

About The Composers' Cafeteria

A composer's greatest dilemma is not deciding what notes to write down, but finding musicians to play the notes after they're written. The Composers' Cafeteria was conceived as a "composers' cooperative", to try to get around this problem. People who write music, after all, are usually pretty good at playing it, and who could be more interested in presenting new music than a composer?

In The Composers' Cafeteria, all of the composers also perform, and all of the performers are invited to compose. We welcome new members from the community, as we are looking forward to performing more varied works for larger ensembles. If you have a work in hand that you would like to hear, if you have ideas for a new composition, or if you are excited about performing new music, please come and meet us after the concert, or give us a call at (415)-548-1095 or (415)-642-5016.

Tonight's Composers

Michael Macrone (b. 1960) grew up with the "Philadelphia Sound" before taking guitar, clarinet and self to Rhode Island, where he was educated highly and where he came of age. Although destined to the New Generation of Investment Bankers, he rebelled and set off on the Lonely Quest for the Real Bob Dylan. In 1983, he moved to California, and is now studying English at U.C. Berkeley. He specializes in the Decline of Literary Careers. About *Balance the Budget Now*, Mr. Macrone writes:

I have long believed, in light of the social constitution of musical conventions and modes of consumption, in the necessity for a politico-economic æsthetics. I found myself, in the act of composing this piece, returning again and again to the networks of exchange which have enabled me to write at all. I was struck at the time with the severity of the debt crisis facing our Nation, and began to think of this piece as a provisional grip on a solution. This, and a forthcoming piece, *Just Say No, Now* are dedicated to our next president, George Bush.

Dan Plonsey was born and raised in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. He has studied music and mathematics enough to constantly mistake one for the other. He relates the following musicological findings in connection with his current composition:

After more than two decades of animated interest in the Petrified Bone, a particular dog chose to retire to live out his days as a composer. He wrote for two ensembles exclusively: one which did not feature the saxophone, and the other which did. He made certain that his music kept "odd hours." This musical system made a lot of sense as far as his neighbors were concerned. One by one, they too retired... Only two melodic fragments remain from this period: one of uncertain pitch, and the other of uncertain direction, along with the concept of the arpeggio and the moderate vacillation, and a handbook of polyphony minus the first two fingers...

This piece is a reconstruction of sorts...

David Reider, born in San Francisco, graduated from UCLA with a degree in flute performance. David recently returned from Italy where he worked as a jazz performer.

He is now active as a performer and composer in the Bay Area. Here he presents a live performance of *Work Ethic*, the first piece in a video series titled *State of the Art*. Musicianing is repositioning to the wayside.

Elaine Schnaidt is the daughter of a Lutheran minister, was born in North Dakota, and declines to comment further.

Chris Maher contributes the following comments on his composition:

This piece is based on Messiaen's show-stopping paean to the Catholic Church, "Dieu Parmi Nous" (God Among Us) for solo organ. It doesn't sound like Messiaen at all. It's not fair to suggest that this piece is to Messiaen's what Martin Luther was to Catholicism. Because here we have a Martin Luther without faith. Nevertheless, if the Bible and the world suggest that God's among us, then they suggest that Satan rules.

...since all the world does never gregariously advance to Truth, but only here and there some of its individuals do; and by advancing, leave the rest behind; cutting themselves forever adrift from their sympathy, and making themselves always liable to be regarded with distrust, dislike, and often, downright—though oftentimes, concealed—fear and hate. What wonder, then, that those advanced minds, which in spite of advance, happen still to remain, for the time, ill-regulated, should now and then be goaded into turning round in acts of wanton aggression upon sentiments and opinions now forever left in their rear. Certain it is, that in their earlier stages of advance, especially in youthful minds, as yet untranquilized by long habituation to the world as it inevitably and eternally is; this aggressiveness is almost invariably manifested, and is invariably afterward deplored by themselves.

— Herman Melville, *Pierre, or the Ambiguities*

Tom Statler received an A.B. in physics and astronomy from U.C. Berkeley in 1982 and a Ph.D. in astrophysics from Princeton in 1986, and now works in the Berkeley Astronomy Department. He has performed most recently with the Princeton University Wind Ensemble, and before that, with the U.C. Berkeley Symphony and Concert Band. While four years of graduate school in New Jersey wreaked havoc on his composing habits, he is now completing a long-neglected work for violin solo and winds to be performed at an upcoming Composers' Cafeteria concert. *A Moment to Myself* was written in December 1981 after a particularly unpleasant week of final exams.

Randy Porter has been an East Bay local for most of his 25 years. He graduated from UCLA in 1984 in music composition and classical guitar. He is currently living in the Berkeley House for the Musically Insane (BHMI), and is performing with the Berkeley Mandolin Ensemble. About *Selections from the Axis Mundi*, Mr. Porter writes:

Oh the joy of creating sonic phenomena to present to you... Now listen to this: Here is a piece of music unlike any I've ever written. I'm not exactly sure where it came from. But I know it has to do with life, the general state of the world for which humans are pretty much responsible, harmony, and things like that.