

NEW MUSIC WITH GUITAR, VOLUME 4

1 **MICHAEL STAROBIN: CHASE** (4:36)
(amplified guitar and computer-generated tape)
David Starobin, guitar

2 - 3 **HUMPRHEY SEARLE: TWO PRACTICAL CATS** (10:24)
(narrator, flute/piccolo, guitar, cello)
poems by T. S. Eliot

2 **Macavity: The Mystery Cat** (4:47)

3 **Growltiger's Last Stand** (5:36)

Patrick Mason, narrator; Susan Palma, flute/piccolo;
David Starobin, guitar; Timothy Eddy, cello

4 **ROBERT SAXTON: NIGHT DANCE** (9:12)
(guitar solo)
David Starobin, guitar

5 - 8 **BARBARA KOLB: UMBRIAN COLORS** (7:22)
(violin and guitar)

5 **Cerulean Blue** (1:33)

6 **Alizarin Crimson** (2:06)

7 **Viridian Green** (2:24)

8 **Burnt Umber** (1:14)

Benjamin Hudson violin; David Starobin, guitar

9 - 10 **RONALD ROXBURY:
TWO SONGS OF WALT WHITMAN** (6:20)
(baritone, flute, guitar)

9 **Goodbye, My Fancy** (4:29)

10 **Here the frailest leaves of me** (1:47)

Patrick Mason, baritone; Susan Palma, flute;
David Starobin, guitar

11 **TOD MACHOVER: BUG-MUDRA** (15:14)
(two guitars, percussion, live computer electronics)
live performance, Tokyo, Japan

David Starobin, acoustic guitar; Oren Fader, electric guitar;
Daniel Kennedy, acoustic and electronic percussion;
Tod Machover, conductor, data-glove

Notes by Robert Arctor

The six pieces on Volume 4 of David Starobin's New Music with Guitar series illustrate both the stylistic diversity of the current compositional scene, and the developing electronic resources that are rapidly becoming an important part of the composer's palette. The two electronic works on this disc also touch on an exciting issue: whether a new generation of classically trained composers who grew up with Rock as the dominant music of their environment can successfully meld the sounds, energy and harmonic language of this "vernacular" with the more complex metric, melodic, and harmonic density which has remained the characteristic mode of expression of most of the great music of our century. Also included on this disc are two vocal works which set poetry both comic and tragic, and two purely instrumental works which are in turn nocturnal and brightly airy.

Michael Starobin's *Chase* for amplified guitar and computer-generated tape was composed for his brother David in 1987, and was first performed in London. The work is dedi-

cated to David's children, Robert and Allegra, and at one point makes use of pitches derived from new-born Allegra's name.

Chase is a highly charged rondo which unites the guitar and tape as equal partners. The work's opening rhythmic figure (tape) is quickly imitated by a similar figure in the guitar. Slower contrasting episodes occasionally intrude to interrupt *Chase's* rhythmic thrust. Midway through the piece a wash of sound and ostinati transform the material into a soft dance-like section. However, this brief episode quickly intensifies, leading to a recapitulatory coda which brings the work to an exciting conclusion.

Humphrey Searle's *Two Practical Cats* was composed in the early 1950's, and is dedicated to Ian Wallace. The scoring for narrator, flute doubling on piccolo, guitar, and cello, is the same as in Searle's Edward Lear setting of 1951, *The Owl and the Pussycat*. *Two Practical Cats* sets two poems from T. S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939). Eliot composed

these light-hearted verses for his godchildren Tom Faber and Alison Tandy. Many Eliot authorities point to the autobiographical references that are contained within these poems.

In *Macavity: The Mystery Cat* Searle's understated accompaniment is the perfect foil for the deceitfully suave feline. The re-current tremolo patterns and the mock terror of the "Macavity" refrain lend a mysteriously comic feel to the "monster of depravity." In *Growthtiger's Last Stand* Searle's accompaniment is more varied and descriptive: the undulating guitar figure for the rocking barge; the flute and cello duo portraying the lovers; the mock Chinese music in micro-tones; the piccolo's fireworks; and finally, Growthtiger's walking of the plank.

Robert Saxton's *Night Dance* was written for David Starobin, who premiered the work in London, in 1987. The composer writes: "It is a miniature tone-poem depicting a scene which came to me as I began work on the piece and which gave me many formal ideas. An old man sits in a doorway at dusk. He is playing a guitar and begins by plucking the

lowest string, as through searching for what he wishes to play. As the music gathers momentum, it gradually moves upwards by means of the guitar's open strings and breaks into a dance. Now it is dark, and a nightmarish band of dancers passes by the old guitarist. (I imagined them to be the terrifying types of characters who people Goya's later paintings.) The dance, jerky and uneven, develops the initial material of the piece melodically and harmonically. After the climax, the dancers move on—the dance music subsides and a nocturne is heard, periodically interrupted by the music of the dance in the distance. Maybe this is not geographical distance, but the distance of time. Perhaps the whole episode has been a mere memory. The piece ends musingly with the motive from which it began."

