-second-note value became 8 beats at MM 60. Each of

---

<sup>1</sup> His performances in this class paralleled uncannily those that Thomas Mann attributes to the inspirational Kretchmar in *Doctor Faustus*.

twelve “sonic circumstances” in the *epigram* became the seed of a section of the *evolution* (A–L), with a designated character (“Strict,” “Playful,” “Inert,” ... “Repose”).

As I listen now to Ashley’s driven rendering, I am surprised that the music sounds so familiar. Not in the sense that I know its specifics well, but rather that I recognize my sensibility. One imagines that one is continuously evolving, but it turns out that the signature features are *there* already at the outset.

The notes which accompany the sketches for *Wedge* (for ten instruments) specify two overlapping musical layers, one a “serene and proportioned” structure, the other consisting of “dynamic and varied blocks of sound material.” The task of the piece is characterized there as requiring “the large phrase structure to somehow impose itself on the vigorous succession of local events.” Each of the layers was planned as a wedge-shaped entity in a field which had pitch as its vertical axis and time as its horizontal one. A center of gravity of B<sup>b</sup> above middle C is shared by both. Although the treatment of pitch is managed by tetrachordal aggregates in this work, the series (F, F<sup>#</sup>, G, B, C, C<sup>#</sup>, G<sup>#</sup>, A, B<sup>b</sup>, D, E<sup>b</sup>, E) still shapes proportion by means of a strategy which Roberto Gerhard (during the intense and decisive interactions we had with his teaching) termed “horizon-tone” numbering.<sup>2</sup> Numerical ratios are used to define the substructure of the two layers<sup>3</sup> so that there is a formal mirroring—though not a precise symmetry.

The intent of this music is to create a situation in which time moves at different rates and with different sorts of momentum simultaneously. Why did I find temporal proportion so important? The basic ratios which define the two musical layers are maintained down to the local phrase level (so that, for example, 288 a 3 : 1 ratio is further divided into 216 + 72, and 216 into 162 + 54). Thus, “normative” spans of time are established, not so different from the hierarchic binary subdivisions of classical phrase structure. Such proportionality provided also the basis for constructing forms which had a meta-contrapuntal nature: an interplay of musics, not simply of motives or lines.<sup>4</sup> One can feel, I believe, the motivating force of this metaphor of multiplicity in the passion that the musicians bring to their performance.

The two superimposed layers, with their subsections, offer a *landscape of opportunity*, and I responded by describing in words the musical behaviors which were to be created within each proportioned subsection: “Ostinato groups, varying lengths and speeds,” “Evenly changing chords (all voices simultaneous),” and so on. The architectural scheme became a scaffolding (this was Gerhard’s term) for a musical scenario (this was not), and I emphasized such formal planning in my music in a way that was, even at this early stage, quite distinct from the practice of my compatriots.

*Mosaic* (flute [piccolo] and piano) is subdivided into twelve sections, and temporal proportion is established here by small number groupings (2 7s = 14, 3 8s = 24, 5 4s = 20, etc.) which are arranged so as to result in a gradual expansion of sub-section duration (24”, ... 48”, ... 100”, 132”). Here, a new level of attention is paid to instrumental “color” and the shaping influence of texture. There are—it is hardly surprising—twelve categories of musical articulation specified in the sketches, ranging from trills and repeated notes, to pitch glissandi and percussive sounds such as key clicks.

So the identity of each section is now supported by a specific musical texture, emphasized interval classes, normative groupings, and expressive intention. For the first time, as well, rudimentary linear drawings appear amongst the sketches, evoking expressive character and textural identity. My concerns remained exclusively *musical* here, and I was increasingly confident that the shaping of intuitive invention by establishing a rationally conceived framework was going to be a rewarding path: Form guides the possible evolution of materials over time. It was (and is) in the shifting of content with time and context that I find meaning, and not in mere sonic novelty.

My first *Mosaic* rehearsal with flutist Karen Hill and pianist Bob James was a transformative experience.

<sup>2</sup> This approach gives a numeric sequence of 8, 9, 10, 2, 3, 4 for the first hexachord and 11, 12, 1, 5, 6, 7 for the second. Summing the first three and second three numbers totals, respectively, 27 and 9, or a 3 : 1 ratio; the second hexachord produces a 4 : 3 proportion.

<sup>3</sup> The longer one begins at its B<sup>b</sup> focus and expands, subdividing a total length of 397.5” into 226.5- and 171-second subsections (4 : 3), while the shorter one’s 3 : 1 proportion is realized as 288 : 81 seconds. The latter is offset by 27 seconds so as to end (in a B<sup>b</sup> unison) with its complement.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. my book, *Form and Method: Composing Music*, Routledge, New York, 2002.

Objectively, I knew what I had put into the score, how I expected it to sound. But as they began to play, I felt an unexpected tugging—the music “meant” in ways that I had not foreseen, with all my planning. I realized that music was something I could seek, not something that I (or by extension anyone else) could ever really *own*. This quality of musical engagements—the actual subject is out of one’s control—remains alluring and rewarding: One hears, one feels that which one has not before, but one cannot claim, at the deepest level, responsibility for what occurs in the name of music.

