

tions with rhetoric to the effect that the old institutions and ways of looking at opera were dead, and that they were doing precisely what they wanted to do. Now, however, whether mellowed by age or seduced by belated opportunity, many have jumped at the chance to work in a conventional operatic environment. Ashley is too defiantly weird, perhaps, ever to feel at home in a situation like that. Always the pioneer, he may one day realize his dream of *Perfect Lives* on international satellite television, circumventing opera houses altogether. But he may also be forced to watch as others, more adaptable, reap the rewards of his mixed-media experimentation.

THE ORIENT, THE VISUAL ARTS & THE EVOLUTION OF MINIMALISM

PHILIP GLASS

Not so long ago, Philip Glass and his ensemble still played most of their New York concerts downtown, almost surreptitiously. One night in the spring of 1973, the site was the large, high-windowed SoHo loft of the sculptor Donald Judd. The only piece on the program was *Music with Changing Parts*. At ninety minutes, it was enough.

Glass's music epitomized a rather wonderful moment in New York avant-garde history, and it still breathes that spirit today. The early seventies was a time of individual accomplishment after societal upheaval, tempering the optimism of the sixties with a new, craftsmanlike care. Innovations still seemed possible, and the barriers between "serious" and popular art looked like they were crumbling. For all its conceptual ingenuity and technical skill, Glass's music had won an audience because people *liked* it. "People," in this case, meant anyone with an openness to the arts of the day, and a feeling for the vitality of the city and of the country's best popular music.

Glass's ensemble that night played with the spirit and precision that only years together can bring. The music danced and pulsed with a special life, its motoric rhythms, burbling, highly amplified figurations and mournful sustained notes booming out through the huge black windows and filling up the bleak industrial neighborhood. It was so loud that the dancers Douglas Dunn and Sara

Rudner, who were strolling down Wooster Street, sat on a stoop and enjoyed the concert together from afar. A pack of teenagers kept up an ecstatic dance of their own. And across the street, silhouetted high up in a window, a lone saxophone player improvised in silent accompaniment like some faded postcard of fifties Greenwich Village Bohemia. It was a good night to be in New York City.

Today, nothing and everything have changed. Nothing, in that Glass's music is still recognizably his own. His evolution has been fascinating but consistent, extending Cage's anarchism in a way that might seem to contradict it completely. Everything, because Glass's audience isn't just a few SoHo artists anymore. In terms of recent attention by the mass media, and with audiences stretching from art museums to concert halls to opera houses to rock clubs, Philip Glass has become about the best-known "serious" composer of his generation.

Best known does not mean best loved by contemporary-music traditionalists. David Del Tredici's career indicates the jealousies that can arise even with his far more limited kind of success. Glass and his "school" of composition, which also includes such other leading minimalist-structuralist-trance composers as Terry Riley and Steve Reich, constitute the most controversial new-music style in recent decades. It is prized by its admirers for reuniting serious music with interested, emotionally committed young audiences. It is damned by its enemies as so lacking in complexity and emotional range that it can hardly be called "serious" at all.

Although he is regarded now as an iconoclast, Glass's early history was an entirely conventional one for a traditionally minded young American composer. Born in Baltimore in 1937, he studied flute at the Peabody Conservatory and was a prodigy in more than music. He graduated at the age of nineteen from the University of Chicago, went on to the Juilliard School for a Master's in composition with Vincent Persichetti and William Bergsma, and worked at the Aspen Festival with Milhaud—around the same time as Del Tredici—and later, in Paris, with Nadia Boulanger. Glass spent a year in Pittsburgh as a Ford Foundation fellow, as part of a program in which promising young composers were placed in residence

around the country. His music from that period—band marches, overtures for school and community orchestras and the like—belonged unashamedly to the non-serial, American-symphonist school, although like almost every young composer Glass had also tried his hand at serialism.

This predictable destiny was altered forever in the mid-sixties, during Glass's rather rambunctious tenure with Boulanger. She made him go back to the basics, as she did all her students, and while Glass valued the experience in some ways, he bridled at the discipline. In addition to what he considered Boulanger's pedantry, nearly all the contemporary music to be heard in Paris then was at Pierre Boulez's *Domaine Musical* series—which Glass has since described as "a wasteland, dominated by these maniacs, these creeps, who were trying to make everyone write this crazy creepy music."

