

ONDAY

2

widely regarded as the country's
orms at 8 tonight at the Civic
Tickets are \$10-\$18; reservations

solo autographs copies of his book
:30 to 6:30 today in the library of
stitute, Columbus at Jackson. The
1th artist and illustrator Bernie
ck Helbig, is based on the movie of
is a fictionalized, satirical account
ice in Saint Louis; it will be for sale
s free. More at 443-3700.

TUESDAY

3

espeare's Birthday Party and
thom will be held from 10 to 2
Damen Hall at Loyola University.
154 sonnets will be read at a rather
econds per sonnet, with a few
eaningful pauses. Refreshments
th details at 670-2860.

Chicago and the American
a and associate professor of
irs at Northwestern, will address a
of Midland Authors at 5:30 this
ry Library, 60 W. Walton. He will
used to determine who would be
nd describe how Chicago figures as
ese writers. \$5, \$4 for members;
1.

s concert series expands to include
itals on Tuesday evenings,
h a performance by cellist Tanya
nist Alexander Braginsky at 8 in
rial Chapel at the University of
ilawn. The series continues through
in the tradition established by Dame
rid War II in London, are free.

WEDNESDAY

4

or's Chair has invited San Francisco
1 Sher to screen her work at 6:30
New Television, 11 E. Hubbard. A
des the screening, with a question
terward. Admission is free;
ation.

THURSDAY

5

t forward takes on new meaning in the
s fun fact, circulatory disorders,
iney disorders, and arthritis are
is that are often first detected in the
e Jam-nastics Exercise Center, which
screenings from 6 to 9 tonight and
700 N. Halsted. Dr. Morris Katz, a
sician, will check out mean feets.

f Chicago presents a Tribute to Jelly
) tonight at the First Chicago Center,
son. The groups paying homage
Souls, composed of Edward
ta Bowden, Aaron Dodd, Robert
wn, Isaiah Jackson, Steve McCall,
r, and the Red Hot Peppers, featuring
in Dapogny, Jim Beebe, Kansas
1, Truck Parham, Charles Lane, and
\$5 for JIC members, \$2 for students,
12; 864-4069.

tre's production of Tom Stoppard's
100t's Macbeth takes note of the
lay (April 23 is the official date, and
) by serving birthday cake at
tonight, tomorrow, and Saturday and
20 W. Bryn Mawr. Bring some candles
-21 at \$2 off the price of admission

Music Notes: local composers expose themselves

photo/Peter Berling



ONO



Ed Herrmann



Michael Gordon

New music fans remember New Music America '82 as one of Chicago's cultural high points of the last few years, a week-long festival at Navy Pier that garnered audiences of up to 2,000 a night and brought to the city such hot new music attractions as Robert Ashley, Meredith Monk, Muhai Richard Abrams, Steve Reich, Roscoe Mitchell, Glenn Branca, and Harold Budd, many of them for their area debut. Jane Byrne made some political points by sponsoring the festival, the weather at the pier was beautiful, the crowds enthusiastic, the critics supportive, and though the quality of such an ambitious event was predictably uneven, everyone seemed happy.

Everyone, that is, except a group of Chicago composers who felt that their contingent had not been sufficiently represented on the festival program. During the week they countered with their own festival at CrossCurrents Cabaret, called Music Mostly at Midnight, which ran each night after the concert at Navy Pier. Such was Chicago's enthusiasm for new sounds that week that this alternative festival was also well attended and received some critical acclaim, though perhaps less than the national attention that would have mollified its founders.

New Music America moved on to the next city (Washington, D.C.), but the resentment lingered and bred revolution. Within weeks an ambitious group of composers and performers had formed New Music Chicago, a coalition devoted to the promotion of local talent and a virtual *Salon des refuses* of Chicago music. Stretching their original shoestring budget to heroic limits, they were organized enough by April of 1983 to present the first of their annual spring festivals at the Chicago Public Library Cultural Center. Composer Sheldon Atovsky was New Music Chicago's first president of the board, and encouraged a democratic policy devoid of stylistic bias in programming the festival, accepting pieces on a first-come, first-served basis. In a similar spirit, it was decreed that board members could not be included in the festival—a move of regrettable austerity since the board contained several of Chicago's best young composers, and one that decreased incentive for board membership. This naturally made for pretty uneven programming; nevertheless, that festival and the second one a year later managed to garner enough good work to create a healthy air of excitement and unpredictability.

New Music Chicago has gone through a lot of changes in its three years, including Atovsky's resignation as president (percussionist Steve Elkins now presides), though he is still indefatigably active, almost the organization's guiding spirit. This year's Spring Festival '85 is being handled quite differently from its predecessors, and the *Salon des refuses* is even trying to coax the establishment into getting involved. Not only were submitted scores and tapes judged by a three-member committee of long-standing NMC members, but five prominent area composers were personally invited

to be honored within the festival. These are: Ben Johnston, long-famous microtonal composer at the University of Illinois at Urbana; Ralph Shapey, Promethean composer, conductor, and teacher at the University of Chicago; William Russo, composer of symphonic jazz and director of Columbia College's Contemporary American Music Program; George Flynn, composition teacher at DePaul University; and Darleen Cowles, composition teacher at the American Conservatory. It will be interesting to observe to what extent this new, less free-wheeling approach will improve the quality of this year's festival. In any event, it is this kind of stuff, not the more official activities of the CSO or Allied Arts, of which the real history of Chicago music is made.