The summer before leaving on a Fulbright grant to Köln (1962–63), I decided to give tangible shape to theatrical potential in a staged theater piece intended for performance at the 1963 Festival. Based upon poet Wallace Stevens's extravagant wake, *The Emperor of Ice Cream*, it required four male and four female vocalists, and three instrumentalists. (My expectation was that Bob James' extraordinary trio would perform it.)<sup>5</sup> *Emperor's* score posits notational strategies that had not, I think, been previously explored. The text was graphically extended and contoured so as to indicate the vocalists' intonation. The position of identifying symbols (there was a distinctive one for each of the vocalists) on the page (from top to bottom) indicated his or her position on stage (from left to right). Thus, I achieved sound spatialization without using technology: shifting groupings of performers about the stage.<sup>6</sup>

The place of political forces in my life was sharpened by Köln (it was bleak: still an intermittent patchwork of rubble and rudimentary new construction), and I decided to set a less abstract text—though still a poetic one—edited from the letters of anarchist Bartolomeo Vanzetti. *A Portrait of Vanzetti*, for chamber ensemble, narrator, and electroacoustic sound, was my first extended composition to combine electronic with instrumental resources. (I had done *Dervish*, a brief work for piano and percussion with tape, a year before in Ann Arbor.) The duality present in *Wedge* was extended and radicalized now as an interplay between the thread of narration and the ensemble's perspectives.

After a brief, assertive Introduction there is a pause, and a voice begins gently, announcing its "common, harmless presence," but soon pressing the anarchist theme: "We were against war because we did not believe in the purpose for which they say the war was fought." There is an episodic interaction between narrator Jack O'Brien's urgent, articulate insinuations, and the shrill, raucous, often asymmetrically stabbing but sometimes even velvety perspectives of the ensemble. Vanzetti's words claim that "anarchy is as beautiful as a woman for me . . ." while the instrumental interjections themselves sound anarchic: each a unique amalgam utilizing some small subset of the total instrumental resource.

Conductor Donald Scavarda emphasized marvelously my radical dynamic contrasts and the melding of the implacable instrumental sonorities which erupted usually at unexpected moments. The motivic world of the previous three pieces is here entirely superseded by a landscape of raw gesture. With the line "The best of essence was choked in myself, or, what was worse, distorted and aberrated," the ensemble achieves its first real tutti; and after another gap (recalling the Introduction), the ensemble continues in its most assertive mode. When the narrator's voice re-enters for the final time, the tessitura climbs to its highest reaches, and lyrical, electroacoustic keening enters. A piercingly intense coda (which is marred in the present recording by unintended bumps and rustlings), closes the piece.

Four decades after ONCE, it was a revelation to discover that much of the compositional landscape I have been exploring over four decades was posited in work done before leaving Ann Arbor. Launching the ONCE enterprise was demanding though glorious work, and, after Karen and I moved on, the Festivals evolved continuously. For our part, we maintained in Europe, later in Japan, and then in California, what we saw as the essential mission: that there needs to be a forum for music that is challenging; that such occasions must be carefully prepared and well-documented. And this was not only needed then . . .

—Roger Reynolds, *Del Mar, December 2002*

---

<sup>5</sup> Bob and his collaborators performed nights at the Falcon Bar in Ann Arbor with a lilt, inventiveness, and abandon that was a wonder. We sought their performances as creative balm, and I think of them now as an important component of ONCE's larger environment, one that elevated improvisation to a level which was not achieved in other contexts then.

<sup>6</sup> This piece was not performed until 1965, but then, by chance, almost at the same moment, in Rome under the auspices of the Nuova Consonanza Group with which Karen and I had had contact, and under the baton of Gunther Schuller, in New York.

## Donald Scavarda

***“New sounds, new forms, new ideas...”***

*“I was acutely aware, in the background of all the Ann Arbor group, of the impact of a remarkable teacher, Ross Lee Finney, whose excitement over the expressive potential of new musical resources and techniques had thoroughly communicated itself to his students not in a doctrinaire but in a liberating way. . . .”* —H. Wiley Hitchcock, *Musical Quarterly*, April 1962

In 1949 Ross Lee Finney’s composition class at the University of Michigan included Leslie Bassett, George Cacioppo, Robert Cogan, Anita Denniston, Donald Scavarda, and George Wilson. “Finney was a dynamic, perceptive teacher. I learned a lot fast,” said Scavarda, who wrote a Sonata for Violin and Piano and String Quartet while studying with him. Nevertheless, Finney claimed he “had to work like the devil” to teach him. Scavarda’s stubborn nature got in the way. Despite sharp differences of opinion, they always maintained a healthy respect for each other. “You try very hard to be original,” Finney said. Scavarda disagreed. “Not consciously,” he said. Scavarda spent the summer of 1952 scoring his master’s thesis and then showed it to Finney. The orchestration amazed him. He urged Scavarda to enter the BMI competition.

In Hamburg, Germany, on a Fulbright Scholarship, Scavarda studied with Philipp Jarnach, a friend of Webern, Schoenberg, and James Joyce. Thomas Brandis performed Scavarda’s Violin Sonata. That same year, 1954, Scavarda’s *Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra* was awarded First Prize in the BMI Competition. At the BMI offices in New York Ulysses Kay, one of the competition judges, informed Scavarda that his composition had been unanimously selected for First Prize.

Scavarda enrolled in the doctoral program and Ross Lee Finney introduced him to serial thinking. He set five haiku poems. Finney wanted to take them to a regional symposium, but conflicting schedules among performers prevented it. Scavarda “temporarily” dropped out in order to concentrate on the required sixty minutes of music. This meant no performances for a while, a deleterious situation, but progress continued on the haiku cycle. Instrumentation varied from song to song. The text is brooding and mysterious. In Scavarda’s interpretation time seems to shift mystically between past and present. In the first song recorded here the word “gossip” is given a raucous, brassy treatment with flutertongue trombone and full ensemble. A mournful cello solo frames the next song while three percussionists and cello harmonics establish the mood of the closing piece. ***In the Autumn Mountains*** consists of nine songs.

