deliberately invoking the late Brahms by the title) is his testament, balancing a hope for the future with regret and even bitterness for the past.

This biography well illustrates the dilemmas of a political musician, and is well worth reading. Perhaps, someday, we may hear the best of Eisler's music. P.J.S.

Soundpieces: Interviews with American Composers
by Cole Gagne and Tracy Caras
Scarecrow Press, 418 pages, $22.50.

Reviewed by Kyle Gann

In a healthy culture, differing musical philosophies would be coexistent, not mutually exclusive.—Harry Partch

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Since virtually no American musical aesthetic born in the last forty years has died out, and new ones still seem to be appearing with some regularity, it is tempting to conclude that American culture is becoming healthier by default. Perhaps most of the publications devoted to new music (one need only mention *Perspectives* and *Source* magazines) have focused on one aesthetic viewpoint to the exclusion of others. This blind man's posture tends to prove that American music is indeed very like a rope, while veiling in verbiage the implication that the elephant's ear is not a valid part of the creature. In contrast to these publications, *Soundpieces: Interviews with American Composers* documents this new cultural health with a diversity and a delicate balance that make the mind reel. Imagine walking into a small room and finding John Cage, Aaron Copland, Philip Glass, Charles Wuorinen, Conlon Nancarrow, and nineteen more equally diverse composers. Then imagine opening a book and finding these composers' views on the same subjects side by side. An argument between Monteverdi and Debussy could hardly create such a culture shock.

Soundpieces is the proud result of the labors of Cole Gagne, now assistant editor of the *Old House Journal*, and Tracy Caras, a Manhattan lawyer. The book is an extension of their work at New York's WFUV-FM radio during their student days. The title is itself a tribute to an American composer who never received his deserved recognition, and whose importance is now beginning to be realized: John J. Becker. Becker used the title "Soundpiece" for eight of his more experimental compositions in order to relieve them of the terrible European historical burden carried by the terms "sonata," "string quartet," etc. This refusal to conform to expectations takes as many forms throughout the book as there are interviews.

The twenty-four composers represented range forty-six years apart in age, from Roger Sessions (b. 1896) to Charles Dodge (b. 1942). No stylistic bias is apparent in the selection. The only criterion seems to have been a degree of acceptance within the musical community, and the result is something like the state of new music as perceived by the mind of God. The pan-aesthetic approach is carried out consistently within each interview, Gagne and Caras taking a general tack and a particular one by alternation. The interviewers have manifestly done their homework, and sympathetically lead each composer through a discussion of his/her output from the earliest significant composition to the work currently in progress. Within this basic format, each composer is tested with three touchstones of recent music: serialism, electronic music, and aleatory techniques, each of which sends most of them running to one side or the other.

These composers differ in no way more than in their articulateness and the kinds of things they will say about their music. Milton Babbitt is finally given a chance to refute his "who cares if you listen" image, and his comments on electronic music should be a definitive defense of that medium against future charges of inhumanness and uninterpretability. Copland's neglect of the electronic medium turns out to be more practical than aesthetic: "I feel lucky if I push a switch and the light goes on." Ralph Shapey sparks and flashes like a truckload of flint, giving a scathing indictment of the music publishing industry. Phil Glass confides that his own entry into publishing has become his largest source of income, and emerges through this and other comments about opera and performing as the most economically astute composer around.

John Cage has been too articulate, and his ideas too widely disseminated, for his followers to expect any new revelations here, though a few older points are refined somewhat; and although Morton Feldman is less warm and interesting than in his franker interview with ex-student Peter Gena in last spring's issue of *TriQuarterly*, he still tosses off some of his unique insights into the history of Western culture. Of the Wagner-Brahms controversy, Feldman says, "Brahms lost. He lost like Teddy Kennedy lost, with everybody cheering." Old-timer Henry Brant is refreshingly more radical than many of the younger composers. His purpose in writing music, he says, is "not to experience hot-blooded feelings myself, but to upset the feelings of others."

In revealing a panorama, the interviews also freeze a moment of time of a landscape that keeps changing in ever more subtle ways. Though the lines of division in American music are still clearly drawn, all sides have matured since the aesthetic confrontations of the Sixties, and disparagement of an opposing compositional method is usually carefully avoided. Faced with

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Kyle Gann, a Chicago composer, was recently the administrative assistant for New Music America '82.

NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

The following programs will be broadcast in March over many of the NPR member stations throughout the country via a new satellite distribution system that insures the highest transmission quality.
Check local listings for date of broadcast. This information is published by Musical America as a public service.

SAINT LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Gerhardt Zimmerman conducts: Haydn's Symphony No. 73 in D; Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 2 in D minor (Sergiu Luca); and Symphony No. 1 in F by Shostakovich.