The schedule of the New Music Chicago Spring Festival '85 is very complex, so please try to follow closely: William Russo's *An Image of Man* for flute, harp, and string quartet will highlight the opening concert today, Friday, from 3 to 5 PM in the theater at the Cultural Center. The program will also include *Weavings* by west-coast composer William Kraft for string quartet, percussion, and two films; *Movement Music* for computer tape, violin, and dancer by Northwestern University's computer composer Shawn Decker; the charming theater piece *With Freddy on the Lawn* by Bloomington multimedia composer Paul Sturm; *Hawk* by Doug Lofstrom of the improvisational group Spontaneous Composition; and the indescribable avant-rock group ONO.

The Nashville Contemporary Brass Quintet will present a "special gala concert" at 3 PM Sunday at the Simpson Theater at the Field Museum, South Lake Shore Drive at Roosevelt. They will play two works, *Serenata* by Raymond Wilding-White, familiar to WFMT listeners through his programs on American music, and *A Curious Euphony* by James Caldwell. Though this concert (like the others) is free, seating is limited, and advance tickets must be obtained at Carl Fischer of Chicago, Laury's Records, Kinko's Copies, or Pacific Stereo outlets.

Monday through Friday, April 22 to 26, at 11:30 AM each day, sound installation composer Stewart Dickson will discuss and perform an improvisational piece for a 100-foot electroacoustic monochord of his own manufacture at the State of Illinois Center, 100 W. Randolph. The remainder of the concert series will take place at the Cultural Center at 12:15 PM Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and at 6:30 PM on Monday and Wednesday. Monday's highlights include the Wind Quintet by George Flynn, Martin Bresnick's *Tent of Miracles* for saxophone quartet (both at 12:15), and Ralph Shapey's *Mutations II* played by pianist Abraham Stokman. Ben Johnston's Toccata for solo cello will be played Tuesday, along with *Five Words in a Line* by Wayland Rogers, conducted by James MacDonald. An unusual duet for tuba and chimes, *Journey to the Yellow Springs* by

Darleen Cowles, will grace the Wednesday afternoon concert. Creative and unpredictable, the rock-based group Dot Dot Dot will play a rare work with a greatly expanded ensemble Thursday afternoon, followed by the German performance duo Anima and the mellow but politically activist *Sandinista* by Frank Abbinanti. Friday includes a multimedia work by Destiny Quibble featuring Tom Cameron (who was in NMA '82), and some real-time electronics by Ed Herrmann of midwest radio fame.

This listing, though, is far from complete: the series includes works by many other composers, some of whom even I've never heard of: Debra Zae Munn and Jack Girard, Robert Greenberg, Martin Rokeach, Roger Briggs, Ada Belle Marcus, Ross Feller, Chris Block, Mark Jacobs, Robert Myers, Michael Daugherty, J. Kawarsky, Michael Gordon, Tom Parsons, Jack Wright, Chris Cochrane, Peter Simon, Laurie Moses and Lee Haddad, and Mark Smierciak. The festival will be dominated this year by works for larger ensembles than in the past, and no volunteer or artistic effort seems to have been spared. Largely absent, except for Shapey, are the academically based composers connected with the University of Chicago (who have their own prestigious performing venues there and on the east coast), and a few of Chicago's older composers; but otherwise, this is as representative a selection of Chicago new music north of Orchestra Hall as the city and the Illinois Arts Council can provide.

How much would you expect to pay for a festival like this? Don't answer yet, because there's also a champagne benefit party at Klein Gallery, 356 W. Huron, from 6 to 9 tonight (\$25 per person; reservations requested); a reception in the Cultural Center's G.A.R. Rotunda Monday at 6:15 PM; a tape-playing party of music by NMC members at Max Tavern, 2856 N. Racine, Monday at 8 PM; a chocolate and champagne reception from 3 to 5 PM Tuesday at Studio V, 672 N. Dearborn; and a dance party at 9 PM Wednesday at Club 950 Lucky Number, 950 W. Wrightwood. Whew. Actually, all events are free unless otherwise noted.

When presented in Minneapolis in 1980, New Music America led to an unanticipated audience burnout, having heard the new music, Minneapolis was satisfied, and composers' base of support there was decimated. In Chicago, happily, the festival had quite the opposite effect, and there are indications that the new music audience has risen here substantially since '82. New Music Chicago is riding on a wave of momentum, and it is to be hoped that this festival will help achieve for new music the same kind of enthusiastic support in Chicago that performance art has had for several years now, and thus overcome Chicago's conservative image in the classical music world.

For further information, as if there weren't an overload here already, call 427-4049 or F-I-N-E-A-R-T (346-3278).

— Kyle Gann