He was thus primed for a violent reaction into simplicity, and the moment came when he was employed to work with Ravi Shankar, the Indian sitarist, on an archetypically sixties hippie film by Conrad Rooks called *Chappaqua*. Glass's job was to take Shankar's raga improvisations and notate them so that Western musicians could play them on the soundtrack. Glass set about this task without much prior knowledge of Indian music, and tried to figure out as he went along just how it "worked." His conclusions proved erroneous as ethnomusicology. But they were the seeds of his own mature style.

What Glass responded to was not the microtonal subtlety of Indian music—"my strong point was not that kind of precise hearing of microintervals"—but its rhythmic structure. He perceived that structure as additive and subtractive, the building up of chains of modular rhythmic patterns out of smaller units of two and three notes. As a result, he scrapped his previous catalogue—some twenty pieces in his conventionally modernist style had actually been published—and turned instead to defiantly simple strings of notes full of a jumping rhythmic life, with pitch choices simple and almost arbitrary. Not surprisingly, nearly everyone he showed them to in Paris hated them. It was only after he had returned to New York that he slowly began to find allies, and the beginnings of a career.

This phenomenon of innovation born of imitative misunderstanding is not quite so silly as it sounds. Many of the new styles in rock music, for instance, have derived from failed attempts at imitation, another example of the benefits of an imperfect technique. A teenager will try to duplicate a record on his electric guitar. Through misunderstanding or technical failings, he will not succeed. But the resultant sounds will fascinate him, and he will be on the way to the evolution of a new style. Of course, innate originality helps; another theory holds that a true original's imitations must always fail for the very reason that the new cannot be denied.

Although Glass's music then and now sounds nothing like Indian music, the very fact that it was Shankar and Indian music that triggered his mature musical thinking is yet another indication of the impact of Oriental ideas on vanguard American composers, and a rather more complex one than, say, the efforts by Colin McPhee or Lou Harrison to recreate the sounds of Oriental music with Western instruments or to compose a cosmopolitan music for Eastern instruments. As with Cage, the influence was more one of philosophical attitude. Although he doesn't like to discuss it publicly, Glass has been a Tibetan Buddhist for years. And an important inspiration for his operas is the Kathakali dance-dramas of Southern India; he has visited the principal center of such drama in the Indian state of Kerala several times.

The way this Oriental influence most decisively expressed itself in American music of the sixties and seventies was in a newly meditational mode of perception. Western art music has been built on tension and release, which would be unthinkable without the tonal system, with its balance between consonance and dissonance and its excursions away from and back to a home key. Such music involves considerable variation of dynamics, and rhythmic ideas that, while fairly primitive, still build to an ever more rapid climax. The meditational approach is more quiescent. The listener settles into the flow of a piece rather than tensely awaiting its denouement; a parallel between traditional masculine and feminine love-making suggests itself. Someone accustomed to conventional Western classical music may find this new meditational music

uneventful, simplistic and dull; the new listener—and many Orientals—find classical music noisy, clumsy and brash.

It is no accident that the rise of Western interest in Oriental meditation, music and life coincided with the increased use of marijuana and hashish. That is not to say that such music had to be made or enjoyed while stoned, although that certainly happened, on both sides of the footlights. Glass himself speaks eloquently about the parallelism between some kinds of music, drugs and religion, yet stresses that they do not depend on one another. For him, they all partake of "a non-ordinariness with certain other experiences." His music, he feels, differs from conventional classical music in that it is "non-narrative"; since it exists in "another time system," it shares attributes with trance states, religious ecstasy and drug experiences without being synonymous with them or dependent upon them. What he says is clearly true, but that does not obviate the fact that marijuana, even for those who ultimately don't much enjoy the drug, can be revelatory—*was* revelatory, for a whole generation of Americans in the sixties. That revelation, that new way of hearing things, can be recalled without recourse to a joint, and, indeed, profoundly affected the way we made, heard and judged all music.

Glass's early Paris pieces of 1965, those based on strictly additive principles, were composed for the American avant-garde theater troupe Mabou Mines. They were built on what he called "repetitive structures with very reduced pitch relationships, a steady eighth-note beat and a static dynamic level." When he returned to New York, after studies with the tabla player Allah Rakha and the first of many trips to India, he continued with this pared-down, minimalist music. The rapt and simple pieces of this period consisted of single lines of equal notes, played on a keyboard or violin. The effect may seem impossibly schematic in description. The actual results, for those who were sympathetic, were charged with hypnotic mysticism and rhythmic life: people listened to these pieces purr rapidly past and were enraptured by their sheer kinetic purity.

