

Since I am a composer, and music is my most direct and effective language, I shall speak to you today primarily through music. This, of course, is made possible by the skill of the performing artists. Thus, I would like to begin by acknowledging three performers and interpreters of my music whom I greatly respect and whom I am most pleased to have here with me today: Chris, Mary Lou and Evan...

I would like to turn now to some autobiographical and introductory remarks concerning the CANTOS FOR THE END OF SUMMER, piano works of mine that will be subsequently performed by Christine Clegg. Firstly, I have always been involved with composing music. It is not something I chose as a career--it is, and has been, my lifestyle. Thus, all else that occurs in my life is in some way related to the music and seen through a musical and creative perspective. My emotional life is not separate from my musical life. Movement, gesture and energy are all modes of expression that ultimately have a musical correlation. Thus, for me, as for most of you in this room, music is not a 9 to 5 job, it is a life.

For me, non-musical events become elements within a musical composition. This is not achieved programmatically or suggestively (despite my use of titles), but rather because I consider that we react to patterns of life as we react to patterns in music. These reactions are initially non-verbal. With no need for words, they can be transmitted through music as shapes and forms, reactions and reflections. There is such a thing as a musical sense of humor, musical longing, musical drama and imagery. These have no verbal translation. Because music is able to speak directly--architecturally and emotionally--it is a powerful language.

If music can be seen as shape, direction, the ebb and flow of energy, duration, endurance, pain and release, laughter, then I say that music is form--the conscious or subconscious ordering of events--a reflection of the universe. When I speak of form, I do not necessarily refer to pre-set structures: ABA, rounded binary, sonata allegro form. Rather, I speak of the form that mirrors life. I speak of the form that is inherent in all that we encounter, for there is a unifying factor--the diverse events are perceived by one. All that we experience is understood and shaped in terms of our associations. This gives it form.

Events unfold in time. Musical events unfold in time. Our ideas occur, grow and recur. The past and the present are fused. The way in which we shape our experiences can be paralleled in music, for it is an art which uses time as an expressive element. There is a meaning to events in time...time becomes an adjective in defining form...and form becomes both the content and the continuity.

CANTOS FOR THE END OF SUMMER show no distinction between musical and non-musical perceptions. They are reflections expressed in patterns and forms...sculptures of time...non-verbal poems. I would like to have you hear them now.

*Convocation at University of Connecticut in observance of Women in The Arts*

*Week - March 30, 1981*

*Buryeth Walker (composer) Christine Clegg (pianist)*

*Mary Lou Rylands (cellist) Evan Williams (choreographer - dancer)*

INNER DANCES is my latest work, composed specifically for today's convocation. The choreographer, Evan Williams, and I both teach at the Hartford Conservatory. We have been anxious to collaborate on music and dance projects, and this is our first joint creation.

As we rehearsed with Christine and Mary Lou on this stage, it became evident the great extent to which music and dance is a unique type of chamber music. The performers must be sensitive to each other, most specifically in rhythmic precision. Such elements as tempo, phrasing, gesture and location on the stage became considerations. The music was composed first and then choreographed, but during rehearsals the nuances of musical interpretation were adapted to the movement of the dancer, and vice-versa. There are times when the dancer leads the musicians...and other times when she fills the more traditional role of expressing the music. At all times, however, the fusion of the music and dance is complete.

INNER DANCES is a set of 3 short dances framed by an invocation, which serves to call in the spirit of dance, and an exodus, bidding farewell to the dance. Active movement is not achieved until partially into the first dance, when the musical fragments coalesce into a solid meter. This first dance is characterized by hesitation, as though it were waiting to begin itself. The other 2 dances need no explanation. As the invocation had descended from high to low pitches, bringing down the spirit of dance, so the exodus rises off into 'cello harmonics and movement ceases.

Both the composer and choreographer value lyricism and laughter, separately and in juxtaposition. I consider this a fortunate bond. Moments of subtle humor in the music can become extremely funny on the stage, while lyrical passages are enhanced through visual, personal expression. The power of the music is heightened. Thus, INNER DANCES represents "Music and Sister Arts" in how they may work together.

POEMS: BETWEEN THE LINES...I would now like to discuss possible relationships between poetry and music. I have composed quite a few songs and anthems setting poetry to music, but today I choose to present a piece for solo 'cello entitled IN MEMORIAM written in the spirit of the poetry of Richard C. Raymond. I would like to explain why a composer might choose to write music after a poem rather than literally setting words to music.

Let me begin by discussing what poetry means to me. A poem is more than a succession of words. It is more than a summation of words. A poem speaks through images that are far broader than words. As we interpret the poem, we draw in our associations which further enlarge the scope of the poem. The space of the words on the page may be small, but their message is infinite, for their essence lies between the lines.

I have found, in times of most acute emotion, a comradeship in poetry. The poets have the courage to confront and unearth the most personal and painful of experiences. They give to us the solace that our own solitude and anguish are not ours alone to bear. Poets, the individuals, often considered to be the outcasts, becomes agents of a communal bonding.

*May Sarton?*

Poetry has long been important to me. There are some poems which lend themselves to be set to music in the form of songs. This I have done with the utmost of reverence, striving always to remain sensitive to the essence of the poem and remaining aware of the pitfall of superficial word-painting.

However, there are many poems, some of my favorites, which I would never attempt to render into song...their message is too complete, too fragile. I take for example the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas. His poetry has a rhythm and a music of its own. The words sing...they dance. They paint and sculpt a projection of themselves. Let me read you the opening stanza of his poem AND DEATH SHALL HAVE NO DOMINION as an example of what I consider to be poetry that would not benefit by being set as a song:

*Dylan Thomas*

I would not set these words to music. I would not match musical phrase to poetic line. The paragraphs, the shapes, the ring of vowels and consonants are sacred to me...BUT, between the lines lies my expression. The poet is saying more than can be said in words, and here is where the sensitive musician may listen and create.

It is in this spirit that I composed IN MEMORIAM for Richard C. Raymond--the poet, my uncle and my friend. He was a man of anger, passion and compassion. He riled against injustice, including the injustice of his own premature death. He left unreconciled...

I would like to read the closing lines from his poem JOURNEY AT THE TURN OF THE YEAR and then conclude the convocation with the performance of IN MEMORIAM.

*Journey at the Turn of the Year*