

MindReader

the newsletter of Other Minds
Winter/Spring 2000

What Will the 21st Century Sound Like?

A Preview of Other Minds Festival VI
by Carl Stone, Guest Artistic Director 1999-2000

In the summer of 1999, I got a call from my old friend Charles Amirkhanian, founder and longtime Executive and Artistic Director of Other Minds. "Carl!" he said excitedly "Guess what! I'm going to Italy for a year as a guest of the Rockefeller Foundation." I knew something was up—Charles is usually too modest to just call me out of the blue to toot his own horn...

➤ page 4



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Ji Young Yi, kayagum virtuoso, will make her U.S. debut at Other Minds Festival VI.

What's inside

President's Letter
Other Minds Events 2000
Special Report: *The Afterlife of Conlon Nancarrow*
Other Minds Festival Preview
George Antheil Centenary
Who is this guy "Scanner"?
Phrenology of Other Minds
News and Notes: *Errollyn Wallen, Robin Kirck tribute, & OM announcements*
Gathering of Other Minds:
Donors & Contributions



George Antheil, 27, arriving in New York for the U.S. premiere of *Ballet Mécanique* at Carnegie Hall, 1927.

Sixteen Pianos in the Service of a Forgotten Vision

George Antheil Centennial Concert
by Charles Amirkhanian

When 23-year-old George Antheil conceived a mammoth cacophony of 16 grand pianos and percussion, synchronized with a film by Fernand Léger, in 1920s Paris, he simply didn't realize that he'd also need to invent personal computers, MIDI, and late 20th century classical music performance techniques to realize his *Ballet Mécanique*.

Since that time, various versions of this radical, proto-minimalist work—which pre-dates Terry Riley, Steve Reich, and Philip Glass by

40 years—have been produced. But until Paul Lehrman's new realization of the piece (commissioned by the publisher G. Schirmer) for the forces as originally conceived by Antheil, the vision remained only an imaginary soundscape...

➤ page 6

Dear Friends,

By the time you read this, we'll be well into the new millennium, the fin-de-siècle panic and exhilaration will have subsided somewhat, and the music, I hope, will still be playing.

But as Other Minds prepares to launch another exciting season, it's worth looking back at the last year to see just how far we've come.

In the 1998-99 season, OM dramatically enhanced its profile as a leading presenter of new music—in its most expanded sense. In addition to our annual festival in March, we brought audiences the first-ever Bay Area appearance of the Bang on a Can All-Stars; helped present the OPUS415 Marathon; and pulled together a special concert celebrating the 50th anniversary of KPFA Radio, featuring the entrancing music of Stephen Scott played on "bowed pianos" by 20 musicians from Colorado and Estonia. Our website (www.otherminds.org) continued to grow in breadth and content, with easier access to John Fago's extraordinary photo-history of Other Minds and many new streaming Real Audio files from the last two festivals.



The season opened in October 1998 with two high-energy concerts by New York's Bang on a Can All-Stars, playing Brian Eno's *Music for Airports* each evening alongside other repertoire by group members Evan Ziporyn, Michael Gordon, Julia Wolfe, and David Lang, as well as Bay Area composers Pamela Z and Dan Plonsey. In November, an astonishing variety of Northern California composers held forth at the OPUS415 No. 4 Bay Area New Music Marathon. Both events drew large crowds—the Bang on a Can All-Stars concerts had nearly sold-out houses at Yerba Buena Theater; and the Marathon, in the Yerba Buena Forum, attracted more than 500 die-hard music lovers, who for 10 hours heard an amazing panoply of music styles.

In March 1999, Other Minds Festival V, at San Francisco's Cowell Theater, featured the first California appearance of Mary Ellen Childs' ensemble CRASH, a choreographed percussion quartet, which played music while moving constantly, sometimes in office chairs with wheels; Errollyn Wallen, a composer and songwriter from London, who dazzled the crowd with her offbeat songs; Margaret Leng Tan, who appeared each evening playing her collection of toy pianos; and a special Other Minds Ensemble making its debut in a quintet called *Islands*, by Alvin Lucier. The exquisitely wrought keyboard music of Portuguese composer António Pinho Vargas was played by Gloria Cheng-Cochran and Ms. Tan; Pinho Vargas himself was an energetic and philosophical presence on our panel discussions. Linda Bouchard conducted her complex chamber ensemble piece *Ductwork* with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players; Sam Rivers and Julian Priester presented an excellent, soaring set with Tucker Martine, electronics; and Luc Ferrari's *Les Émois d'Aphrodite* was a smashing (and perhaps a bit controversial) hit, as performed by Mary Chun and the MC Band.

Our plans for the spring 2000 season are even more ambitious. For updates about Other Minds Festival VI and possible webcast events, as well as the Antheil Centennial Concert and OPUS415 Marathon, bookmark our website at www.otherminds.org—and visit often!

OM's audience response has reached an all-time high, with strong support from our donors and sponsors. The annual budget grew last year, from \$150,000 to \$250,000, enabling the organization to stabilize its administrative operations and concert production for the first time in its six-year existence. We moved to new offices in the Mission district, and added talented board and staff members. Our thanks to Mitchell Clark, longtime OM staffer, who left us this summer to return to his composing and writing career.

For Other Minds' success, we owe much to our dedicated funders, the members of the Gathering of Other Minds donor circle, and the unhesitating support of our adventurous artists and audiences. Our sincere thanks to all of you who made possible this effort to bring the most provocative new music to the San Francisco Bay Area.

Warm wishes,

Jim Newman

Other Minds Events Spring/Summer 2000

Other Minds Festival VI ◀

Participating composers: Hamza el Din (Oakland, b. Nubia); Peter Garland (Mexico, b. USA); Annie Gosfield (New York); Leroy Jenkins (Brooklyn); David Lang (New York); Paul D. Miller aka Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid (New York); Hyo shin Na (San Francisco, b. Korea); Robin Rimbaud aka scanner (Great Britain); Jacob ter Veldhuis (Holland); and Christian Wolff (Hanover, NH).

Participating performers include Fred Frith (Oakland, b. Great Britain), guitar; Aki Takahashi (Japan), piano; Ji Young Yi (Korea), kayagum; and William Winant (Oakland), percussion.