Scavarda composed ***Groups for Piano*** at Tanglewood in 1959. In this work he poses the question: *How short can a piece be and still be perceived as complete and coherent?* The 5 groups have durations respectively of 7, 8, 10, 8, and 7 seconds with specified silences between them. Total duration is 55 seconds. To create a sense of spatial depth every note is given its own specific dynamic, frequently with dramatic contrasts.

Leon Kirchner, with whom Scavarda studied at Tanglewood, invited Paul Jacobs to premiere *Groups* at a Composers Forum. The piece created a storm of controversy and dominated the audience discussion.

In January 1960 Roberto Gerhard replaced Finney, who went on sabbatical. He was well known for his writings on serialism. Several local composers enrolled in his class. They found him a thoughtful man with a positive attitude toward his students. “His encouragement was germane to the ultimate formation of ONCE,” said Scavarda. “He was the unifying factor.”

At the University of Illinois Symposium in the spring of 1960 Scavarda’s *Groups For Piano* incited the audience. A heated debate followed. As the moderator Ken Gaburo climbed onto the stage he said quietly “the avant garde has arrived.”

ONCE was unofficially founded in the summer of 1960 when eight composers from Gerhard's class congregated to take inventory of their music. It was an inauspicious beginning and no one could have foretold its staying power. Scavarda invited H. Wiley Hitchcock to review the upcoming concerts, which took place in February 1961 with great success. Plans proceeded for a second series and the composers were ecstatic. After a period of gestation during the 1950s, for some of them it seemed now like a renaissance. "We could compose whatever we wanted to and it would be performed," said Scavarda. "New sounds, new forms, new ideas..."

### ***Matrix for Clarinetist* (1962)**

*"Donald Scavarda's contributions to the ONCE Festivals are among the most distinctive. His Matrix for Clarinetist (1962) is widely known today as a pioneering study in clarinet multiphonics. In this and its breadth of timbral variety, Matrix is typical of Scavarda's thorough exploration and presentation of each, frequently radical, new compositional problem he chose to examine."*

— Richard James, *American Music*, Winter 1987

Scavarda is widely recognized for his early discovery and development of *multiphonics* in the revolutionary *Matrix for Clarinetist*. The piece was first published in May 1962 in *Generation Magazine*, at the University of Michigan. It is believed to be the first published multiphonic work for clarinet, complete with special fingerings and instructions. *Matrix* explores the acoustical properties of the clarinet and makes a clean break with the past. It all began when Scavarda heard an accidental *squeak*, the kind of sound all clarinetists had been taught to *shun*. For hundreds of years clarinetists have been trained to produce only pure single tones. The squeak alerted Scavarda to the possible existence of more complex sound structures in the instrument. With the help of his friend the clarinetist John Morgan, he embarked on a relentless search for the elusive sounds. Six intensive weeks of experimentation, of trial and error, finally yielded rich treasures: They had discovered and developed a distinctive repertoire of double and multi-pitched sounds. Several years later they were dubbed *multiphonics*. "In the end," said Scavarda, "we realized that it was a special mental attitude, not technique alone, that brought to life these remarkable new sounds. It required an open mind to imagine their existence in the first place and then to learn how to produce them."

Scavarda chose the mathematical matrix form to organize them and showcase their natural beauty. Each sound is autonomous yet relates to its surroundings, often in a different context. Every multiphonic should be phrased and shaped so that it becomes almost a miniature composition in itself. The blocks of *Matrix* are put together very much like a crossword puzzle with clusters of blocks being cross-related and thus setting up the possibility of various orderings in performance. Matrix operations of addition, multiplication, and permutations thereof can be employed to structure each performance.

John Morgan premiered *Matrix for Clarinetist* at a ONCE Friends concert in East Lansing Michigan on May 25, 1962. He performed it again the next day at a ONCE Friends concert in Ann Arbor and at the ONCE Festival in 1963. The performance presented here was recorded in the studios of WUOM at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, on June 2, 1962.

Phillip Rehfeldt recorded *Matrix* on Advance Recordings in 1964. Alfred Frankenstein praised it in the February 1966 issue of *High Fidelity* magazine, and concluded by saying "Scavarda's piece has real stature." The review prompted a flood of requests for the score. From its very beginnings in 1962 *Matrix for Clarinetist* has exerted a major influence on new music.

### ***Sounds for Eleven* (1961)**

*It is a condition of living things that they grow and decay simultaneously.*

By 1961 Scavarda had become interested in the expressive possibilities of sound itself, devoid of all extraneous

associations such as melody, rhythm, and gestures. In *Sounds for Eleven* he expunged these elements in order to permit the discrete sonorities to be heard for their own intrinsic beauty. Unique timbres evolve from the *interaction* between instruments with natural *decay* properties and those capable of sustaining sounds such as the woodwinds. Scavarda sought a plastic form, freed from the chains of meter. Percussion sounds are simply permitted to *decay to silence*, while durations of woodwind sounds are determined by the specified size of the breath intake.

*“The work is a study in discrete sonorities of the most remarkable variety of instrumentation. One reason I found the piece so satisfying was that I sensed in it a reflection of the cosmic ratio between star or atom and space.”* —H. Wiley Hitchcock, *Musical Quarterly*, April 1962

*“The form of the piece is as subtle as the sounds and silences within. No sectional endings are observable and phrases seem at once brief and endless, seeming to bridge the event structure with tension never quite relaxing until work’s end.*

*Scavarda has created a delicate pastel of color with a dynamic feel for line and space that few contemporary works can equal.”* —David Cope, *NOTES*, June 1981

***Filmscore for Two Pianists*** (1962) Premiered at the Once Festival, 1963.

***Greys*** (1963) A *filmscore* for electronic realization.

“The most original experiments of the festival were presented by Donald Scavarda . . . there is no question about the composer’s seriousness, his courage to probe the unknown in art, the scope of his inventiveness and intellect.” —Udo Kasemets, Toronto Daily Star, 1963