Such music may, as he now insists, have been original for him, but it was not unprecedented. The grandfather of this style was La Monte Young, who began as an experimental jazz musician and

subsequently pioneered a hieratic minimalism without the rhythmic impetus others later brought to it. The father was Terry Riley, the composer of *In C*, although Glass never fully explored that score's communitarian, participatory implications. Reich, who had worked with Riley on *In C* in San Francisco, returned to New York shortly before Glass got back there from Paris. Reich had ideas that were very similar to Glass's at the beginning. The two talked about music a lot in the late sixties, and played in each other's ensembles. After 1970, when both were in competition for the same grants and performance opportunities and were invoked interchangeably in the press, they developed a fierce rivalry, which has since been muted by manners and ameliorated by their divergent stylistic directions.

Glass's musical evolution to the opera *Einstein on the Beach* in 1976 was steady and logical, although some of his stylistic innovations seemed disruptive or even retrogressive at the time. He soon combined his additive procedures with cyclical ideas, setting different additive combinations in rhythmic counterpoint against cyclical patterns. His music gradually assumed a greater density of texture, both in the number of players on a given line in unison or parallel motion, and in the introduction of rudimentary counterpoint. This was the period in which his ensemble was coming together, so that the outer "skin" of the music took on the character of whoever was playing it at the time. By the early seventies, the basic instrumentation was two or three electric pianos and organs, several amplified winds and a wordless, instrumental female soprano—along with a sound designer and mixer who was considered a member of the group.

The harmonic language of these pieces was static—one key for the entirety of a long section—and it was this refusal to come to terms with either conventional tonality or its serial extension that more than anything else enraged the contemporary-music establishment, accustomed as it was to equating technical complexity with artistic worth. Such harmonic contrast as there was in Glass's music existed at the seams between sections, when the whole ensemble laboriously shifted gears. Gradually, Glass found himself paying increasing attention to those seams, and slowly began to

introduce modulations within sections; the key moment came in 1974, with Parts Eleven and Twelve of *Music in Twelve Parts*, which suddenly erupted into functional, root-movement harmony—in other words, full-fledged tonality. From there, the way was open to the large-scale tonal organization conducive to opera.

Reich, in the meantime, pursued his own development to greater harmonic and textural complexity. His music is woodier, softer, more rippling and gentle. While Glass was seeking grander effects through rock amplification and the theater, Reich enlisted ever larger ensembles, to the point that he is now writing for symphony orchestra. Glass has come to the symphony, too, in the form of the opera pit band. But by now, once one overlooks the outer similarities, their styles are as different as the two men always claimed they were.

Stately or agitated repetition has been heard before in Western music. The passacaglia and chaconne, in which the same "tune" is repeated over and over in the bass or elsewhere, more or less audibly, is one example. "Gimmick" pieces like Wagner's *Das Rheingold* prelude or Ravel's *Bolero* anticipate Glass's style even more directly, as do Carl Orff's still too little-known settings of Greek tragedies for gamelan-like percussion orchestra. Yet the new style is still really new, with its jumping energy and shifting colors.

For the real antecedents of this music, one must look not to previous examples in the West or the Orient. The direct precursors were the painting and sculpture fashionable in New York during the sixties. If Shapey and even Babbitt suggest an affinity with New York abstract expressionism of the fifties, Glass and Reich can claim kinship with another "New York school"—that of sixties minimalism. The plethora of sixties paintings with analytically reductive, repetitive structures and simple, even childlike formal elements all fed into a common pool of inspiration in lower Manhattan. In a sense, it is more fruitful to consider the general ambience of New York's artistic community, led by painting and then by vanguard dance, than to seek out specific visual-aural parallels. Glass, for instance, has long been friendly with the sculptor Richard Serra; he once worked as Serra's assistant, and they have nearby land in Nova Scotia, where Glass does most of his

composing. Similarly, the painter Sol LeWitt has been a longtime friend and collaborator, designing some of Glass's album covers and working with him and Lucinda Childs on a piece called *Dance* in 1980. And it was no accident that Donald Judd hosted that 1973 *Music with Changing Parts* concert.