Thursday March 16 8:00 pm

Theater Artaud, 450 Florida Street, SF
Music by Peter Garland, David Lang, Leroy Jenkins, and Annie Gosfield. Featuring the Onyx Quartet, Aki Takahashi, Reddrum, William Winant, and others.

Friday March 17 8:00 pm

Theater Artaud, 450 Florida Street, SF
Music by Jacob ter Veldhuis, Peter Garland, Hyo shin Na, and Christian Wolff. Featuring the Onyx Quartet, Aki Takahashi, Fred Frith, Miya Masaoka, Bob Ostertag, Joan Jeanrenaud, Ji Young Yi, William Winant, Thomas Schultz, and others.

Saturday March 18

11:00 am

George Coates Performance Works, 110 McAllister Street, SF
Artists' Forum I: *Cross-cultural practices on stringed instruments*. Moderated by Sarah Cahill (KPFA). Panelists include Joan Jeanrenaud, Hamza el Din, Miya Masaoka, and others.

12:00 pm

Artists' Forum II: *Cultural identity and music in the post-modern world*. Moderated by Herman Gray (U. of California, Santa Cruz). Panelists include Annie Gosfield, Paul D. Miller aka Dj Spooky, Robin Rimbaud aka scanner, and others.

9:00 pm

Justice League, 628 Divisadero Street, SF
Music by Hamza el Din, Robin Rimbaud aka scanner, and Paul D. Miller aka Dj Spooky.

Presented by Other Minds in association with the Djerassi Resident Artists Program. Amoeba Records is an official business sponsor of the Other Minds Festival. All programs subject to change.

OPUS415 No. 5 ◀

Bay Area New Music Marathon

Sunday, March 19

1:00 - 11:00 pm

Theater Artaud, 450 Florida Street, SF

Over 25 composers and 75 performers, including the Paul Dresner Ensemble Electro-Acoustic Band, Gamelan Sekar Jaya, Mark Grey with cellist Joan Jeanrenaud, and visiting guest David Del Tredici. The Marathon's ten hours of music will present a diverse mix of works that bridge the gap between the streets and the university. Food and drinks will be available—Come and go as you please!

Produced by the Common Sense Composers Collective and presented by Other Minds.

George Antheil Centenary ◀

Sunday, June 11

Davies Symphony Hall, Grove Street at Van Ness Avenue, SF

Presented by the San Francisco Symphony in collaboration with Other Minds. Further details to be announced.

For information on tickets to all events, see back cover



Viva Conlon! A Personal Remembrance

by Peter Garland

My relationship with Mexico began at exactly the same moment as my personal friendship with Conlon Nancarrow; for me the two will always be intertwined. One week after I entered Mexico—after shrimp and beer on the beach in Veracruz, a visit to the Totonac ruins of Zempoala where Cortez had his first contacts with the local Indians, followed by a visit to the old market in the center of Puebla City—we were sitting in Conlon and Yoko Nancarrow’s comfortable home in the southern part of Mexico City. In 1975, I was 23 years old and Conlon was 63. Thus began one of the most remarkable friendships of my life—one which influenced me as much personally as musically—and which lasted for 22 years, up to the year of his death in 1997.

The Mexican people have a lovely phrase for welcoming friends, which translates as “my house is your house;” and during the mid- and late-1970’s when I lived in Mexico, his house became my second home. With Conlon and Yoko I tried many foods for the very first time: chicharrón, maguey worms, the Aztec corn fungus, huitlacoche (which Yoko prepared in delicious crepes), chayote, squash flowers, mamey, and zapote negro (a soft persimmon-like fruit which was a favorite dessert in the Nancarrow household). Since in Mexico the main meal is eaten in mid-afternoon, by one o’clock it was time for the first aperitif of the day, in my case beer. Once Conlon discovered my taste for Mexican cerveza, I could always count on there being two cold six-packs in the refrigerator any time I arrived. Yoko would get home from work in time to supervise the preparation of the main meal. After the meal—which was almost always a culinary feast—there would be a period of rest (Conlon would wander off to his studio) until around five o’clock, when it was time to make the daily trip up to the espresso cafe, which then existed at the top of their street. Over cappuccinos or espressos, spirits and energies would revive, and the conversation (which seemed constantly ongoing, despite Conlon’s reputation for being a man of few words) would continue. We spent entire days—from breakfast until after a small late supper and perhaps some time listening to his music in his studio—talking.

At the time, perhaps what left the greatest impression on me was Conlon’s friendship with the painter and architect, Juan O’Gorman. The two of them together, elegant old men cracking jokes, O’Gorman with his cane and cigar, were quite a sight. I remember vividly an evening in 1975 when the conversation turned to the subject of Augusto Pinochet—and my wife’s and my embarrassment, as well as the look of exasperation on their faces, when it turned out we didn’t know who Pinochet was.

Since that first trip to Mexico, I have returned a dozen times or so, including several extended periods of residency. I have lived in the states of Oaxaca, Michoacán, Puebla, and Veracruz, and now speak fluent Spanish. Conlon used to joke that I, after a year and a half, knew more about Mexico than he did (that he only stayed in his “cave”—his studio—working). The other night, during a fiesta here in southern Veracruz, I was playing the jarocho music I’ve been studying with the young musicians in my hometown, and stepped up to a microphone for the very first time to sing verses of *La Bamba* to the people who created the song. I looked up at the full moon over the palm trees, and for some reason I thought of...Conlon. If only he could see me now! He would laugh, and be proud. Not only did he teach me about music, and—by his own example—about steadfastly keeping to one’s own vision and integrity; he also taught me about Mexico—his Mexico, which has now become my Mexico. Viva Conlon! Viva Mexico!

Para bailar La Bamba
Para bailar La Bamba
Se necesita una poca de gracia..... ■

Peter Garland was born in 1952 in Maine. He studied with Harold Budd and James Tenney at Cal Arts and has had long student-mentor friendships with Lou Harrison, Paul Bowles, and Dane Rudhyar. He edited and published *Soundings* for 20 years, and has written two books of essays on American music and culture. Garland is one of the 10 composers to be featured at Other Minds Festival VI in March 2000.

