# MOBIUS NEWSLETTER

**3**54 CONGRESS STREET, BOSTON (FORT POINT) 617-542-7416

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"Vision is as much a natural function of man as disgestion; vision is that function which raises a man above the rest of creation, and, if it be not exercised, produces the most disastrous results upon the health of body and mind. Artists are those who, by fidelity to their genius, their vision, preserve their health, and, in so doing, help to maintain the health of the body politic and give it a standard of health."

-- Gilbert Cannan, The Joy of the Theatre (1913)

## 5 EVENINGS/APRIL

Malcolm Goldstein, series director

# April 24 - 28

Last fall, Mobius presented 5 EVENINGS/OCTOBER, a concert series of new and improvised music by New England-based composer/performers. That series featured David Moss, Lowell Davidson, Robert Rutman, Malcolm Goldstein and Tom Plsek, and Jon Damian. This spring, 5 EVENINGS will continue with:

April 24: John Voigt, contrabassist and composer, will present a new work, "Suite for the Kabbalah", which combines the spirit of New Age music with the autonomy characteristic of contemporary improvisation. Drawing on imagery from the Jewish mystical tradition, the piece will feature Voigt on double bass, with Carla Bee, vocalist, and Taylor McClean, a sculptor and percussionist. McClean will create "Mandala for the Kabbalah", a temporary sculpture based on spheres and lines of light. The work will be backed with a synthesized audiotape, which Voigt describes as "sounds analogous to electric bioenergy streamings heard by mystic seers when in deep meditation/ contemplation."

In over 20 years of performing, Voigt has played and worked with Chick Corea, Mike Mantler, Jan Hammer, Lowell Davidson, Mick Goodrick, Malcolm Goldstein, Keith Jarrett and Jon Damian, among a great many others.

April 25: Ned Rothenberg will perform solo works for alto and tenor saxophones and bass clarinet. His pieces vary widely in the rhythmic and emotional environments they create. However, and strong underlying element in his work is the extension of the woodwind language to incorporate polyphony and accurate microtonal organization through the manipulation of multiphonics, circular breathing, overtones, and unorthodox fingering techniques. This is not just a vocabulary of effects, but a response to the many musical issues inherent in world folk and contemporary forms which do not conform easily to the normal capabilities of western wind instruments. The result is not an imitation of other traditions, but a unique and personal music.

Rothenberg has worked with Joan LaBarbara, Anthony Braxton, David Moss, Robert Dick, John Zorn, and Derek Bailey, among many others. He has performed his original works for solo woodwinds throughout the United States and Europe, including appearances at New Langton Arts in San Francisco, the St. Louis New Music Circle, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, Symphony Space, The Kitchen and Experimental Media Foundation in New York, the Pompidou Center in Paris and New Music America '83.

April 26: Oboist and composer Joseph Celli is virtually the only American oboist specializing in the performance of new and experimental music in all media. In the past several years, he has premiered over 35 works written for him by various American composers. These compositions have included the use of tape, live electronics, film, theater, and audience participation. Among these compositions are works by David Cope, Anthony Falaro, Phil Niblock, Alvin Lucier and Malcolm Goldstein. He is a co-founder and Artistic Director of Real Art Ways, a central New England regional center for the performance, presentation and exhibition of new and experimental works of art.

#### 5 Evenings continued....

"I call what I do 'Organic Oboe'. Even though I realize that the word 'organic' is a bit overused these days, it does accurately describe what I'm doing. In performance I take very primitive sounds and transform them into very complex sounds. I don't limit myself to the 32 traditional pitches on the instrument. And with electronic extension there in space and time." is no limit to the possibilities. I've begun a real exploration of this instrument. By 'organic', I mean that I am just following the natural growth of my discoveries. There's no telling where it'll all end." -- from the Hartford Times

April 27: Philip Corner, pianist and composer, will present a concert of "Music Visible and Invisible" at Mobius. Corner has been an important contributor to new American performance for more than 25 years. In association with the Judson Dance Theater. he provided music for works by Lucinda Childs, Yvonne Rainer, James Waring, Elaine Summers and many others. Among his associates in the Events and Happenings of the 1960s were Nam June Paik, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Carolee Schneeman and Yoko Ono. He cofounded "Tone Roads", a group dedicated to performances of new music, and helped organize "Sounds Out of Silent Spaces", an "exploration/meditation collaborative."