In these two interdisciplinary works Scavarda redefines and expands the entire concept of musical notation. He explores the physical properties of film itself and produces a kind of visual music, an abstract film which simultaneously contains symbolic information for performers. Scavarda transformed common objects into variously colored discs which seem to be illuminated from within. In *Filmscore for Two Pianists* they move at different speeds, in every direction and through all dimensions. They approach and expand, recede and diminish, sometimes at eye-popping speeds. The climactic section contains twelve separate and independent layers of visual information. It is a dense, complex contrapuntal texture which suddenly erupts in a frenzy of activity. Although *Greys* employs the same kind of abstract symbols as the earlier film, the form is quite different. It is structured as a multi-layered, single direction, continuous flux of varying densities and speeds. At its densest the film contains eighteen layers of material. Both *filmscores* are intended to inspire and challenge the performers to invent new sounds and new ways of articulating them.

The Ann Arbor Film Festival premiered *Greys* in 1963. Gordon Mumma took an interest, studied the film carefully and produced the stunning electronic realization presented here. Film and sound have frequently been performed together.

***Landscape Journey*** (1963) *Clarinet, piano, and 8mm color film*

*Landscape Journey* continues to bring forth fresh aspects of the multiphonic sound in the clarinet. They combine with a wide variety of keyboard and inside-the-piano sounds for a series of finely differentiated timbres. The film is of an entirely different nature and function than previous works and has no notational connotations whatever. It is pure, abstract, rapidly changing color that has been integrated into the structure of the piece to become a visual extension of the instrumental timbres.

“The combined effect of the tender, eerie sounds and the restless, somewhat aggressive colors on the screen is haunting, yet utterly sensitive and memorable. It is a very intellectual score, but in it lies uncommon beauty and delicacy.” —Udo Kasemets, *The Musical Quarterly*, October 1964

Throughout the ONCE years there was a prevailing sense of quiet excitement. The composers maintained frequent contact and by 1964, impromptu, low-key meetings were common. The agenda covered diverse topics, but mostly focused on upcoming events.

The first concert of the 1964 Festival featured three world premieres: Scavarda’s *Landscape Journey*, Cacioppo’s *Advance Of the Fungi*, and Ashley’s *in memoriam . . . Crazy Horse (symphony)*. Scavarda performed the piano in *Landscape*, the opening work, then conducted Cacioppo’s *Fungi* and Ashley’s *Symphony*. “The contrast between the three pieces was phenomenal,” said Scavarda. “Each one demanded its own unique approach to performance.” The concert was regarded as one of the highlights of the Festival.

### **Postscript**

In the year 2002 Donald Scavarda numbered among his new works some 400 drawings and paintings. Some of the recent ones extend the cross-disciplinary experiments in musical notation which began in 1962 with *Filmscore for Two Pianists*. They are simultaneously abstract paintings and musical scores. Scavarda is currently editing

three new films. *Blood Of Christ* is an abstract film with electronic sound. *Marathon* is a highly compressed, high-energy metaphor. *Concerto for Orchestra* is a *filmscore*, which again continues the experiments in musical notation of forty years earlier. The imagery in these three works differs radically from that in all previous films.

—Donald Scavarda, *Ann Arbor, 2003*

## **SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY**

*Music from the ONCE Festival*. Advance Recordings FGR-5. (LP)

### **Robert Ashley**

*Atalanta (Acts of God)*. Lovely Music LCD 3301-2.

*Automatic Writing*. Lovely Music LCD 1002.

*Dust*. Lovely Music LCD 1006.

*el/Aficionado*. Lovely Music LCD 1004.

*Perfect Lives*. Lovely Music LCD 4917.3

*The Wolfman*. Alga Marghen plana-A 20NMN.048.

### **Gordon Mumma**

*Live Electronic Music*. Tzadik TZ 7074.

*Megaton for William Burroughs*. Lovely Music VR 1091. (LP)

*Studio Retrospect*. Lovely Music LCD 1093.

### **Roger Reynolds**

*all known all white*. Pogus Productions P21025-2.

*Ariadne's Thread*. Arditti Quartet Edition 36, Montaigne 782083.

*Electroacoustic Music*. New World Records 80431-2.

*The Paris Pieces*. Neuma 450-91.

*Voicespace*. Lovely Music LCD 1801.

*Whispers Out of Time*. New World Records 80401-2.

### **David Behrman**

*On the Other Ocean*. Lovely Music LCD 1041.

*Wave Train*. Alga Marghen plana-B 5NMN.020.

### **Pauline Oliveros**

*Alien Bog/ Beautiful Soop*. Pogus Productions P21012-2.

*Electronic Works*. Paradigm Discs PD 04.

### **“Blue” Gene Tyranny (Robert Sheff)**

*Country Boy Country Dog*. Lovely Music LCD 1065.

*Free Delivery*. Lovely Music LCD 1064.

## **SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Azarm, Ben. “Once Upon a Group.” *Ear* 8, no. 4: 1, 3.

Beckwith, John, and Kasemets, Udo. *The Modern Composer and His World*. University of Toronto Press, 1961.

Dietrich, Ralf von. “Unzensierte Simultaneität der Stimmen: Robert Ashleys Frühwerk,” *Musik Texte* 88 (2001): 63–81.

Finney, Ross Lee. *Profile of a Lifetime: A Musical Autobiography*. New York, London, and Frankfurt: C.F. Peters, 1992.

Gerhard, Roberto. “Is New Music Growing Old?” Ann Arbor: University of Michigan School of Music Series, 1960.