CONLON NANCARROW: LOST WORKS, LAST WORKS
New CD Release from Other Minds

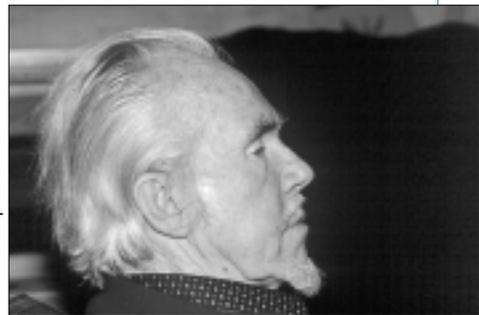
Hidden treasure is always thrilling, particularly when it means recovering the forgotten works of a great artist.

In spring 2000, the Other Minds CD label will release a selection of the previously unrecorded rarities of composer Conlon Nancarrow on a new and historic CD, *Lost Works, Last Works* (OM 1002). Along with Other Minds’ first CD release last year of *The Virtuoso Pianolist*, with English player-piano artist Rex Lawson, this Nancarrow recording extends the theme of the use of mechanical pianos in 20th century music.

Nancarrow, whose output consisted mostly of elaborately complex piano compositions realized by hand-punching holes in virgin player-piano rolls, died on August 10, 1997, in Mexico City, at the age of 84. He lived long enough to see his reputation rise from absolute obscurity (as late as age 58) to international new-music stardom by the time he appeared at our first Other Minds Festival in November 1993.

While the complete studies for player piano by Nancarrow are available on five CDs from Wergo Schallplatten, and other companies have released his music for live instrumental ensembles and solo piano, this will be the first look at the peripheral, but highly provocative, player piano output that was not released during the composer’s lifetime. These works will add new understanding to the extraordinary oeuvre of this composer—who was the first selected by the MacArthur Foundation in 1983 to initiate their famous “genius” awards.

The new release will include *Piece for Tape*, a dazzling rhythmic exercise in musique concrète. Nancarrow, in the early ‘50s, bought a tape recorder, recorded drum sounds on various segments of acetate, and spliced them together, in what was to be a precursor to his more elaborate piano roll projects. Making a piece of music in this manner is equivalent to running a marathon in the world of track and field. It takes an extraordinary single-mindedness and capacity for both mental and physical endurance.



© 1979 Philip Makanna

Conlon Nancarrow at home in Mexico City, 1979. Photo courtesy of Eva Soltes.

Listeners will also be treated to the composer’s own recording of his study for prepared player piano, his last compositions for player piano (made after the Wergo set was issued), and his work for a “Contraption” instrument by Trimpin, the Seattle-based, German-born sound sculptor/composer who collaborated with Nancarrow for many years. The instrument, consisting of a player piano with the bars of a marimba suspended in space above it, was installed last year at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Trimpin personally supervised Other Minds’ on-site recording of the installation in August 1999.

The CD will conclude with highlights from an interview I did with Nancarrow in Mexico City in 1977, when I produced four LPs of Nancarrow’s player piano studies for Tom Buckner’s 1750 Arch Records. The engineer on that engagement, and for my subsequent production of the studies for the Wergo set, was Robert Shumaker, who has lent his talents once again to this project. —Charles Amirkhonian

Lost Works, Last Works is made possible by a recording grant from the Aaron Copland Fund for Music.



A Composer for Mexico: Observations from the First Nancarrow Conference

From October 27-29, 1998, a conference celebrating the life and music of Conlon Nancarrow took place at the Escuela Nacional de Música, in Mexico City. It was organized by Yoko Nancarrow and composer Julio Estrada. For Yoko, it partially represented the end of a year of mourning her late husband; it also was a reaction to a lack of official recognition, by the Mexican cultural bureaucracy, of the death of a composer who spent 56 of his 84 years living in Mexico. And, too, it coincided with what would have been his 86th birthday (October 27). Conlon Nancarrow is a hero—perhaps not to the academic composers and the art bureaucrats, but to the youth of Mexico, the young composers, and those whose vision of music—and Mexico—is firmly planted in the future.

This contradiction was made clear by the fact that the majority of the invited guests were from the United States, and that most of the conference was presented in English. But what made this festival special was not so much the people invited, but rather the young people from Mexico who packed the conference and concerts. During the entire three days, there was not an empty seat to be found.

The invited speakers were myself, Charles Amirkhanian, Kyle Gann, Trimpin, Joel Sachs and Cheryl Seltzer, Ursula Oppens, Julio and Velia Estrada from Mexico, and Felix Meyer from the Sacher Foundation in Switzerland, which now owns Nancarrow's papers and player pianos. I have been invited now to three academic conferences in Mexico concerning Silvestre Revueltas (along with Nancarrow, Mexico's greatest composer, whose 100th birthday falls on December 31, 1999), and I've noticed that the people who normally attend these kinds of conferences are mostly those who have some vested career interest in the deceased composer. This was totally the opposite of the Nancarrow conference—people were here for the living music.



Charles Amirkhanian, Trimpin, and Peter Garland (left to right) standing in Conlon Nancarrow's player-piano studio in Mexico City, 1998.

The contrast between the Mexican and U.S. style of conference presentations couldn't have been more apparent. Julio Estrada and I came prepared with written papers (as did, in fairness, Kyle Gann). But our other "gringo" friends waltzed in with nothing more than their charm and their experience. In the case of Charles Amirkhanian and Trimpin, that proved to be more than enough (I missed Joel Sachs' and Ursula Oppens' talks, as they were directed more to performers). The young composers in the audience were particularly taken with Trimpin—his fresh and unorthodox approach to technology, and his sense of humor. Amirkhanian managed to turn some of his presentations into interview sessions, where he was the moderator and the others talked, a skill for which he is particularly known. Yoko Nancarrow gave a moving talk about her husband—about the person, and about his integrity, radicalism, and dedication to his music above and beyond any interest in success or fame.