Describing a performance of Corner's "Gamelan" at Dartmouth College, Anne Swartz wrote: "The music emanated with no breaks or pauses, the effect achieved when you breathe deeply and let out the air slowly. . . . I was filled with a sense of past time and place. I felt soothed

almost at once, and found myself contemplating my life and my emotional reactions. Then, about halfway through the piece, I began to feel caught up with the rhythm and sounds, and I felt very content and happy, as if I could laugh or dance. . . . The music itself becomes a kind of ritual that encompasses sound

April 28: Sound/Image/Events --Larry Johnson, Richard Lerman, Tom Plsek. In celebration of Bach's 300th birthday, three of the four works presented will be based on pieces by him (or on his name). Plsek's "Sarabande" for trombone, tape delay and computer is based on a portion of Bach's sixth cello suite, "stretched" horizontally in time, and multilayered with tape delays. Johnson's (untitled) work for trombone and computer graphics takes a "fractal" approach to the notes in the name of BACH, breaking them down and recombining them with themselves, to form increasingly complex patterns. Guest composer Stephany Plsek's work for violin and trombone, The Endless Snake, combines Bach's "Musical Offering" with a Navajo healing chant. The players will be moving "from one world to another" as they progress from free improvisation to totally notated music. Malcolm Goldstein will join the group for this piece.

Finally, Richard Lerman will present a new piece using three different kinds of instrument/microphones -- made of different lengths of harpsichord wire, bendable plastic soda straws and thin stainless steel, respectively. He says about this piece, "I am continuing to work with very affordable self-built equipment, pushing materials to their sonic limits."

SOUND ART AT MOBIUS: PART 4

IVAN LADISLAV GALETA

New Video Installtions and Works in Film and Audiotape

Performances May 4 and 5

Free Public Lecture: Museum of Fine Arts, May 3

Free Workshop at Mobius, May 6

(Sound Art at Mobius will present the first Boston appearance of Yugoslav conceptual artist Ivan Ladislav Galeta. Galeta will present two new video installations: DROPS and A3/2 "SANGWA DUPA H -72064" as well as works for film and audiotape. Outside of Yugoslavia, his work has been seen at the Netherlands Film Museum. Amsterdam, the 3rd International Avant-Garde Film Festival in London; the Stadtmuseum, Munich; the 15th Biennale de Sao Paolo: and Manhattan Cable TV. Descriptions of his Mobius presentations are given below.)

Galeta's work is researchoriented, and can be thought of as falling into two areas: the manipulation of "system assumptions" pertaining to different art media, and an examination of commonly shared perceptions about the nature and use of everyday items. The first concern focusses attention on what are assumed to be irreducible. essential properties of a given medium, such as film or video; the latter concern extends this examination to objects as they exist in the world, questioning what properties necessarily pertain to them and to our use of them.

The film Backwards-Forwards: The Piano (included in the May 4 program) provides a good example of Galeta's mediadirected research (most of this information comes from Hrvoje Turkovic's essay in the catalogue to Galeta's exhibition at the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti, Zagreb). BackwardsForwards consisted of four variations on the filming of a pianist playing Chopin's Waltz No. 2, Opus 64. The first version consisted of a "normal" filming of the waltz being played; this was followed by the waltz being played normally, but filmed backwards (and projected forwards). Next, the waltz was <u>played</u> backwards, note-for-note, and filmed normally; finally, the "backwards" waltz was filmed backwards and again, projected forwards. The object of Galeta's experiment, according to Turkovic, was "to see how the final presentation of an event on the screen changes with systematic modifications in the sequence of the variables [direction of shooting and "direction" of performance]." The question was asked, "Will the recognizability of the happening [the waltz] be retained in all the combinations?"

Galeta's redesigning of objects, which lend themselves more readily to simple description, include a ping-pong table sawed in half and placed against a mirror, so that the reflection "completes" the table; chessboards redesigned in relief, in trapezoidal or rhomboidal shapes, or with all white squares or pieces; and bicycles rebuilt with either duplicate, or the absence of, seats, pedals and handlebars.