Grofsorean, Michael. "Time On Time: Conversations with George Cacioppo." *Lightworks* 6 (Dec.–Jan. 1977): 5–7.

James, Richard S. "ONCE: Microcosm of the 1960s Musical and Multimedia Avant-Garde." *American Music* 5, no. 4 (Winter 1987), 359–90.

Mumma, Gordon. "An Electronic Music Studio for the Independent Composer." *Journal of the Audio Engineering Society* 12, no. 3 (July 1964): 240–44.

Mumma, Gordon. "The Once Festival and How It Happened," *Arts in Society* 4, no. 2: 380–98.

Reynolds, Roger. "An Interview with John Cage on the Occasion of the Publication of *Silence*" in *Generation* 13, no. 2 (1962): 40–51. Reprinted in Elliott Schwartz and Barney Childs, *Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967.

Sheff, Robert, and Slobin, Mark. "Music Beyond the Boundaries," *Generation* 17, no. 1: 27–65, and no. 2: 55–59 (1965–66). Reprinted in *Lightworks*, nos. 14–15 (1981–82): 34–44.

Weiss, Edward, "Conversations with Composer George Cacioppo: 'ONCE' 1961–1968." *Detroit Artists Monthly*, January 1978.

Yates, Peter. "A Ford to Travel 4: ONCE in Ann Arbor." *Arts and Architecture* 82, no. 9 (September 1965): 8–9, 33.

Produced by Paul M. Tai, Robert Ashley, Gordon Mumma, Roger Reynolds, and Donald Scavarda.

Engineer: George Cacioppo

Digital mastering: Dirk Sobotka, SoundByte Productions, Inc., NYC

Front cover photo: Scene from *Unmarked Interchange*, ONCE Group, September 17, 1965. Photo by Makepeace Tsao.

Back of slipcase: Scene from Richard Waters, *My Piece*, ONCE Theater Ensemble, Feb. 11, 1965. Photo by Makepeace Tsao.

The photographs of Makepeace Tsao are used courtesy of Kelvin and Karen Tsao. All rights reserved.

Cover design: Bob Defrin Design, Inc., NYC

Live recordings taped during the ONCE Festivals and ancillary ONCE events by WUOM, University of Michigan Radio. The tapes are archived at the Northwestern University Music Library ONCE Festival Archive and are used with their kind permission.

**This recording was made possible by grants from The Aaron Copland Fund for Music and the Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trust.**

Very special thanks to Robert Ashley, Gordon Mumma, Roger Reynolds, and Donald Scavarda.

Special thanks also to Al Margolis, Howard Klein, Don Roberts, Northwestern University Music Library, Leta Miller, and Advance Recordings.

*in memoriam . . . Crazy Horse (symphony), Landscape Journey, and Time on Time in Miracles* were originally released on the LP *Music from the ONCE Festival*, Advance Recordings FGR-5.

FOR NEW WORLD RECORDS:

Herman E. Krawitz, President; Paul Marotta, Managing Director; Paul M. Tai, Director of Artists and Repertory; Lisa Kahlden, Director of Information Technology; Virginia Hayward, Administrative Associate; Mojisola Oké, Bookkeeper; Dan Parratt, Production Associate.

RECORDED ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN MUSIC, INC., BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Richard Aspinwall; Milton Babbitt; John Lee Carroll; Emanuel Gerard; David Hamilton; Rita Hauser; Herman E. Krawitz; Paul Marotta; Robert Marx; Arthur Moorhead; Elizabeth Ostrow; Cynthia Parker; Larry Polansky; Don Roberts; Marilyn Shapiro; Patrick Smith; Frank Stanton.

Francis Goelet (1926–1998), Chairman

©1966, 2003 © 2003 Recorded Anthology of American Music, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

**THIS DISC WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY GRANTS FROM THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION AND THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS**

**NO PART OF THIS RECORDING MAY BE COPIED OR REPRODUCED WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION OF R.A.A.M., INC.**

**NEW WORLD RECORDS**  
**16 Penn Plaza #835**  
**NEW YORK, NY 10001-1820**  
**TEL 212.290-1680 FAX 212.290-1685**  
**Website: [www.newworldrecords.org](http://www.newworldrecords.org)**  
**email: [info@newworldrecords.org](mailto:info@newworldrecords.org)**

LINER NOTES © Recorded Anthology of American Music, Inc.



**DISC ONE**  
**MUSIC FROM THE ONCE FESTIVAL**  
**1961**

Robert Ashley (b. 1930)

1. *Sonata* (1959–60)\* 7:44

Robert Ashley, piano

Donald Scavarda (b. 1928)

2. *Groups for Piano* (1959)\* 1:03

Robert Ashley, piano

George Cacioppo (1926–1984)

3. *String Trio* (1960)\*\* 10:23

Edith Perrow, violin; Jean Harter, viola; Arthur Follows, cello

Roger Reynolds (b. 1934)

4. *Epigram and Evolution* (1960)\*\* 8:50

Robert Ashley, piano

Gordon Mumma (b. 1935)

5. *Sinfonia for 12 Instruments and Magnetic Tape* (1958–1960)\*\* 12:03

ONCE Chamber Orchestra: Bruce Wise, piano; Edith Perrow, violin; Alice Hays, viola; Arthur Follows, cello; Carolyn Rabson, soprano and alto recorders; Rosemarie Waldrop, flute; Don Robbins, bassoon; Stanley Mogelnicki, trumpet; Jerry Bilik, trombone; Gustave Rabson, guitar; Daniel Levine, double bass; David Bourns, percussion; Wayne Dunlap, conductor