Ursula Oppens gave a solo piano concert. Joel Sachs and Cheryl Seltzer played some of the arrangements for piano for four-hands by the late Yvar Mikhashoff. Trimpin presented a selection of Nancarrow's studies played "live" via his digital realizations of the original piano rolls. Sachs also directed the Mexico City ensemble, La Camarata, in performances of Nancarrow's chamber music, climaxing with the *Piece for Small Orchestra No. 2* (1986). The final concert was standing room only, with people sitting in the aisles. Afterwards, Yoko hosted a lavish party at the Nancarrow's house, the one that architect/painter Juan O'Gorman designed for them. At a certain point a large group of us went over to Conlon's studio, now half empty (with the pianos, papers, and music all at the Sacher Foundation)—and it was almost like visiting a shrine. For most of us who had been his close friends, it was an emotional moment, because Conlon's presence was still there; and after three around-the-clock days celebrating him and his music, we were all energized by the work itself and by the enormous public response. Now, in the empty, silent studio, we could imagine Conlon there alone, working late into the night, long after the party and the applause had ended.

—Peter Garland



A Preview of Other Minds Festival VI

(continued from page 1)

...and my instincts proved correct, for the next thing I knew I was being offered the chance to fill in for a year as Guest Artistic Director for Other Minds, a festival I had long admired, many times attended, and proudly performed in.

I hesitated—for a minute. Indeed, I could easily imagine contributing to the untraditional programming of the Other Minds Festival, which has become one of the most important annual events on the Bay Area music calendar. The festival's global scope and always-fascinating mix of composers, with their wide range of cultures, generations, and schools of musical thought, has been most remarkable. And when the always stellar roster of guest musicians are added—how could I refuse?

The research to put together this year's roster has been a lot of fun. While at times I turned to composers who were well known to me, such as Christian Wolff (whom I first met in 1974 at the summer courses for new music in Darmstadt, Germany) or Peter Garland (we studied together at Cal Arts back in the early '70s), others such as Annie Gosfield, David Lang and Dj Spooky were those I had encountered in the last ten years or so. Hyo shin Na has been an even more recent sighting on my radar. But the real surprise was the Dutch composer Jacob ter Veldhuis, whom I must confess I had never heard of until Charles Amirkhanian took me aside and said "I just heard the music of this madman in Paris. You MUST program him on Other Minds VI!"

As always, diversity is the key, as we ask the question "What will the 21st century sound like?" What can an elder statesman like Christian Wolff learn from a young Turk like Scanner? Can a Nubian oud player be influenced by a classically trained Korean now living in San Francisco? And will an anti-establishmentarian American, living in Mexico almost as a refugee, find common ground with a Yale-trained stalwart of the New York scene? I hope you'll drop by Other Minds VI to find out.

We offer you these 11 Other Minds VI artists, and urge you to hear them in person when they all converge on San Francisco this March:

Hamza el Din

is a brilliant oud player and composer, a long time jewel of the Bay Area, who originally hails from Nubia (now part of Egypt) and also lives part of the year in Tokyo. He has single-handedly created a new music, essentially a Nubian-Arabic fusion, but one in line with both traditions, and informed by Western conservatory training. In addition to his extensive solo recording and concertizing, he has engaged in a number of fascinating creative collaborations with artists such as Mickey Hart and Joan Jenrenaud.



Hamza el Din

Peter Garland

is a lifelong student of Native American musics, and has lived in New Mexico, California, Maine, and the states of Michoacan, Oaxaca and Puebla in Mexico, which has been his permanent home since 1997. His musical works after 1971 are marked by a return to a radical consonance and a simplification of formal structure influenced by Cage, Harrison, early minimalism, and an interest in world musics. Peter has worked with William Winant since 1972, and has had a long and close musical association with Aki Takahashi, both of whom will be on hand to perform his works at OM VI.

Annie Gosfield

has performed and/or collaborated with John Zorn, Elliott Sharp, Nurit Tilles, The Rova Saxophone Quartet, and many others including her long-time partner Roger Kleier. Much of her work explores combinations of traditional and non-traditional techniques: contrasting detuned or microtonally tuned instruments with equal-tempered scales, or combining a notated score with improvisational performance practices. With the help of the American Composers Forum (with funds from the Jerome Foundation), OM VI will present the world premiere of a work we commissioned from Annie, for double quartet (strings and percussion), inspired by the industrial sounds of a Siemens factory in Germany.



© Nola Lopez

Annie Gosfield

Leroy Jenkins

is a composer and violinist, and one of the most important musicians to emerge from the AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians), the legendary collective of which he still is a member. He has performed with an incredible roster of talents in creative music, including Cecil Taylor, Anthony Braxton, Albert Ayler, Archie Shepp, and Rahsaan Roland Kirk. He's composed for the Kronos Quartet, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and choreographer Bill T. Jones. OM VI will offer a great opportunity to see this virtuoso perform with his trademark inter-combination of jazz and classical influences.



Leroy Jenkins

David Lang

is a composer whose distinct sound fuses the tradition of classical music with urban aggressiveness, where melodies are accompanied by noise, and subtle harmonies are pulled apart by pounding rhythms. He returns to *Other Minds* after his success as part of our 1998 presentation of the *Bang on a Can All-Stars*. A native Californian who studied at Stanford and Yale, he now lives in New York, where he has galvanized audiences and critics, including Mark Swed, who wrote: "There is no name yet for this kind of music."



© James Pake

David Lang

Paul D. Miller aka Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid

is among the most noted (and notorious) proponents of turntablism, an approach to hip-hop and deejaying that merges avant-garde theories of *musique concrète* with the increased devotion paid to mixing techniques during the 1990s. Paul is a critical figure in spotlighting the DJ as a post-modern poet in his own right. Influenced equally by John Cage and Sun Ra as well as Kool Herc and Grandmaster Flash, few artists have done more to mainstream the DJ-as-artist concept than Paul. His appearance at *Other Minds VI* will be an excellent opportunity to see the range and versatility of this young performer/composer, who seems to draw from an infinite universe of sounds and cultural references.

Hyo shin Na

is the youngest person ever to receive the coveted Korean National Composers Prize (1994). Now living in San Francisco, she has had her music performed in numerous festivals in her native Korea, as well as in Malaysia, Japan, Israel, Germany, and throughout the U.S. In the Bay Area, her work has been performed by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Earplay, the Kronos Quartet, and others. For OM VI, we are inviting virtuoso kayagum (Korean zither) player Ji Young Yi to join us from Seoul to perform the world premiere of a new work by Hyo shin, supported in part by a grant from the Zellerbach Family Fund.