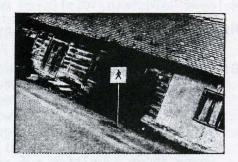
Turkovic describes the scientific nature of Galeta's experimentation, as compared with the "artistic exploratory act (which) strives for uniqueness, unrepeatability and individuality." By contrast, in Galeta's work, "certain phenomena--those that are artistically relevant -- may be subjected to a systematic and controlled variation in order to determine their universally valid mutual dependence and the type of effect they produce. . . Far from being a speculative theoretician, Galeta is a true scientific practitioner, who subjects artistic media to a systematic analysis and research, in compliance with all the postulates of scientific experimentation."

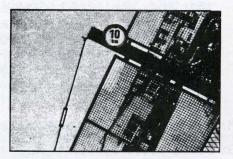
The essay goes on to characterize Galeta's research as "metamedium": "All kinds of meta-medium research must of necessity encompass several media, because suppositions about the system can be made only by postulating or discovering the different characteristics of the system, which in turn is possible only by a comparative study of different media systems. As we become aware of the conventions of our culture only when confronted with a different one or with the behavior that violates our codes, so can the suppositions of media systems be discovered only in their confrontation or violation. Galeta's research substantiates these general statements."

PROGRAMS: May 4: Video installation, A3/2 "SANGWA DUPA H-72064"(new work); three films and one work for audiotape.

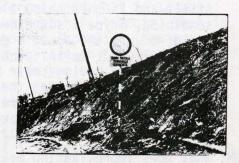
May 5: Video installation, DROPS (new work); four films (different program).

- FREE PUBLIC LECTURE: Museum of Fine Arts, May 3: Review and analysis of some of Galeta's work in film, featuring <u>PiRaMidas 1972-1984</u>, construction and symbolism related to "The Last Supper" by da Vinci.
- FREE WORKSHOP: Mobius, May 6: Focussing on the two new video installations and on earlier film work.









INTERVIEW WITH MALCOLM GOLDSTEIN: IMPROVISATION AND "THE WHOLE MUSICIAN IN A FRAGMENTED SOCIETY" (Malcolm Goldstein, violinist and composer, is the series director for 5 Evenings.)

- DM: It's clear that your primary committment as a composer and performer is to improvisation. Has that always been true? How did you come to it?
- MG: Well, I came to it very simply. I work with dancers a lot, and in the early 1960s I worked with the Judson Dance Theater, and improvisation was a natural part of our explorations. I had freshly come out of graduate school, where no-one discussed their thought about the word "improvisation", and working with dancers I had no vocabulary to talk about music the way you've been taught in graduate school. They just needed something to be done. Since I'm a violinist the natural way to respond to the situation was to make music, and not worry about a written-out score.
- DM: When you started working with the Judson Group, did you say to yourself something like, "My God, I've got to start improvising," or were you by your own predilictions prepared to smoothly move into it?
- MG: I think I was always prone to it. In the framework of the Judson, a lot of the movements that they explored became common vocabulary -- not "dancy" dance movements like ballet, but anything from walking and rolling and running, different group formations that have become more formalized in contact improvisation, people touching and doing things where there was no set vocabulary as in ballet. So that the sound that we worked with was also analogous, that is, working with a wide variety of sounds. <u>Doing</u> music was the basis, doing an activity, working with dance, all these things were the basis, and for me I guess that's always been a natural thing.
- DM: I'm curious to know about any outstanding memories of pieces that you worked on.
- MG: For a piece by Jimmy Waring, I had my wind players on a balcony at Judson, and I'm not sure if I even saw the dance. Actually, Jimmy was interesting. I was fresh out of graduate school, and I was both open to it, as well as not understanding lots of things. I just felt there was a fertile place here. And Jimmy suggested that he wanted to have several composers compose for one instrument and then put it all together simultaneously. That just threatened all my training, 'cause this wasn't art to me. I can't even tell you what it aroused in me, but I decided that it was definitely wrong, so I want and spoke with him and I said, well, I can't see that because it would be chaos. (I mean now I like chaos, but then ...) So Jimmy said, "O.K., how would you do it then?" I said, well I could see myself composing for several instruments, not knowing what they sound like together, and at least my ear or temperament would give it a kind of overall blending quality. That, to me, was far out at that time. And he said, "O.K., go ahead and do it," and that threatened me too! I thought he would reject it.
- DM: That meant you had to do it!
- MG: I had to do it, and it turned out to be amazing, how uniform and how blended it sounded. A lot of experiences like that broke down a lot of preconceptions I had developed in school.
- DM: So there was a certain amount of unkinking you had to go through.
- MG: There was one dancer who choreographed a piece for me, which meant I had to play the violin while I was moving. That's a little unusual also, because people stand still or they sit still, and in this thing I wasn't so much told what to do in terms of notes, but to do something, maybe a sustained sound while I maybe did deep knee bends or turning in space, and of course the sound's going to be quite different. So, in addition to the improvisation, they really put me in touch with my body, and most musicians are not in touch with their body. They're moving their body all the time, but they don't know that. What they are involved with is making these sounds, which are usually preset on a page. Sometimes they're not even listening, they're just sort of busy making sounds. So the awareness of the totality of the gesture that makes the sound and the reality of the quality of the sound became very apparent.
- DM: What does improvisation mean for you? What are its special values?