The painting connection extended beyond esthetic inspiration. While the world of uptown contemporary music defiantly ignored this new downtown music, the art galleries and museums welcomed it. "I gravitated towards artists because they were always more open than musicians, and I liked looking at what they did," Glass told Ashley. "They were more interested, really, in what I was doing." Well into the seventies, it was the Whitney and Guggenheim museums and a variety of downtown galleries and artists' lofts that provided the principal base for this music. It was championed not by music critics (a few exceptions aside) but by art critics, and the feature spreads in *Artforum* came long before those in *Musical Quarterly*—which as of this writing has still not devoted an article to Glass. Indeed, the hostility to Riley, Reich and Glass from conservatives and uptown avant-gardists alike may be the best testimony to the vitality of their music.

Although the connections between this school of composers—and it really is a school, with all manner of spin-offs both in classical music and in rock—and visual artists are obvious, such affinities extend into all areas of the downtown SoHo arts community. In Glass's case, not only is his music used by every other loft dancer one encounters, but he himself served as music director and composer for Mabou Mines, of which his first wife, Joanne Akalaitis, was and is a member. The dance connection was even more direct in Reich's case. For a time, he lived with Laura Dean, who choreographed a number of works to his music and later took to composing Reichian scores herself.

The musical world's first interest in Glass and Reich came from Europe. During the seventies, they and many other New York avant-garde performing groups, including new-jazz musicians, toured France, Germany and Holland regularly, playing at state radio stations, art galleries and concert halls. This has been adduced by disgruntled American composers of greater domestic reputation as

further proof of Europe's incorrigible trendiness; the French also doted on Jerry Lewis. But the enthusiasms of a few fashionable French were only a small part of the intensity and seriousness of Europe's reaction to this music. Reich and Glass may possibly have been first perceived as novelties, but Europeans soon found their music not only representative of America in a way that other American art music was not, but worthy of admiration in the abstract. Glass's growing European reputation was solidified by the tour of *Einstein on the Beach* in 1976. Robert Wilson, who collaborated with Glass on *Einstein*, already had a cult reputation in France, from which Glass benefited. Following the end of the tour and some bad feelings between the two men that precluded, for a while, further collaboration between them, Glass received a commission from the Royal Netherlands Opera for an opera by himself alone. By "alone" one means he was the determinant force, although Constance DeJong, a longtime friend, helped him assemble the text and received credit as librettist. That opera was *Satyagraha*, a series of tableaux on the life of the young Gandhi in Africa. First performed in Rotterdam in the fall of 1980, it toured Holland and was presented in upstate New York and Brooklyn in the summer and fall of 1981.

Opera was not so foreign to Glass's sensibility as one might imagine. He had worked in long time-spans before, with the four-hour *Music in Twelve Parts*. Mabou Mines had accustomed him to the stage. Wilson's esthetic, with its hypnotic stage pictures and glacial movement punctuated by abrupt *coups de théâtre*, had many points of contact with his. And Glass, ever mindful of the economic aspect of a composer's career, realized that operatic commissions were his surest guarantee of financial stability.

Einstein and *Satyagraha* are very different, but again represent a logical evolution in Glass's development. *Einstein* is for the ensemble and untrained singers. Their text consists of solfège syllables and numbers that limn the rhythmic structure of the music: Boulanger's influence on Glass returns over and over again. The music often recalls Glass's pre-operatic instrumental idiom, especially in the dances, and serves throughout as accompaniment to Wilson's remarkable stage pictures. *Satyagraha* owes much to Wilson's

dramaturgy. But this was a work commissioned by a functioning opera company—as opposed to the specially formed, lower-Manhattan touring company that performed *Einstein*. There is a real symphony orchestra in the pit, and a real cast of operatic singers and chorus on stage. The action is not realistic; Glass's sympathy with "non-narrative" theater precludes that. But the *sound* of the music conforms with surprising ease to the classical tradition. It is on the one hand an orchestrated (and deftly so) version of Glass's ensemble style; on the other hand, it recalls Fauré and Bruckner in its sensuous, stately, untroubled unfolding. Glass's ensemble music is hard-edged and insistent; *Satyagraha* is soft, flowing and meditative, as befits its subject.

The success of these two operas—the Achim Freyer production of *Satyagraha* in Stuttgart in the fall of 1981 earned respectful reviews from even the orthodox modernist critics—has ensured Glass as lively a future in opera as he chooses. Dennis Russell Davies, the American music director in Stuttgart, has commissioned another opera from Glass, to be based on Immanuel Velikovsky's *Oedipus and Akhnaton*, and the city of Amsterdam has asked for yet another opera after that.