Robin Rimbaud aka scanner (See feature article on page 7)

Aki Takahashi

has delighted and astounded audiences, composers, and critics alike since her public debut in 1970. Whether performing with the hyper-virtuosity demanded by Xenakis, the profound simplicity of Garland or Feldman, or all that was required when she invited 47 international composers to arrange and recombine their favorite Beatles pieces, Aki has established an international reputation as one of today's foremost interpreters of contemporary music. For OM VI she'll be performing Peter Garland's *Bright Angels Hermetic Bird*, composed for her on the occasion of the passing of her husband, critic Kuniharu Akiyama.



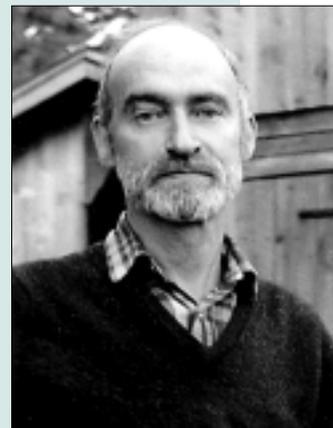
Aki Takahashi

Jacob ter Veldhuis

says he regards himself as a "late developer." He started his musical career in the '60s as a rock musician and studied at the Groningen Conservatory, where he was awarded the Dutch Composition Prize in 1980. Breaking through in the mid-1980s with harmonious compositions that have been called "straight from the heart and averse to intellectual concepts or complex techniques of a worn-out avant-garde, his music pleases the ear without ever becoming too sweet or indolent." Besides his instrumental writing, he also uses electronic sampling techniques to draw on sounds ranging from the Gulf War to Chet Baker to the Jerry Springer Show. For OM VI, the Onyx Quartet will present the U.S. premiere of his *Third String Quartet*, subtitled "There must be some way out of here," a reference all fans of Bob Dylan—and of Jimi Hendrix—will recognize immediately.

Christian Wolff

is a self-taught composer whose early contacts with John Cage, Morton Feldman, David Tudor, and Earle Brown (and later, Cornelius Cardew and Frederic Rzewski) helped form the direction of his work. Christian's music often involves both professional and lay players, who are allowed flexibility during the actual performance, and follow specially devised notations to make this practicable. For OM VI, we have drawn together an all-star ensemble featuring Fred Frith (guitar), Joan Jenrenaud (cello), Miya Masaoka (koto), Gordon Mumma (french horn), Bob Ostertag (sampler), William Winant (percussion), and Christian himself (on melodica), to perform his seminal work *Burdocks*. ■



Christian Wolff

➤ George Antheil Centennial Concert (continued from page 1)

...but now, with newly available technical resources, the full blast of this music, with its complementary battery of airplane propeller sounds, doorbells, sirens, gongs, xylophones, and bass drums, can be experienced by 21st century audiences. On June 16, 2000, Other Minds and the San Francisco Symphony will present a George Antheil Centennial Concert, featuring *Ballet Mécanique* and other works. With 16 Yamaha MIDI-controlled Disklavier grand pianos provided by Yamaha for this event, the evening's centerpiece promises to deliver a massive decibel level as well as a visual treat. You won't want to miss it: *Ballet Mécanique* is one of those legendary works that are often discussed, but rarely seen in full performance. At its 1925 Paris world premiere, it caused a near-riot, and made the composer an overnight *enfant terrible* star of modern music. "George had Paris by the ear!" Aaron Copland later remarked.

George Antheil (pronounced "ANN-tile"), was born in Trenton, New Jersey and from early childhood was fanatically involved in playing the piano, writing poetry and journalism, and other artistic pursuits. He studied music theory in Philadelphia with Constantine von Sternberg, a pupil of Liszt, and composition with Ernest Bloch, who taught him for free when he discovered that young Antheil was going without meals to pay for his private lessons. In the early 1920s, Bloch introduced him to Mary Louise Curtis Bok, founder of the Curtis Institute, who subsequently became his patron for about 15 years, enabling the young pianist to give up concertizing and live in Paris exclusively as a composer.

In his very entertaining autobiography, *Bad Boy of Music* (Doubleday & Doran, 1945; reissued by Samuel French, 1990), Antheil describes moving from Berlin to Paris in 1923. There he lived with his Hungarian wife, Böske Markus, in a tiny apartment located directly above the bookstore Shakespeare & Co., owned by Sylvia Beach. Beach, who published Joyce's *Ulysses*, introduced Antheil to the author, as well as to other modernist legends, including Pound, Eliot, and Ford Madox Ford. Antheil also counted among his friends such notables as Léger, Braque, Dali, Max Ernst, and Man Ray. Among musicians, Erik Satie was an admirer of Antheil's and vice versa.

Antheil's very brief life (he was only 58 when he died in 1959) was marked by sudden fame, a whirlwind of creative activity, and years of semi-obscure. His output comprised not only music composition, but journalism, book writing on various subjects, film scoring, innumerable essays, and an invention that presaged satellite communications. The beginning of the new century seems a perfect time to re-examine the work of this true rebel of 20th century music, whose wide influence is still not fully recognized.

When Michael Tilson Thomas, of the San Francisco Symphony, heard of our plans to produce the Antheil Centennial Concert, he proposed to include it in the first weekend of this year's incarnation of the American Mavericks Festival, the Symphony's innovative new-music festival, which last year featured a comprehensive, universally acclaimed retrospective of music by Igor Stravinsky. This year's event runs June 8-11, and will investigate the works of Carl Ruggles, Edgar Varèse, Charles Ives, Henry Cowell, and others whose works have been performed only rarely here by the Symphony.

The June 11th Antheil event will take place at Davies Symphony Hall over an entire day, including a panel discussion, slide lecture, and film showing. The panel discussion will feature former composition students Henry Brant and Benjamin Lees, Paul Lehrman, the arranger of the 16-piano version of the *Ballet Mécanique*, and other luminaries. In addition, German director Michael Meert will present the public premiere of his new film *Bad Boy of Music* (produced for German television), a meditation on Antheil, featuring actors filmed in Poland who portray the major characters in the composer's fascinating and tumultuous life. ■



© William Claxton

A 1950s William Claxton portrait of George Antheil in Hollywood, during his post-Paris years, when he worked as a composer of film scores.