MG: Well, I think primarily it focusses on the human being at that moment, making sound like

no other music, whereas classical music focusses on objects which someone else realizes. Most musicians work toward perfecting an interpretation, which maybe comes down to being as narrow as what fingers do what at what instant. Maybe if their mood is such-and-such it might be a shade different, but basically that becomes a kind of working toward a perfection of this object. Improvisation, on the other hand, really focusses on the moment and the person, and what they're doing at that moment, and being totally responsive to the music sounding, to themselves and to the other musicians, to the space they're in, even to the response of people. So for me it's that process that is personal, it focusses on the person. In working from notes that isn't a factor; the factor there is the object that they're playing.

- DM: Have you encountered any examples where people playing from a score have been able to invest their playing with something that's akin to what happens in the best improvisation?
- MG: Oh yes. I mean, I've been talking about the bulk of performers, who come out of conservatories and do a well done, competent job. No, I think that any performer who really had something to say of their own -- and those are the people that maybe our society remembers their names, gives them concerts -- they really are playing music like it's not written down, but it's been so digested within them that they're hearing the music just like improvisers, and they can reach very high points that way. The other specific thing for me about improvisation is that there are just whole areas of sound making and relationships between people that I work into my compositions, that just can't be notated with everybody told exactly what to do. There are certain sounds where you can only give a general framework, and then the person has to do a lot on the spot, bring themselves to it. So in terms of my own compositions a lot of improvisation is necessary.
- DM: You've titled one of your articles, "Improvisation: Toward a Whole Musician in a Fragmented Society." What is the wholeness that you mean? What is the fragmentation?
- MG: I can start off with the fragmentation, and then show why we put them all together and it can be a nice thing. Music is no different from the rest of our society. The fact that I call myself a "musician" means I am saying I'm not also a father, I'm not also a person who likes to paint, read, write, take walks and things like that. I think that some musicians and ballet people have in image that has been built up, where people practice eight hours a day and then go home, and that's their whole life. Then, within music you get people who are performers on a specific instrument, or a composer, or a conductor, and in each one of there areas it simply puts a person to develop a certain kind of expertise. Like a person who's been into plumbing maybe just with elbow bends, or a car mechanic who only does tuneups and doesn't know about changing brakes. In music we tend to do that. You get experts who are really known for baroque music but can't do well when they come to 19th or 20th century music. What I'm seeing is how the expertise cuts off a much larger awareness, which for me has to do with the totality of us as living beings. As a composer, I've also conducted, I'm a violinist. I have lived in all different aspects of music. I've conducted renaissance choirs, done contemporary music, played in conservatories. I don't think a person has to do everything, but I do think that the conservatories tend to make a person feverishly - I use that word very specifically - guide themselves to one point which they will then master and succeed. I personally feel that in the process of succeeding they really have denied most of living, living as musicians and maybe living in a larger way too. I guess I'm not asking for something too different than what is taught as part of living in African society, as well as the way Bach taught his students. That is, he didn't simply teach how to play a keyboard; he taught you how to improvise, how to compose, how to conduct, how to do everything. If you're going to survive in that society you've got to be able to do everything, so from the necessity side you can see the need. But even from the artistic side I think that's important -- that fact that he could play stringed instruments as well as keyboard instruments and do all these things I think made made him what he was. The same thing with West African society and in other parts of the world, people just make music in all different kinds of situations. They don't think about it, they do it, and everything comes out of living music as it is necessary in that part of society. That totality ties us in with music as part of society.