Donald Scavarda

6. *In the Autumn Mountains* (1958–59)\*\* 7:01

Shirley Zaft, soprano; James Berg, baritone; ONCE Chamber Orchestra: Bruce Wise, piano; Edith Perrow, violin; Arthur Follows, cello; Rosemarie Waldrop, flute; John Morgan, clarinet; Stanley Mogelnicki, trumpet; Jerry Bilik, trombone; Gustave Rabson, guitar; Paul Miller, Eugene Hansen, David Bourns, percussion; Wayne Dunlap, conductor

Bruce Wise (b. 1929)

7. *Two Pieces for Piano and Chamber Group* (1958)\*\* 6:23

Bruce Wise, piano; ONCE Chamber Orchestra: John Morgan, clarinet; Blanche Kangas, bass clarinet; Don Robbins, bassoon; Stanley Mogelnicki, trumpet; Jerry Bilik, trombone; Robert Ashley, celeste; Daniel Levine, double bass; Paul Miller, Eugene Hansen, David Bourns, percussion; Wayne Dunlap, conductor

Robert Ashley

8. *The Fourth of July* (1960)\* 18:37

(magnetic tape)

\* February 25, 1961

\*\* March 4, 1961

*Sonata, The Fourth of July* © 2003 Visibility Music, BMI.

*Sinfonia for 12 Instruments and Magnetic Tape* © 1960 Gordon Mumma, BMI.

*Epigram and Evolution* © 1963 Roger Reynolds.

*Groups for Piano* © 1962 Donald Scavarda. *In the Autumn Mountains* © 2003 Donald Scavarda.  
*Two Pieces for Piano and Chamber Group* © 2003 Bruce Wise.

**DISC TWO**  
**MUSIC FROM THE ONCE FESTIVAL**  
**1962**

Donald Scavarda

1. *Matrix for Clarinetist* (1962)+ 9:07

John Morgan, clarinet

Roger Reynolds

2. *Wedge* (1961)\* 7:56

ONCE Chamber Ensemble: Bob James, piano; Karen Hill, Francea Whitcomb, flutes (piccolos); Barney Pearson, Ron Bell, trumpets; Don Green, Paul Young, trombones; Stanley Towers, tuba; Daniel Levine, double bass; Robert Pozar, David Maves, Gordon Mumma, percussion; David Sutherland, conductor

Gordon Mumma

3. *Meanwhile, A Twopiece* (1961)\* 7:16

Robert Ashley, piano, percussion; Gordon Mumma, French horn, percussion; with magnetic tape

Donald Scavarda

4. *Sounds for Eleven* (1961)\*\* 10:55

ONCE Chamber Orchestra: Robert Barris, bassoon; John Morgan, clarinet in B; Margaret Varnell, clarinet in E; Anne Speer, flute; Kenneth Snipes, oboe; Robert Ashley, piano; David Maves, vibraphone; Gustave Rabson, guitar; Robert Pozar, Gordon Mumma, percussion; Donald Scavarda, conductor

Gordon Mumma

5. From *Gestures II* (1958–60)\*\* 13:14

Robert Ashley, Gordon Mumma, pianos

George Cacioppo

6. *Bestiary I: Eingang* (1961)\*\* 7:16

Karen Lovejoy, soprano; ONCE Chamber Orchestra: Bob James, piano; Robert Ashley, celeste; David Bourns, percussion; Agnes Conzemius, Eugene Hansen, Paul Miller, Gordon Mumma, percussion; Wayne Dunlap, conductor

Robert Ashley

7. *Details (2b)* (1962)++ 7:09

Robert Ashley, Gordon Mumma, pianos

Robert Sheff (b. 1945)

8. *Ballad* (1960)++ 8:31

Philip Krumm, flute; Karin Fierce, violin; Larry Leitch, piano

+ June 2, 1962 (studio recording)

++ December 16, 1962

\* February 10, 1962

\*\* February 16, 1962

*Details (2b)* © 2003 Visibility Music, BMI.

*Meanwhile, A Twopiece* © 1961 Gordon Mumma, BMI. From *Gestures II* © 1960 Gordon Mumma, BMI.  
*Wedge* © 1963 Roger Reynolds.  
*Matrix for Clarinetist* © 1962 Donald Scavarda. *Sounds for Eleven* © 1980 Donald Scavarda.  
*Ballad* © 1960 Robert Sheff, BMI.

**DISC THREE**  
**MUSIC FROM THE ONCE FESTIVAL**  
**1962-63**

Gordon Mumma

1. *Large Size Mograph* 1962+ 8:09

Larry Leitch, piano

Robert Ashley

2. *Fives* (1962)\* 12:36

The Camerata Quartet of New York City; Bob James, Robert Ashley, pianos; Robert Pozar, David Maves, percussion; Bertram Turetzky, double bass; Edwin London, conductor

Gordon Mumma

3. *A Quarter of Fourpiece* (1962)\* 4:56

The Hartt Chamber Players: Nancy Turetzky, flute; Josef Marx, oboe; Edwin London, French horn; Bertram Turetzky, double bass

George Cacioppo

4. *Two Worlds* (1962)\*\* 6:02

Karen Lovejoy, soprano; The Camerata Quartet of New York City; Bob James, piano; Nancy Turetzky, flute; Josef Marx, oboe; Robert Pozar, percussion; Edwin London, conductor

Roger Reynolds

5. *Mosaic* (1962)\*\* 9:38

Karen Hill, flute (piccolo); Bob James, piano

George Cacioppo

*Pianopieces* (1962)\*\*\*

6. *Pianopiece I* 3:12

7. *Cassiopeia* 2:57

8. *Pianopiece II* 2:10

Donald Bohlen, piano

Roger Reynolds

9. *A Portrait of Vanzetti* (1962-63)\*\*\* 20:27

for narrator, instruments, and stereophonic electroacoustic sound

(Text edited by the composer from the letters of Bartolomeo Vanzetti)

Jack O'Brien, narrator; Karen Hill, Anne Speer, flutes (piccolos); Richard Reynolds, Kay Maves, French horns; Richard Lowenthal, trumpet; John Moses, clarinet; Kenneth Miesen, trombone; Robert Pozar, David Maves, percussion; Donald Scavarda, conductor

Gordon Mumma

10. *Greys* (1963)++ 3:19

Stereo electronic music for the film/score *Greys* by Donald Scavarda

- + December 16, 1962
- ++ December 3, 1963
- \* February 9, 1963
- \*\* February 10, 1963
- \*\*\* February 16, 1963

*Fives* © 2003 Visibility Music, BMI.