"Riots came rather to be the order of the day at my concerts because I was one of the few pianists of that period always to end a concert with a modern group, preferably of the most 'ultra order."

... My piano was wheeled out on the front of the stage, before the huge Léger cubist curtain, and I commenced playing. Rioting broke out almost immediately. I remember Man Ray punching somebody in the nose in the front row. Marcel Duchamp was arguing loudly with somebody else in the second row. In a box near by Erik Satie was shouting, 'What precision! What precision!' and applauding. The spotlight was turned on the audience by some wag upstairs. It struck James Joyce full in the face, hurting his sensitive eyes. A big burly poet got up in one of the boxes and yelled, 'You are all pigs!' In the gallery the police came in and arrested the surrealists who, liking the music, were punching everybody who objected.

From George Antheil's autobiography, *Bad Boy of Music* (1945).

GEORGE ANTHEIL CENTENNIAL DOUBLE-CD SET (Other Minds OM 1003/04) two-CD set due May 2000

In late spring 2000, Other Minds will release a two-CD set of historical recordings spanning the later career of George Antheil, who would have been 100 years old on July 8, 2000. Included will be items from his now extremely rare SPA LPs from the early 1950s and recordings of Antheil's voice, previously unreleased.

Highlights of this two-disc release will include a forgotten but exquisite work composed for, and performed by, the Roger Wagner Chorale with Antheil on piano, *Eight Fragments from Shelley*; his *Symphony no. 5*, premiered by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, and recorded in the U.S. by F. Charles Adler (founder of SPA records), conducting a hand-picked ensemble of the best Viennese orchestral players; two pieces for narrator and piano, with Vincent Price reading odes by Keats as Antheil accompanies at the keyboard; some rare, one-of-a-kind 78 rpm homemade discs of Antheil playing piano and even singing; a 1958 interview with the composer, made by Truman Fisher for KPPC Radio in Pasadena; and an interview I conducted in 1979 with Hannah Adler (widow of Charles Adler) and Norman Fox, SPA executive producer, in Saratoga Springs, New York.

The release is scheduled to coincide with Other Minds' co-presentation with the San Francisco Symphony of a George Antheil Centennial Concert in June 2000. — Charles Amirkhian

For information on ordering CDs on the Other Minds label, refer to back cover.

Sitting on a bench next to a bag of records, Scanner flips through his date-book in an unnaturally natural corner of New York's Washington Square Park. The British electronic musician's head is exceptionally large around the brain part, the exceptional largeness of which lends a certain authority to his already authoritative musings on the "invisible sounds of technology." Having made a career out of working with these sounds, he's an expert on the matter. And having a head as large as his, he looks the part of the expert. His fingers flip past pages of calendar dates and phone numbers until they reach a small chart matching cities from Barcelona to Zurich with numbers beside them. The numbers look innocuous enough, but, representing electronic frequency ranges used around the world, they serve as Scanner's secret codes.

Using an extended shortwave radio scanning device, Scanner, or Robin Rimbaud, mines the ceaseless airborne signals of cell phones, fax machines, microwave ovens, urban power grids, police communication channels, satellite transmissions and the like for sounds ranging from human voices to oddly musical tones and crackles. In his work, these sounds act as phantom reminders of electronic music's alienness. "I like the impermanence of these sounds," Rimbaud says, as a park-goer strolled by with a handheld radio, seemingly on cue. "There's a magical quality to it. It's almost like ... hearing ghosts."

In the 1950s, experimental musician and theorist John Cage wrote somewhat cryptically, "Mostly, right now, there is painting and sculpture, and just as formerly when starting to be abstract, artists referred to musical practices to show that what they were doing was valid, so nowadays, musicians, to explain what they are doing, say, 'See, the painters and sculptors have been doing it for quite some time.'"

The '50s are long gone. When it comes to art forms addressing technology as a subject, music is back on top. By using the actual sounds of technology, Rimbaud injects himself under its silver skin, mapping its obscured nerve endings and exposing otherwise private forms of communication in ways visual art never could. Scanner albums, including the recent *Lauwarm Instrumentals* (Sulphur Records/Beggars Banquet), have beats. But his more fittingly fleeting public works—BBC radio plays, countless art installations, a recent sound-design commission for a new digital wing at the Science Museum in London—are snatches of an environment, both physically and metaphysically.

It's fitting that a man more fascinated by the sound of engines than by the FM station drowning them out would make music explicitly about the act of listening. He first made a name for himself as Scanner by manipulating bits of sampled phone calls plucked out of less than thin air. His scanning device allows him to pick up what he lovingly calls "sonic debris" in real time within a one-mile radius of the machine. As a former student of literature, he uses these snippets of conversation, oftentimes one-sided, as a blank narrative construct to which we almost instinctively attach a narrative arc.

"There's a great term, 'repaired indexicality,' which sociologists use for replies to unasked questions, where people repair a thought," he says. "It's a phrase I like to apply to sound. If you take beats and cut them up so there's nothing where the next beat should fall, you repair it in your head automatically. You know where it should go. That's what happens with the telephone calls. If you can't hear what the other person is saying, you repair the conversation." There's a certain sense of dread surrounding Scanner's methods. By accessing spaces traditionally considered private, his work evokes questions about piracy and motives and intent. And the alien electronic undercurrent to it all isn't exactly soothing. At a show in New York last year, Rimbaud said he quickly turned the channel when he realized he was broadcasting a discussion of funeral arrangements to an entire

audience. His methods certainly are voyeuristic in nature, and potentially illegal, and his sounds are a far cry from sweet soul music. Rimbaud acknowledges this, but he also speaks romantically about the subtle subversion in using technology as a creative means.