In the midst of all this, as if to prove that he could maintain his diversity, Glass and his ensemble—which will not have a part in these full-scale operas—played more and more in rock clubs, and Glass even co-produced, along with his longtime sound technician, Kurt Munkacsi, two RCA albums of a minimalist-structuralist rock band called Polyrock. For Glass, the New York rock clubs in the late seventies constituted "the most important and vital new music scene today, more challenging and innovative than what I was hearing coming out of the schools or from people imitating me. I find their approach to their music serious, lively, risky; these guys are doing all the things that artists are supposed to be doing."

Is Glass's newfound operatic opulence and cult rock stardom part of the Cage tradition? The answer depends on how one interprets Cage's influence. If we measure that influence by the number of composers whose music *sounds* like his, then his impact has been small. If we interpret his writings to mean that formal music should disappear and we all, "composers" and listeners alike, should become

equals, then he has been a failure, too. But if Cage's influence was primarily one of liberation, a permission to explore, then Glass owes him an enormous debt, as do many other composers. It is a debt they own up to: *Silence* was a crucial text in Glass's transformation from dutiful young American composer to what he is today. Cage let conventionally trained composers tear down or ignore the "rules"; he let them experiment without fear of condemnation. "I admired his ability to stand on his own feet," Glass told Ashley. "You know there is this maverick tradition in America that's very strong. It's in Ives, Ruggles, Cage, Partch, Moondog, all of these weird guys. That's my tradition."

In the mid-sixties, Glass went back to the basics and built up a personal style from there. In retrospect, we can note similarities to earlier forms of music, to non-Western music, to SoHo composers and to painting and dance. But the actual piece-by-piece evolution was Glass's own, in a way that composers who deal in received idioms—*knowing* deep inside that they have an absolute freedom to experiment, yet repressing that knowledge—cannot match.

In creating his own style, Glass illuminated still further the relation between musical simplicity and complexity. Traditional composers complain that his music is insultingly simplistic. Of course it is, if the criterion is a complexity that only a peer can penetrate. But if the goal is a music with structure and integrity and conceptual fascination that simultaneously excites and moves an audience, then music which fails to do that has fallen short. On its own terms, Glass's music has complexities its critics rarely consider. Rhythmic units fly by with such a speed that it takes a player considerable concentration not to get lost. Lines sometimes overlap in ways that are difficult to perform or perceive. And when played with great speed and the high volume Glass favors, exotic acoustical phenomena emerge—"beats" and combination tones—to lend the music an unexpected textural richness.

Over the course of the past fifteen years, Glass has built an audience that for diversity and sheer numbers surpasses that of any "serious" composer today. In so doing, he discovered something rock musicians have known all along. When you attract a following that loves your past work, and expects more of the same, you

encounter pressure *not* to change your style. A composer like Rzewski can shift facilely from idiom to idiom because, to be blunt, nobody cares what he does, least of all "the people." But Glass and the rock bands have *fans*, and those fans get disgruntled when they feel "betrayed." Were Glass suddenly, on a whim, to write a serial piece, it would be regarded as an aberration by his admirers. There are already those who cherish the early, austere pieces, who found *Einstein* too busy and fussy, and who feel that in *Satyagraha* he softened his style beyond salvation. Such pressure can function as invidiously as the strictly commercial pressure to duplicate a hit song—which is merely the leverage of fans' expectations translated into a direct threat not to buy anything unorthodox. It also parallels the pressure applied to academic composers by their teachers and peers, who understandably prefer approaches similar to their own.

The pressure can come from within, as well. Glass finally decided to introduce harmonic modulation into his music because he resented his own instincts telling him he could not. "I decided to change the rules," he recalled. "I noticed that I had been operating under a lot of rules that had become automatic, and that there were things that weren't possible to do in my music because I had made them forbidden. I said, 'Why can't I do it?' 'Well, there's this rule.' 'Rule!?! Who's making the rules? I'm making the rules.' And that was the end of the rule."

Whether the pressure comes from the public, one's peers or one's self, the strong will resist and the weak will capitulate. Despite the complaints of those disappointed with *Satyagraha*, Glass has in essence, for all his evolution within his own terms, stuck with the style that defined his maturity. One can only hope that was because it best expressed what he wanted to say, rather than because it was what his career demanded. But a steady evolution has helped define his public image and lend coherence to his work in a way that vacillating eclectics can never achieve.