*Large Size Mograph 1962, A Quarter of Fourpiece* © 1962 Gordon Mumma, BMI. *Greys* © 1963 Gordon Mumma, BMI.

*A Portrait of Vanzetti* © 2003 Roger Reynolds. *Mosaic* © 1963 C. F. Peters Corp.

**DISC FOUR**  
**MUSIC FROM THE ONCE FESTIVAL**  
**1963-64**

Philip Krumm (b. 1941)

1. *Music for Clocks* (1962)+ 10:24

Anne Speer, flute; Kenneth Snipes, oboe; John Morgan, clarinet; Richard Reynolds, Kay Maves, French horns; Lana Lou Nail, violin; Michael von Biel, cello; Bertram Turetzky, double bass; Philip Krumm, prepared piano; David Maves, percussion; Donald Scavarda, conductor

Robert Sheff

2. *Diotima* (1963)\* 18:58

Anne Aitchison, flute; with magnetic tape

George Crevoshay

3. *7PTPC*\*\* 5:57

Larry Leitch, celeste; George Crevoshay, piano; Terry Jennings, saxophone; ONCE Chamber Ensemble

Donald Scavarda

4. *Landscape Journey* (1963)\*\*\* 9:31

John Morgan, clarinet; Donald Scavarda, piano

George Cacioppo

5. *Advance of the Fungi* (1964)\*\*\* 15:54

John Morgan, Tom Asboth, William Albright, clarinets; Gordon Mumma, Richard Reynolds, French horns; James Ferguson, Karl Wirt, Russell Peck, trombones; Dick Tilkin, percussion; male chorus; Donald Scavarda, conductor

Robert Ashley

6. *in memoriam ... Crazy Horse (symphony)* (1963)\*\*\* 15:12

ONCE Festival Orchestra, Donald Scavarda, conductor

+ February 17, 1963

\* February 28, 1964

\*\* February 29, 1964

\*\*\* February 25, 1964

*Music for Clocks* © 2003 Philip Krumm.

*Diotima* © 1963 Robert Sheff, BMI.

*Landscape Journey* © 2003 Donald Scavarda.

*in memoriam ... Crazy Horse (symphony)* © 2003 Visibility Music, BMI.

**DISC FIVE**  
**MUSIC FROM THE ONCE FESTIVAL**  
**1964–66**

Bruce Wise

1. *Music for Three* (1963)+ 29:30  
Robert Ashley, Gordon Mumma, pianos; with magnetic tape

George Cacioppo

2. *Time on Time in Miracles* (1964)++ 9:44  
ONCE Chamber Ensemble: Peggy Ericson, soprano; Larry Leitch, piano; Jack Brooks, cello; Gordon Mumma, Richard Reynolds, French horns; Russell Peck, tenor trombone; Philip Corner, bass trombone; Max Neuhaus, percussion; Robert Ashley, conductor

David Behrman (b. 1937)

3. *Track* (1965)+++ 10:11  
ONCE Chamber Ensemble

Pauline Oliveros (b. 1932)

4. *Applebox Double* (1965)\* 17:07  
David Tudor, Pauline Oliveros, live electronics

Robert Ashley

5. *Quartet* (1965)\*\* 9:51  
William Albright, clarinet; Richard Reynolds, Gordon Mumma, French horns; Mary Ashley, Harold Borkin, George Cacioppo, Cynthia Liddell, Anne Wehrer, Joseph Wehrer, readers

+ February 26, 1964

++ February 12, 1965

+++ February 13, 1965

\* March 28, 1966

\*\* March 29, 1966

*Quartet* © 2003 Visibility Music, BMI.

*Track* © 2003 David Behrman.

*Applebox Double* © Deep Listening Publications 2003, ASCAP.

*Music for Three* © 2003 Bruce Wise.

<sup>1</sup> Manupelli, telephone interview, July 13, 2002. Hereafter quotations from personal interviews or email correspondence with the author are not footnoted. All other sources are cited.

<sup>2</sup> Mumma describes the studio in detail in “An Electronic Music Studio for the Independent Composer,” *Journal of the Audio Engineering Society* 12, no. 3 (July 1964): 240–44.

<sup>3</sup> From Cohen’s progress report to the Graham Foundation, July 1961.

<sup>4</sup> They also won awards in competitions to design an FDR Memorial (never built) and the Boston City Hall.

<sup>5</sup> The orchestra was conducted by William Boyer, a former UM student. Cacioppo’s year of birth has often been reported erroneously as 1927; official records from Washtenaw County confirm that he was born on Sept. 24, 1926, in Monroe, Michigan.