"These questions are important to ask. Freedom of information is an important issue outside music that the work touches on," he said. "And it suggests the vulnerability of these kinds of systems, of technology. You'd like to think as technology continues to develop, it would be more secure, when in fact, it just gets easier to break into. And my work plays into that. The important thing

is that we're allowed access to these tools that watch us and listen to us, that acknowledge who we are. It's when they're held in the power of somebody else that they can be quite scary." ■

In a rare San Francisco appearance, Robin Rimbaud—better known as Scanner—will be journeying from London to be one of the featured composers at Other Minds Festival VI. Rimbaud has been dubbed a "telephone terrorist" and a "techno-data agitator," scavenging today's electronic communications highways in search of raw materials for his stunning and disquieting aural collages. In addition to his work as a composer and musician, Rimbaud is a writer, media critic, and host of London's monthly digital club, the Electronic Lounge.

This article originally appeared in Salon.com on August 5, 1999. Reprinted with permission from Salon.

"WHO TOLD YOU YOU COULD DO THAT?"

A letter from Errolyn Wallen

As I sit here in the Californian spring sunset in my large studio with a friendly grand piano surrounded by my scores, manuscript paper, and favourite pencils, I am in perfect silence, with only the mountains and the distant, glinting sea blocking my view of forever. The craggy, heart-stopping beauty of the 600 acres with its panoply of redwood, madrone and oak trees, all mine to roam, has reduced a grown composer to tears. What could I have possibly done to deserve all this?

Well, although England seems ineluctably far away, it was actually *New Notes* which started the first whispers of discovery which were to turn eventually into the roar of the 777 aeroplane which brought me here. A few years ago Charles Amirkhanian, a composer, broadcaster, and Director of the Other Minds Festival, was looking through a copy of *New Notes* and saw some information on me

and my music. He contacted me in England and after hearing some of my work, invited me to take part in the fifth Other Minds Festival taking place in San Francisco in spring 1999. Charles wanted San Francisco to hear examples of

both my classical music and my popular songs. Charles has (metaphorically speaking) ears larger than an elephant and a musical openness to match. He is responsible for, amongst other things, bringing Conlon Nancarrow and Laurie Anderson to a wider audience. Participating composers in previous Other Minds Festivals have included John Cage, Philip Glass, La Monte Young, Julia Wolfe, and Tan Dun. The 1999 line-up, apart from myself, consisted of Alvin Lucier, Luc Ferrari, Julian Priestler, Sam Rivers, Linda Bouchard, Mary Ellen Childs, and António Pinho Vargas. The special guest performer was Margaret Leng Tan (the "dinky diva of the toy piano"). Between us we covered every conceivable style and approach to writing music known this century. And some.

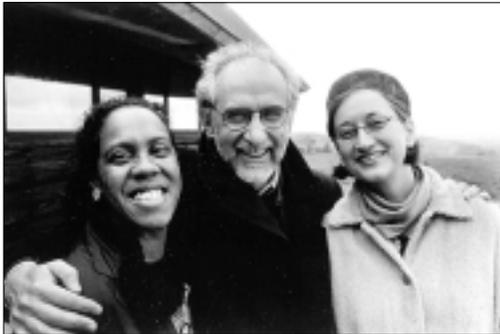
In his capacity as Director of the Other Minds Festival, Charles had spent two years travelling to find us all and he brought us to the mountains of the Djerassi Resident Artists Program, which is a ranch an hour from San Francisco, so that we could talk to each other and share ideas and philosophies of music-making. It was an exhilarating and stimulating four days that we spent together and I know of no other festival which includes this type of 'summit pow-wow.' We then descended on San Francisco and the Cowell Theater by the bay looking over to the Golden Gate Bridge for three days of performances of our music and pre-concert panel discussions. The presentation of the Other Minds Festival was excellent, with none of that sense of apology and worthiness that can visually wither so many concerts of contemporary music. There was plenty of preparation and rehearsal time and ample scheduled time for sound checks and lighting. (I happily chose a sea-to-sky blue for the projected back-drop for my new viola piece, *Rapture*.) The theater was full every night and members of the audience felt free and, indeed, were encouraged to come up and talk with composers and performers. I even met former neighbors from Greenwich!

One day Alvin Lucier told us a funny story (and he is full of them) about the day he was playing his music to some young school-children. After listening intently to the mesmerizing sound sculptures which explore the very basis of sound, a little boy asked Alvin, "Who told you you could do that?"

We live in a world of rigid categories and not-so-musical boxes but Charles Amirkhanian has proved, through his vision, courage, and passport that

people will pay to come and hear astonishing music presented with joyful eclecticism—even when the Oscars are going on just up the road...

After the Other Minds Festival was over, the firm-and-fast friended composers bade their adieus. I was lucky enough to be coming back to the Djerassi ranch for a month's residency of solid composing, joined by artists in other disciplines, all working in their own studios. All falling under the spell of the immense beauty of this place. Who told me I could do that? Well, there is this wonderful American musician called Charles Amirkhanian who was browsing through *New Notes* one day... ■



© 1999 John Fago

Errolyn Wallen (left) with António Pinho Vargas and Mary Ellen Childs at the Djerassi Resident Artists Program, during the residency portion of the 1999 Other Minds Festival. "I know of no other festival which includes this type of summit pow-wow," the composer says.

Errolyn Wallen is a Belize-born composer who now lives in London. She was a featured composer at Other Minds Festival V in 1999, only her second U.S. appearance and her first on the West Coast. The San Francisco Chronicle (March 27, 1999) called her Other Minds Festival appearance a "most exciting discovery." This letter originally appeared in the May 1999 issue of New Notes, published monthly in London by spnm, and is reprinted here courtesy of the author and spnm.

Robin Kirck, Friend of New Music

Other Minds notes with sadness the passing of Robin Kirck, for many years one of the pivotal figures in the promotion and presentation of new music in San Francisco. She died on December 4, 1999, at the age of 53, of cancer.

Robin was one of the West Coast's leading fund raisers and producers for practitioners of the emerging experimental music tendencies, which encompassed minimalism, rock-infused, and world music based styles, as well as builders of new instruments and sound installations. She produced works by Paul Dresher, Anthony Davis, Peter Sellars, Jon Hassell, Rinde Eckert, and George Coates, among others.