Barbara Kolb's *Umbrian Colors* was written for violinist Pina Carmirelli and guitarist David Starobin in 1986. The work was first performed by those artists at the Marlboro Music Festival. *Umbrian Colors* is part of a series of works that Ms. Kolb has written for David Starobin during the

past 15 years. Other works include: *Looking for Claudio* (1975) for guitar and tape; *Songs Before an Adieu* (1976-79) for soprano, flute, and guitar; *Three Lullabies* (1980) guitar solo; and *Molto Allegra* (1989) guitar solo (The last two works were written to celebrate the birth of Starobin's children).

The four sketches that comprise *Umbrian Colors* are all transparently delicate, yet each presents the instruments in a differing relationship. In *Cerulean Blue*, the guitar dominates, with the violin sustaining high harmonics as accompaniment. In *Alizarin Crimson*, the violin takes charge, with the guitar adding doublings two octaves below. *Viridian Green* is the focal point of the composition. Both instruments come together in a sad waltz, with the main tune parodying Satie. In *Burnt Umber* the instruments separate again—the registers gradually climbing and falling, until the guitar is at its lowest, and the violin at its highest.

Ronald Roxbury's *Two Songs of Walt Whitman* was commissioned by David Starobin. Upon the work's publication in the *Guitar Review*, Mr. Starobin wrote the following note:

"*Two Songs of Walt Whitman* (1986) is Ronald Roxbury's final composition, completed during the last weeks of the composer's life. The first song, "Goodbye my Fancy!" is a lover's farewell. Whitman's verse was a palpable expression of the composer's own circumstances during the creation of this work. Roxbury sets the text as a flowing barcarolle, creating a dreamlike sadness.

The second song, "Here the frailest leaves of me" is a shockingly austere setting. As all three musicians slowly intone soft, rising scalar phrases, a feeling of disembodied stasis is achieved. Marked "relaxed, intimate," this coda to Roxbury's life's work concludes with a surprise: out of the close, dissonant counterpoint a hauntingly luminous E-flat major triad is sounded by the guitar."

Few works in the guitar's repertoire are as poignantly sad as these Whitman songs. Using the sparest of gestures and materials, Roxbury's songs transcend considerations of style and achieve a truly universal beauty.

Tod Machover's *Bug-Mudra* provides the sharpest contrast on this

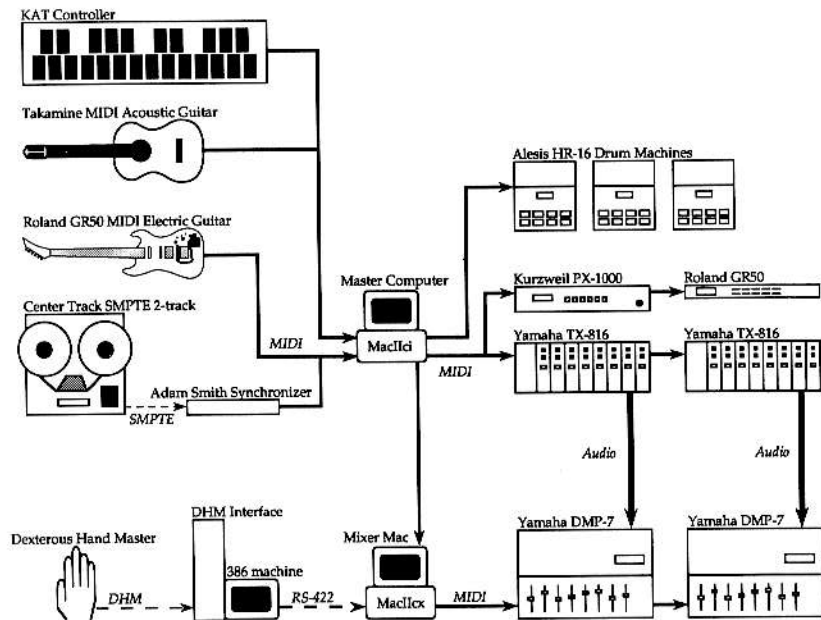
disc. The composer writes the following:

"*Bug-Mudra* was composed between November 1989 and January 1990, and was given its premiere at Tokyo's Bunkamura Theatre during nine concerts of my music in January and February 1990. The piece was commissioned by the Fromm Music Foundation of Harvard University, was composed at the request of guitarist David Starobin, and is dedicated to my dear friend Tomoyuki Sugiyama. *Bug-Mudra* is scored for two guitars (one acoustic and one electric), percussion (KAT electronic mallet controller plus three acoustic suspended cymbals), and conductor. The three instrumentalists are connected to the "hyper-instrument" system, as is the conductor through the use of a special glove (the EXOS Dexterous Hand Master) worn on the left hand and adapted for music use under the direction of David Sturman. This glove measures the nuances of the conductor's left-hand gestures, translating them to influence the piece's overall sonic result. The title *Bug-Mudra* comes from two sources put together: *mudra* being

the word for hand gesture in classical Indian dance, and *bug* referring to computer "bugs," a pun on the difficulty of getting such a complex interactive system to work in a live concert situation. The present recording is of our last performance in Tokyo. It was recorded directly from the mixing board, with the acoustic cymbal part recorded later.

Bug-Mudra is organized into six sections (actually eight, since section four is subdivided into three parts), but in fact is imagined as a dynamic *moto perpetuo*, unfolding in a burst of energy from beginning to end. The first section is a rapid, syncopated and contrapuntal song, whose rhythm and harmony become the subject of development in section two. Section three features a virtuosic electric bass melody, over which acoustic guitar tremolos and electronic percussion washes build up interchanging harmonies and harmonic spectra. Section four is melodic and lyrical, although fragmented guitar tremolos and hyper-instrument arpeggios keep the piece moving forward. The melody and accompaniment move into the high-

est register as the three instruments approach their first moment of total unity, together playing the triumphal melody that leads to section five. Section five is a vivid fantasy that combines a descending bass line played by hyper-acoustic guitar, an ascending soprano *cantus firmus* played by hyper-percussion, and a virtuosic hyperized electric guitar melody (with the live guitar adding timbre and phrase articulation to a pre-sequenced track) that sweeps wildly through all registers. Section six is a recapitulation of section one, with an elaborately accumulating harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment, and with extra music added at each reprise. The piece gathers intensity constantly, and ends on an affirmative unison."



"Hyperinstrument" setup for *Bug-Mudra*.

Two Songs of Walt Whitman

Good-bye my Fancy!
Farewell dear mate, dear love!
I'm going away, I know not where,
Or to what fortune, or whether I may ever see you again,
So Good-bye my Fancy.

Long have we lived, joy'd, caress'd together;
Delightful!—now separation—Good-bye my Fancy.

Yet let me not be too hasty,
Long indeed have we lived, slept, filter'd, become
 blended into one;
Then if we die, we die together, (yes, we'll remain one,)
May-be we'll be better off and blither,
May-be it is yourself now really ushering me to the true songs,
May-be it is you the mortal knob really undoing, turning—so now finally,
Good-bye—and hail! my Fancy.

Here the frailest leaves of me
And yet my strongest lasting.

Here I shade and hide my thoughts
I myself do not expose them,

And yet they expose me more than all
 my other poems.

Composer Biographies

Michael Starobin (b. 1956) composes and orchestrates primarily for the musical theater. Recent compositions include *Symphony #1*; *Trio* for oboe, clarinet and cello; and incidental music for the Public Theater' production of *A Winter's Tale*. He received a Drama Desk award for his orchestrations of Stephen Sondheim's Pulitzer prize-winning *Sunday in the Park with George*, and is currently orchestrating Sondheim's latest work, *Assassins*.

Humphrey Searle (1915-1982) studied composition with Gordon Jacob, John Ireland and Anton Webern. In addition to his composing, Searle was active as a BBC producer, and was a noted Liszt authority. Searle's output includes 3 operas, 6 symphonies and a sizeable catalog of chamber and vocal music.

Robert Saxton (b. 1953) exhibited strong musical gifts at an early age. At nine he had begun a correspondence with Benjamin Britten, and when he was twelve he had already composed an operatic setting of *Cinderella*. Saxton studied composition with Luciano Berio, Elisabeth Lutyens and Robin Holloway. Recent works include a violin concerto commissioned by the Leeds Festival; *In the Beginning* commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra; and *Caritas*, an opera for the 1991 Huddersfield Festival.

Barbara Kolb (b. 1939) has slowly but steadily produced a highly original catalog of compositions. Beginning with the Rome Prize in 1969, her music has been awarded many of the classical music world's highest distinctions. Upcoming commissions include a Piano Concerto for Radio France and an orchestral piece for the 150th anniversary of the New York Philharmonic.