- <sup>6</sup> Roberto Gerhard, "Is New Music Growing Old?" (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan publications 62, no. 18, Aug. 10, 1960), 10. Thanks to Bruce Wise for making a copy of this document available to me.
- <sup>7</sup> Letter from Reynolds to Yates, Nov. 14, 1960, University of California, San Diego, Special Collections.
- <sup>8</sup> The stories were each read in one minute; short stories were thus read slowly, long stories rapidly.
- <sup>9</sup> Anne Wehrer, unpublished typed biography (ONCE archival materials, Northwestern University library).
- <sup>10</sup> The month of Berio's visit is cited in an essay by Mumma in the *Michigan Daily*, May 8, 1960.
- <sup>11</sup> The papers and ensuing discussion are printed in *The Modern Composer and His World*, ed. John Beckwith and Udo Kasemets (University of Toronto Press, 1961).
- <sup>12</sup> Ross Lee Finney, *Profile of a Lifetime: A Musical Autobiography* (New York, London, Frankfurt: C. F. Peters, 1992), 177.
- <sup>13</sup> *Catalog ONCE*, ca. 1963–64.
- <sup>14</sup> Collins George, "Young Composer Scores," *Detroit Free Press*, Mar. 5, 1961.
- <sup>15</sup> H. Wiley Hitchcock, "Weekend Concerts Feature 'New' Music," *Ann Arbor News*, Feb. 27, 1961.
- <sup>16</sup> Bernard Waldrop, "ONCE: Festival of New Music: Complex to Excellent," *Michigan Daily*, Feb. 28, 1961.
- <sup>17</sup> Finney, *Profile*, 177.
- <sup>18</sup> *Generation* 13, no. 2 (1962), 40–51. It is also published in Elliott Schwartz and Barney Childs, *Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music* (New York: Da Capo, 1998): 335–48, and has been translated into German and Japanese.
- <sup>19</sup> Collins George, "Is It a Melody—Or Is it Noise?" *Detroit Free Press*, Feb. 4, 1962; "Music in Detroit: Will Machines Create Music of the Future?" *Detroit Free Press*, Feb. 11, 1962.
- <sup>20</sup> Paul Cooper, "'Once' Festival Called Unique By Critic," *Ann Arbor News*, Feb. 12, 1962.
- <sup>21</sup> *Catalog ONCE*.
- <sup>22</sup> H. Wiley Hitchcock, "Current Chronicle," *Musical Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (April 1962): 244.
- <sup>23</sup> Georg Bayr used flute multiphonics in a concerto published in 1813 and wrote a treatise on them in the 1820s, but the technique had virtually no impact on musical composition before the mid-twentieth century. Some jazz musicians experimented with multiphonics in the 1940s and 1950s.
- <sup>24</sup> Sheff, E-mail communication, Nov. 2002.
- <sup>25</sup> Robert Sheff and Mark Slobin, "Music Beyond the Boundaries," *Generation* (Winter, 1965): 83–84 (reprinted with excisions in *Lightworks* 14/15 (Winter 1981/82)).
- <sup>26</sup> Sheff, notes to *Meditation Nine*.
- <sup>27</sup> *Catalog ONCE*.
- <sup>28</sup> Michael Grofsoresan, "Time On Time: Conversations with George Cacioppo." *Lightworks* 6 (Dec.–Jan, 197[6–7]7): 6.
- <sup>29</sup> Bernard Folta, "ONCE Festival: Series Offers Grounds for Optimism," *Michigan Daily*, Feb. 19, 1963.
- <sup>30</sup> *Catalog ONCE*.
- <sup>31</sup> Bernard Folta, "Composers Present Avant-Garde Music," *Michigan Daily*, Feb. 12, 1963.
- <sup>32</sup> Joseph Wehrer and Robert Ashley, E-mail messages, Dec. 10 and 13, 2002.
- <sup>33</sup> Faubion Bowers, "A Feast of Astonishments," *The Nation* 199 no. 8 (Sept. 28, 1964).
- <sup>34</sup> Kasemets, "Current Chronicle," *Musical Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (Oct. 1964): 516.
- <sup>35</sup> André Boucourechliev, "Tone Roads," *Preuves* July 1964. Translations from the French by Leta Miller.
- <sup>36</sup> Quoted in "ONCE Turnout Up This Year," *Ann Arbor News*, Mar. 2, 1964.
- <sup>37</sup> Sheff and Slobin, "Music Beyond the Boundaries," 83.
- <sup>38</sup> Peter Yates, "A Ford to Travel 4: ONCE in Ann Arbor," *Arts and Architecture* 82, no. 9 (Sept. 1965): 33.
- <sup>39</sup> The garage has since been expanded laterally and vertically and a fence added above the wall.
- <sup>40</sup> Reynolds wrote to Yates on Sept. 26, 1965 that Mumma told him the attendance (presumably for the first night) was 500 seated, 200 standing.
- <sup>41</sup> For example, Richard James, "ONCE: Microcosm of the 1960s," *American Music* 5, no. 4 (Winter, 1987): 383, and Ralf Dietrich, "Unzensierte Simultaneität der Stimmen: Robert Ashley's Frühwerk," *MusikTexte* 88 (2001): 72

<sup>42</sup> On *Variations V* and Mumma's work with Cunningham, see Leta E. Miller, "Cage, Cunningham, and Collaborators: The Odyssey of *Variations V*," *Musical Quarterly* 85, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 545–67.

<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, both Mumma and Reynolds also ended up teaching in California, Mumma at UC Santa Cruz, Reynolds at UC San Diego.

<sup>44</sup> For Cacioppo's discussion of this piece, see Grofsorean, "Time on Time: Conversations with George Cacioppo," 5–7.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Roger Reynolds, "ONCE: Festival of Premieres to Present New Music," *Michigan Daily*, Feb. 23, 1961.

<sup>47</sup> Announcement accompanying the third ONCE festival.

<sup>48</sup> Mumma, "The ONCE Festival and How It Happened," draft version. (The quotation was substantially altered in the published version in *Arts and Society* 4, no. 2 (1967): 398.)