PERSEPHONE AND HADES

Mobius Performing Group

#### May 10 and 11

"Demeter leapt to Her feet and ran down the hill through the fields into the forests. She waved Her arms and cried: <u>Persephone returns!</u> Everywhere Her energy was stirring, pushing, bursting forth into tender greenery and pale young petals. Animals shed old fur and rolled in the fresh, clean grass while birds sang out: 'Persephone returns! Persephone returns!'

. . The mortals saw everywhere the miracles of Demeter's bliss and rejoiced in the new life of spring. Each winter they join Demeter in waiting through the bleak season of Her Daughter's absence. Each spring they are renewed by the signs of Persephone's return."

-- from Lost Goddesses of Early Greece, Charlene Spretnak

Persephone and Hades has been performed every spring since 1980. Following are some reflections on its development and what it has become --

It is not very often in one's performing life that one can grow in a part over the years. Even more infrequent is a piece that allows personal growth to shape it along with artistic growth.

As I approach my sixth year of performing Persephone, I think of growth. It is a piece unlike anything else I have performed. When I began working on it, I tried to keep the work habits for Persephone separate from my other theater work. Now I cannot imagine working without that simplicity and awareness. It is that orientation of allowing the audience to be with me, not demanding it, that affects my performing life.

I remember my first attempts with the persona of "black". She demanded the attention of the audience. Now she allows them to be there. she knows they will be there, and that is more powerful than any physical "grab" an actor could do. Actually, this year, I want to work on a new internal monologue for black .- I read The Spiral Dance this summer and found much of it relating to the triple goddess. I want to bring how that material affected me to our work.

The most amazing realization for me is that I feel that the choices I can make in the three colors (white, red and black) are infinite. I may have used only 1/8 of the thousands of possibilities from the card combinations. So I no longer worry about not having a response to the cards. I never feel lost in the piece. It is home. It is our world, Hades', the audience's, and mine. It is always an extremely emotional moment for me when I walk in and the objects are there and Hades is there waiting for me.

The relationship between Persephone and Hades continues to grow and change. David has added some of his own text. and vocally he lives a full life, as well as emotionally. I imagine that people think I am the most active, I have the most effect, because I move. Ah ha: David has the most effect too. Sometimes I am not sure - who is affecting whom? The text is like music to me as I move through space. It is Hades, moving with me or against me. The fragmented passages of text travel through me, even in my everyday life. He is a strong presence. We are connected and the void is great when we are separated.

-- Mari Novotny-Jones



"Hades" has always been a pretty direct expression of "David Miller", under unusual circumstances: sitting more or less still, facing a bank of mirrors, watching the reflections of Persephone and the audience, and playing back my "tapes" in the form of 15 or so speeches which I speak over and over, in fragments of different sizes, down to the isolated phonemes. Developing Hades since 1980 has been a process that lies somewhere between conventional characterization, and the selfrevelation of Time Against Time.

Once, P & H was for me an experiment in speech, in letting passion flow through a narrow channel, in playing one part in a starkly beautiful theater. It is still these things, but thanks to the onward march of my personal life (darn it anyway), it's now much more for me about: what does this piece say about men and women being together, and what can we do about that? "Hades" would like to terminate P & H and give it all back to the matriarchs, but "David Miller" wants it to continue because there's got to be more to find out. Now I write new texts to mix with Steve Lydenberg's originals: questioning just what the hell this Underworld is all about.

-- "David Miller"

Persephone and Hades is faster and louder than it ever was before. Am I also?

-- Marilyn Arsem

### ARTISTS DECLARE NUCLEAR FREE ZONE

Organized by Artists for Survival

Exhibition May 14 - 31 Performance May 18

The art world is presently in the midst of a surge of politically motivated art work. The East Village in NYC oozes with venomnous disgust and morbid pessimism. This Neoexpressionist movement often digs into the bowels of our war-latent history for images of violent despair. Politically oriented art today is often found in the darkness of the shadow of the Nuclear Threat.