Ronald Roxbury (1946-1986) produced a catalog of some 70 works, ranging from solo instrumental through operatic. Much of Roxbury's output is notated in the composer's own graphic system, developed during the late 1960's. Major works include the operas *Leda and the Velvet Gentlemen* (1976) and *A Daemon's Love* (1974); and the orchestral work *An Attack of Flies on a Stalwart Bust of Nefertiti* (1970).

Tod Machover (b. 1953) is active in many forms of new music, from orchestral to computer-generated, chamber to operatic. As Director of Musical Research at IRCAM and Professor of Music and Media at MIT's Media Lab, he has worked intensively on the development of interactive electronic music systems. Machover's opera VALIS (Bridge BCD 9007) was just named "Best Record of 1989" by the Stevenson CD Guide. Upcoming commissions include a solo work for Yo-Yo Ma; a Violin Concerto for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and an operatic collaboration with director Peter Sellars.

Performer Biographies

David Starobin is active as a player, conductor and producer of a wide range of music. In recent years he has performed 19th Century repertoire on period guitars, while simultaneously continuing his major pursuit—the expansion of the contemporary guitar literature.

Patrick Mason has performed leading roles at the Utrecht Festival, South Bank Festival, and in New York, Boston, Washington, Tokyo, Rome and Paris. For more than 20 years Mason and David Starobin have performed as a duo. Mr. Mason currently teaches at SUNY/Fredonia.

Susan Palma is principal flutist with the Orpheus Ensemble, Speculum Musicae, The Bach Chamber Soloists, and the American Composers Orchestra. Her latest recording is of Mozart flute concerti with the Orpheus Ensemble on Deutsche Grammophon.

Benjamin Hudson is active on both period and modern violin. As concertmaster of London's Hanover Band and Drottningholm's Court Theater Orchestra (Sweden) he has performed throughout Europe. Recent solo records include the Mendelssohn Concerto (on period violin) and works by Charles Wuorinen, performed with Garrick Ohlsson (Bridge BCD 9008).

Timothy Eddy took the top prize at the Cassado International Competition, in Florence. Mr. Eddy is a founding member of the Orion String Quartet and is solo cellist of the Bach Aria Group. Timothy Eddy is presently Professor of Cello at SUNY/Stony Brook.

Oren Fader is active as a performer of classical guitar repertoire, both old and new. Mr. Fader is a member of the Cygnus Ensemble, and has performed in England, Japan and throughout the USA. His other recordings for Bridge include Sor (BCD 9004) and Carter (BCD 9014).

Daniel Kennedy has performed throughout the USA and Europe with ensembles including the CalArts Twentieth Century Players, the California E.A.R. Unit, and the New Jersey Percussion Ensemble. He attended the Ali Akbar College of Music, where he studied Hindustani music and tabla with Swapan Chudhuri.

Chase was recorded at Hip Pocket Studios, New York City, on July 5, 1990. Engineer: Paul Zinman. Guitar: Humphrey Spruce top, 1981. *Chase* is in manuscript. (ASCAP)

Two Practical Cats was recorded at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, New York City, in November 1987. Engineer: David B. Hancock. Guitar: Humphrey Millenium cedar top, 1985. *Two Practical Cats* is published by Oxford University Press. (ASCAP)

Night Dance was recorded at Holy Trinity in November 1987. Engineer: David B. Hancock. Guitar: Humphrey Millenium, "f" hole model, 1987. *Night Dance* is published by J and W Chester/Edition Wilhelm Hansen, London Ltd. (ASCAP)

Umbrian Colors was recorded at Holy Trinity in April 1988. Engineer: David B. Hancock. Guitar: Humphrey Millenium f hole model, 1987. *Umbrian Colors* is published by Boosey and Hawkes, Inc. (ASCAP)

Two Songs of Walt Whitman was recorded at Holy Trinity in November 1987. Engineer: David B. Hancock. Guitar: Humphrey Millenium, 1985. *Two Songs of Walt Whitman* was published in *Guitar Review* #80 and #81.

Bug-Mudra was recorded in live performance at Tokyo's Bunkamura Cocoon Theatre, February 4, 1990. Live sound design by Paul Zinman with technical assistance from Hadley Taylor. The recording was engineered by Paul Zinman. Acoustic Cymbals were recorded in April 1990 at Hip Pocket Studios. *Bug-Mudra* was mixed by Tod Machover, David Starobin and Paul Zinman at Hip Pocket Studio A, with technical assistance from Joseph Chung. *Bug-Mudra* is published by Editions Ricordi, Paris. (BMI)

All six works were mastered at New York Digital Recording by Paul Zinman, David Starobin and Michael Calvert.

Producers: David Starobin, Michael Calvert

Engineers: David B. Hancock, Paul Zinman

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Bridge Records: Becky Starobin, managing director

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