During his many years of marginal economic existence, Glass worked as a furniture-mover, plumber and taxi-driver; a few weeks after the glamorous *Einstein* premiere at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1976, he was back behind the wheel of a cab. But he was able to avoid the academy and to keep his odd jobs at a minimum

by touring with his own performing ensemble. He also refused to let his music be published, in order to ensure exclusive performance rights for his own group. More and more composers have taken to starting ensembles of their own—Reich and Wuorinen in New York, Shapey in Chicago, Peter Maxwell Davies in London and Pierre Boulez in Paris. Glass and Reich played only their own music, while the others diversified. In all cases, the existence of such a group assured the composer not only performances, but *better* performances than he could otherwise have hoped for. Composers profit from organizational ability, a knack for working in the world. This need not preclude a kinship with the outsider tradition of American composers, however, since the very act of creating one's own group places one outside the normal pattern of having to beg for performances.

Composing for one's own ensemble does seem to limit a composer in another way, by precluding large-scale music. Reich tried to escape that trap first by expanding his ensemble up to eighteen musicians and beyond, then by writing works for ensemble *and* orchestra, and finally turning to the symphony itself, when his growing stature enabled him to win commissions and assurances of adequate rehearsal time. Glass also writes now for the symphony, but before that he side-stepped the problem of enforced small scale by the same means with which rock groups have managed to fill indoor sports arenas with sound—amplification. If the growth of the symphony orchestra through the nineteenth century was partly a response to the democratization of music and the ever larger halls in which orchestras played, the advent of amplification was a further step in that direction—except that now the actual number of musicians could shrink, thus ideally combining the close, subtle interaction of chamber music with the volume of a full orchestra.

Amplification, generally augmented to a point where non-rock listeners become literally uncomfortable, is part of the connection between Glass and rock. Another is the very nature and configuration of his ensemble, or "band." Another is the palpable rhythmic kineticism of the music, even without a drummer. All that is missing are electric guitars, and younger composers like Glenn

Branca, Rhys Chatham and Paul Dresher have now turned to them. In 1982 there was an all-electric-guitar performance in SoHo of Riley's *In C*. Such affinities helped inspire the growth in New York of rock bands that were clearly influenced by this school of music—Talking Heads, above all. The rock appeal of his music won Glass club bookings that expanded his and the ensemble's earnings at a time when he was so busy composing he had no time to waste touring. And it attested still further to the variety of his audience, confirming that it was both permissible and enlightening to like more than one kind of music.

By every criterion except grudging mainstream respect, Glass is enjoying a success that few American composers have been able to equal. It may be an ephemeral success, as his detractors insist—the kind that will fade like the pop charts. But right now, Glass seems to be developing and diversifying his style and audience and supporting himself through commissions, grants, record sales and concert dates in a way rarely achieved in this dreary age of parsimonious foundations and stultifying academic appointments. Transitory or not, people *like* this music. For a serious composer in the late twentieth century, that is no mean achievement.

WOMEN COMPOSERS,
PERFORMANCE ART
& THE PERILS OF FASHION

Laurie Anderson

By now the distinction between "uptown" and "downtown" new music probably means something even to those who live outside New York, as a distinction between academic sobriety and bohemian experimentation. In New York itself, "downtown" literally used to mean Greenwich Village. Now it refers more to SoHo or SoSoHo or Tribeca or whatever the acronyms of the moment are for still seedier, less developed neighborhoods between Houston Street and the southern tip of Manhattan. It was to these neighborhoods, most of them commercially zoned with large loft buildings that used to house light industry, that artists began moving when the Village became too expensive. The lofts were ideal for painters, and the rents were cheap. But as artists settled in, boutiques and other signs of trendiness soon followed, driving up the rents and driving out the artists.

For all the troubles Manhattan artists have with loft-converters and landlords, however, the downtown arts community still exists. It is a real community. People who live there feel a kinship with other downtown artists, even if they are working in different media. Artists will often work in more than one medium themselves. And artists in a given medium feel closer to fellow downtown artists of all kinds than they do to uptown artists in their own medium. Specifically, that means a downtown composer may feel more in common with neighboring dancers, painters and poets than with