

BENNINGTON COLLEGE

SYMPOSIUM ON MUSIC AND ART

CONCERT

NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY, BENNINGTON, VERMONT, MAY 17, 1955, 8:00 P.M.

PROGRAM

SECOND SONATA FOR PIANO..... Roger Sessions

ALLEGRO CON FUOCO

LENTO

MISURATO E PESANTE

Claude Frank, *piano*

A SET OF PIECES FOR THEATRE OR CHAMBER ORCHESTRA.. Charles Edward Ives

IN THE CAGE

IN THE INN (POTPOURRI)

IN THE NIGHT

BENNINGTON COLLEGE ORCHESTRA

Stell Andersen, *piano*

Lionel Nowak, *conductor*

ANGELS..... Carl Ruggles

BRASS ENSEMBLE

Frederic Waldman, *conductor*

DESERTS (*American Première*)..... Edgard Varèse

GUEST ORCHESTRA

Frederic Waldman, *conductor*

(*Deserts* will be repeated after a short intermission.)

GUEST ORCHESTRA
Frederic Waldman, *conductor*

Flutes Eugene Kushner
Samuel Baron

Tubas William Barker
Herbert Wekselblatt

Clarinets Wallace Shapiro
Jack Kreiselman

Percussion Ronald Gould
Arnold Lang
Joe Kastka

Horns Albert Richman
Frederick Schmitt

Richard Koff
Stanley Koor

Trumpets Robert Nagel
John Glasel
James Hustis

Piano Claude Frank

Trombones Erwin Price
Lionel Kasimira
Richard Hixon

Sound Technician Ann McMillan

BENNINGTON COLLEGE ORCHESTRA
Lionel Nowak, *conductor*

Violins Orrea Pernel
Virginia de Blasiis
Eileen Carrier
Phyllis Heywood
Gloria Cummings

Flute Louise Valentine

Clarinet and
English Horn Gunnar Schonbeck

Violas Susan Humbert
Luigi Tavelli
Frank Maile

French Horn Carita Richardson

Trombone Alyce Hastings

'Cellos George Finckel
Judith Levine
Julian DeGray
Stephen Manes

Timpani Louis Calabro

Bells Augustus Nowak

Basses Jane Simpson
Marianne Finckel

Piano Sibyl Totah

BRASS ENSEMBLE
Frederic Waldman, *conductor*

Trumpets Robert Nagel
John Glasel
James Hustis
Freida Rowell

Trombones Erwin Price
Lionel Kasimira
Richard Hixon

PROGRAM NOTE

Edgard Varèse's *Deserts* was begun in New York, 1952, and finished November 1954 in Paris where, the following month, December 2nd, its European première took place at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées, performed by the Orchestre National under the direction of Hermann Scherchen. It was given again in Hamburg, December 8th, and in Stockholm, December 18th, conducted by Bruno Maderna.

Varèse says of the origin of his score: "*Deserts* was conceived for two different media: instrumental sounds and real sounds (recorded and processed) that musical instruments are unable to produce. After planning the work as a whole, I wrote the instrumental score, always keeping in mind its relation to the organized sound sequences on tape to be interpolated at three different points in the score.

The score of *Deserts* is made up of two distinct elements: (1) An instrumental ensemble composed of 4 woodwinds and 10 brasses, a variety of percussion instruments played by five musicians, and a piano as an element of resonance. (2) Magnetic tapes of organized sound transmitted on two channels by means of a stereophonic system to provide a sensation of spacial distribution of the sound sources to the listener. There are four instrumental sections of different lengths and three interpolations of organized sound. The music given to the instrumental ensemble may be said to evolve in opposing planes and volumes, producing the sensation of movement in space. But, though the intervals between the pitches determine these ever changing and contrasted volumes and planes, they are not based on any fixed set of intervals such as a scale, a series, or any existing principle of musical measurement. They are decided by the exigencies of this particular work. Of the interpolations of organized sound it should be noted that the first and third are based on industrial sounds (sounds of friction, percussion, hissing, grinding, puffing) first filtered, transposed, transmuted, mixed by means of electronic devices and then composed to fit the pre-established plan of the work. Combined with these sounds, as a structural and stabilizing element, (especially in the third interpolation) are fragments of instrumental percussion, some already present in the score, others new. The second interpolation is for an ensemble of percussion instruments.

It will be noticed that the shorter the section the higher the tension, the music rising to a climax in the third interpolation and fourth instrumental section, finally fading out in a long pianissimo.

The title *Deserts* should not lead the listener to expect descriptive music. Varèse has said that there is no program, no literal reference. For him but not, he insists, necessarily for any one else, *deserts* means not only all physical deserts (of sand, sea, snow, of outer space, of empty city streets) but also the deserts in the mind of man; not only those stripped aspects of nature that suggest bareness, aloofness, timelessness, but also that remote inner space no telescope can reach, where man is alone, a world of mystery and essential loneliness.

Bennington College expresses gratitude for assistance with the performance of "Deserts" to:

Ampex Corporation, New York District Office, for providing an Ampex Model 403-2, two-track stereophonic recorder.

McIntosh Laboratories, Incorporated, Binghamton, New York, for providing two 50-watt McIntosh Amplifiers.

Commercial Sound Systems, Incorporated, Albany, New York, for providing an Altec-Lansing, Model 820, speaker system.

Mr. Joseph E. Joseph, North Bennington, Vermont, for technical assistance in arranging the performance.

Major Joseph Krawczyk, Vermont National Guard, for making the National Guard Armory available for this concert.