Leonard Slatkin conducts: Debussy's Three Nocturnes (The Saint Louis Symphony Women's Chorus); and Wagner's "A Faust Overture"; flute concertos by Stamitz and Nielsen (Jean-Pierre Rampal).

Leonard Slatkin conducts: Haydn's Symphony No. 17 in F; Mozart's Concerto Rondo in E-flat K. 371; Hindemith's Horn Concerto; and "Harold in Italy" by Berlioz. (Barry Tuckwell, horn; Thomas Dumm, viola)

Leonard Slatkin conducts: Brahms' "Tragic Overture"; Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5; and Berlioz's "Les Nuits d'ete" (Claudine Carlson, mezzo-soprano).

BERLIN PHILHARMONIC CENTENNIAL

Seiji Ozawa conducts: Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1, Opus 21 (Krystian Zimmerman); and Berlioz's "Symphonie fantastique."

GRAND PIANO

Ivan Davis: Beethoven's Sonata No. 21 in C; and Chopin's Andante Spianato and Grand Polonaise.

Michael Gurt: Bach's English Suite No. 2 in A minor; "Cherea" by Marescotti; and Sonata in B minor by Liszt.

Detlef Kraus: all-Brahms program

Mischa Levitzki: Rare recordings featuring works of Liszt.

Paul Jacobs: Six Chorale Preludes by Brahms and Busoni; Elliott Carter's "Night Fantasies": Preludes, Book II, by Debussy; and Schoenberg's "Six Little Pieces."

Joao Carlos Martins: Bach's Twenty-four Preludes from the "Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I. and Chopin preludes played by **Arthur Lima.**

SAINT PAUL SUNDAY MORNING

Ars Musica, "A Baroque Orchestra," program to be announced.

"Musical Offering": Concerto in E minor, Opus 37, by Boismortier; Telemann's Quartet in G minor and Concerto in A minor; Sonata in D minor by Fasch; and Vivaldi's Concerto for flute, oboe, violin, bassoon and continuo.

The Deller Consort: Music from the Court of Henry VIII and Elizabethan England.

CONCERTGEBOUW ORCHESTRA OF AMSTERDAM, Bernard Haitink, conductor.

Haydn's Symphony No. 92 ("Oxford"); Stravinsky's "Jeu de Cartes"; and Brahms' Symphony No. 2.

Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 7 ("Song of the Night").

Ravel's "Valses Nobles et Sentimentales"; "Movements" by Kueris; and "Symphonie fantastique" by Berlioz.

Book Reviews

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the continued health and prosperity of a rival, most wise men will tone down their polemics. The single point on which all twenty-four composers seem to agree is that electronic music takes too long to make. Take note of that; anything that this diverse a group of professionals all believe must be God's truth.

Gagne and Caras have done their work well. Near the end of his interview, Babbitt admits that "now I've said more about my music than I've probably ever said before," and he is probably not alone. As former radio programmers, the interviewers have wisely tended to center their questions around works available on record whenever possible. I found myself pulling out many an old record I had forgotten about and listening with fresh ears. The exhaustive list of compositions (with dates) following each interview gives the book some value as a reference work. One could hope to see this work continued, and I would like to suggest Christian Wolff, Terry Riley, Meredith Monk, and Frederic Rzewski for the next volume. Such a work would be an amazing documentation of a moment in the history of music, and a moment as complex and self-contradictory as this deserves such documentation. Someday, someone will want to know what the whole elephant looked like. **MA**

Szeryng

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that's really the only thing that matters. I have had over eight hundred students whom I can remember, so they must have been highly talented. But a long time ago I asked myself whether I should try to help only those who were born with great gifts and abandon those who were less talented. And I think the answer is no—those who are less gifted also deserve our attention and honest encouragement, though you must convey to them the truth and only the truth. I think young violinists all over the world know that my door is always open to them. As I enter my second half-century of activity, I'm glad I'm still able to help young musicians not only through my checkbook but through my ten fingers."

Szeryng feels that his teaching activities offer one means of continuing his influence after he lays down his bow. "Your name may live longer," he says, "your music goes on circulating somewhere in the universe." To the same end, he has also given away some of the fine instruments he has acquired over the years. His favorite Stradivarius, the 1734 "Hercules," he renamed the "Kinnor David" (David's Harp) and presented to the Israel Philharmonic, where it is shared by the two concertmasters. His 1683 Guarnerius "Santa Teresa" has similarly gone to the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico. He still retains a 1743 Guarnerius, "Le Duc." Of the instruments that are gone he says simply: "You cannot play all your violins at the same time."

Like many of today's violinists, Szeryng takes a hand at conducting occasionally, but says he has no intention of making a career of it. "I've been doing it since 1959," he says reflectively. "It's all *right to conduct* Baroque, Mozart, early Beethoven. But I feel that conducting is a profession in itself. I don't want to repeat

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