As usual, the upper echelon of the art market has "literally" read the writing on the walls and usurped the cultural movement, bringing the issues into the very institutions that help propagate the status quo and prop up the military rationale. It is not surprising that the celebrity artists would want to harness the power of the psychology of the nuclear threat. This coopting of the momentum by the "stars" need not be counterproductive. The loss will come when the aristocratic institutions completely sanitize the art work and thus dilate the political potential for action.

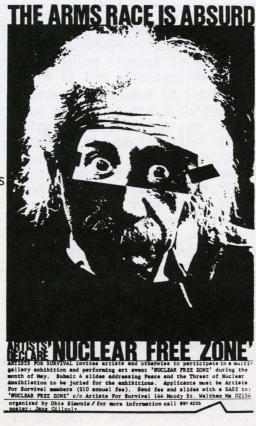
Some organizations of artists refuse to be neutralized as art world characters. Lucy Lippard's Artists Call, Artists for Survival, and PAND are some organizations of artists who insist on being heard, not just in the traditional art institutions, but on the streets, in public spaces, in the Senate and in the schools.

Artists for Survival has been organizing a multigallery national open and invitational arts and theater event: a "Nuclear Free Zone". The Fort Point Artists District will be the principal location of the

symbolic declaration. The Kingston Gallery, Basement Gallery, FPAC Gallery, Mobius, and the State House, will all be participating in this major event. The Children's Museum will also be displaying AFS's Soviet/American children's peace exchange posters; workshops will be conducted for visiting children to create posters that will be sent to the USSR.

Mobius will be the focal point of the events. All exhibitions will be on display in the last two weeks of May. The openings will all occur on Saturday, May 18. The Underground Railway Theatre will be performing some of their political pieces early in the evening on the 18th; other theater performances are being considered at this time. Later on in the program there will be canned music, DJed by the MX Mixers and coordinated with a multimedia light show, orchestrated by Tom Matte and friends.

-- Obie Simonis



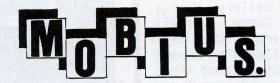
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under-know-ledge (pronounced U-K-L) is a new tabloid of 'texts of INTER<sup>signalité</sup> mass attempt at demarginalization. Twentythousand copies of Postmodernist alterity . Texts By members of the 'tel quel' including Philippe Sollers and Maurice Roche Members of the 'Fiction Collecive' Mark Leyner, Raymond Federman, George Chambers as well as Texts by Dick Higgins, Richard Kostelanetz . . and many many more and Your tests of the question Are well come play as Your eGO! PLEASE CALL WITH ANY Q? ! or for any reason i.e. Time? Weather?

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Francine: "I'd give any amount of money to go to a party where my lines were written out in advance."

Arnold: "I'd give any amount of money to go to a party where it all turned out to be the way I directed it to."

Francine & Arnold: "Too good to be true!"

Oscar: "We need actors and actresses, directors, walk-ons and voyeurs for our MOBIUS FUND-RAISER, a party you'd give anything to attend. Call 542-7416." DOUBLE EDGE THEATER is doing its first comedy!

A BOLD STROKE FOR A WIFE by Suzannah Centlivre --

It's an ironic vision of the political and economic machinations of marriage, written by one of the few female 18th century dramatists.

True to the company's committment to risktaking, DOUBLE EDGE intends to produce the play with cross-gender casting, adding intriguing modern resonance and social commentary to this comedy of manners.

Dates: April 18 - May 11, Thurs. - Sat. at 8:00 p.m., Sat. matinee at 2:00 p.m. For ticket prices and reservations, call 776-9474. At the Church of Sts. Luke & Margaret, 40 Brighton Ave., Allston.

Mobius is funded in part by the Massachusetts Council on the Art's and Humanities, a state agency, and by a grant from the Boston Arts Lottery. Sound Art at Mobius was made possible by a New Works grant from the Mass. Council on the Arts and Humanities. 5 Evenings/October is funded in part by Meet the Composer, through the New England Foundation for the Arts, the Mass. Council on the Arts and Humanities, and The National Endowment for the Arts.

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