Robin Kirck

A native of Los Angeles and a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, Robin Kirck's Bay Area music career began when she was hired in 1970 as a part-time receptionist at KPFA Radio. She was soon tapped by Robert Ashley, director of the Center of Contemporary Music at Mills College in Oakland, to be his administrative director during a period of substantial organizational growth, before moving on to The Exploratorium, San Francisco's innovative science museum. There, with the blessing of Exploratorium founder Frank Oppenheimer, Kirck began the "Speaking of Music" series and invited scores of composers from around the country to explain the inner workings of the compositional process before live audiences. She directed the 1981 New Music America Festival in San Francisco, and from 1983-84 served as Associate Director of the American Music Center.

Having worked so hard to support and encourage many composers who otherwise might not have been recognized, Robin Kirck is regarded by Other Minds as one of our predecessors in seeking to enliven the Bay Area contemporary music scene. She will be sorely missed by her many friends. She is survived by her husband Paul Dresher, her son Cole, 6, and her mother, Rowie Kirck.

Other Minds Abroad: Amirkhanian and Law Awarded Rockefeller Foundation's First Ella Holbrook Walker Fellowship

It may be one of the art world's most enviable residencies. In August 1999, OM Executive Director Charles Amirkhanian and his wife, visual artist Carol Law, were awarded an 11-month sojourn at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Conference Center, a palatial villa overlooking Lake Como. As the Foundation's first Ella Holbrook Walker Fellows, the two host visiting artists, scholars, and executives, while also having time to pursue their own artistic projects. In December, Charles presented *Im Frühling* (1990), which he describes as a work in which "natural sounds imitate 20th century orchestral music—the opposite of the Smetana-Dvorak type tone poem in which the orchestra imitates nature." Accompanied by a new video piece made by Carol, the work was performed in Milan's 600-seat Teatro Franco Parenti, alongside the work of five Italian composers.

Other Minds Welcomes Carl Stone as Guest Artistic Director

During Charles Amirkhanian's time in Italy, OM is delighted to have Carl Stone as Guest Artistic Director and Executive Director *pro tem*. Carl has been hailed by the *Village Voice* as "one of the best composers working in the country today." Composing electro-acoustic and computer music since 1972, Carl's works have been performed in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Asia, Australia, South America, and the Near East.

In addition to his work as a composer, Carl has a long history of working with new-music organizations. In 1985, he was Co-Artistic Director (with Joan La Barbara) for



Carl Stone and his Macintosh Powerbook G3, which is central to his electronic-based compositions and live performances.

the New Music America Festival in Los Angeles. He worked as Director of Meet the Composer/California from 1981-1996, and has served as a board member of the American Music Center since 1983, acting as president of that organization from 1992-1996.

Carl has received numerous awards for his work

(see page 9 for the most recent), and has worked with some of the today's foremost musicians, choreographers, and visual artists. For more on Carl's work, concert schedule, and recordings, visit his very impressive web site at www.sukothai.com.

Recent Funders and Sponsors

Other Minds acknowledges a generous \$30,000 grant from the **Rockefeller Foundation Multi-Arts Production (MAP) Fund** to support a major new dual commission for the 2001 season. Details will soon be announced. The City of San Francisco's **Voluntary Arts Contribution Fund** awarded a \$5,000 capital grant to OM to support new equipment needs associated with its move to new offices in summer 1999. **Meet the Composer Fund** awarded OM a grant totalling \$2,500 to support the educational activities of composers at OM VI. A \$1,500 award from the **Zellerbach Family Fund** will support a new work by Hyo shin Na. Recent grants of \$1,000 each were also received from the **Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts** and the **Virgil Thomson Foundation**. Special thanks to **Marc Weinstein** and **Amoeba Records** for their sponsorship of OM VI. The more obscure labels or hard-to-find releases of Other Minds' composers, past and present, can almost always be found at Amoeba's stores in San Francisco and Berkeley. For our visiting composers, Amoeba is often a must-see destination during their visits.

Special Gatherings of Other Minds

Hearing Margaret Leng Tan play her toy pianos up close in a private concert is a rare and exquisite pleasure. A group of OM's friends experienced just that at a March 1999 fund-raising dinner held in the private dining room of PlumpJack restaurant in San Francisco. For their support, we thank all our guests, including Dale Djerassi, Peggy Dorfman, Fran and Mortimer Fleishhacker, PlumpJack proprietor Billy Getty, Vanessa Jarman, Ira Nowinsky, Henry and Carola Rosenthal, Curtis Smith, and Winsor Soule. Special thanks to Margaret for her special appearance, PlumpJack, and designer and OM board member Stephen Weaver, who organized an evening beautiful in every detail. In September 1999, at the home of Jim and Jeanne Newman, over 40 guests helped welcome Trimpin to San Francisco. The Labor Day weekend gathering recognized OM's closest supporters and friends, who were treated to a fascinating talk and slide show by Trimpin. Composer, scholar, and new board member Belinda Reynolds was also welcomed at the event. Special thanks to Jeanne Newman for her extraordinary efforts and a lavish vegan buffet. ■

A Gathering of Other Minds 1999-2000

Other Minds is grateful to the following individuals and institutions for their generous support.

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San Francisco Examiner
March 19, 1999



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Photo of Dj Spooky by Phyllis Galembo
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Where did we get the name "Other Minds"?

Inspiration for Other Minds' organizational name was found in an unsigned obituary for John Cage that appeared in *The New Yorker*, soon after Cage's death on August 12, 1992. The obituary said that for Cage, "A suitable epitaph might be: He composed music in others' minds." Interestingly, the ethnomusicologist John Blacking, in his *How Musical is Man?*, points out that there is a Balinese expression, "the other mind," referring to an altered state achieved through music and dance. John Cage spoke of similar experiences engendered by enlightened listening. The name "Other Minds" is indeed a resonant one—after all, its acronym is OM. —Mitchell Clark



Paul D. Miller/Dj Spooky

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OTHER MINDS

Other Minds Events Spring/Summer 2000 Program Information

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General \$16 / Students & seniors \$12
Festival Pass \$40 / Students & seniors \$30
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OPUS415 New Music Marathon: For tickets, call the Theater Artaud box office at (415) 621-7797.
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George Antheil Centennial Concert: Tickets will be available through the San Francisco Symphony box office at (415) 864-6000. Further details to be announced.

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