

# PLAYER

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## Chez Steve review

### LIVE REVIEW

"Jazzendental Energies,"  
Minnesota Composers Forum  
curated by Donald Washington  
at Town Square Park, Nov. 8, 1990.

By Jaye C. Beldo

The first of the audio hors d'oeuvres of the evening consisted of an all-percussion composition by **Collin Franey** entitled, "Pain," performed by four musicians who tried to conjure stringed instrument sounds out of automobile parts, cymbals, saws and xylophones, by running violin bows over their metallic surfaces.

The actualization of the auditory dimensions of the work evoked a peculiar sense of anticipation for a resolution that never occurred. While waiting for the solution (to alleviate or avoid the pain addressed), I was distracted by the insistent presence, but disturbing ungroundedness of the music and fell into a trance. The reference to the music's physical origins was obscured by the anguish born of possibilities that nearly realized themselves, but always returned to the dilemma that the composer intended to express.

In **Michelle Kinney's** "A-part From my Life," a work she says was "...inspired by the mystery, beauty, and anxiety of a life lived

on different planes simultaneously." The thematic dichotomies of romantic yearnings unsatisfied and the resulting frustrations which create such anxiety gave the audience an opportunity to explore their own paradoxes, instead of being impeded or immobilized by them.

Like the preceding work, her difficult yet pleasing composition, while demanding in terms of separating the various musical styles that composed her contradictions, gave us possibilities for the resolutions of our own dilemmas. Kinney explained, "This music is about the process of striking a balance between the contradicting parts of my life." Whether or not she succeeded in achieving such a repose depended upon our reception of the work in terms of striking a balance within and without ourselves.

The most informative and entertaining work was the aleatoric piece, "Chez Steve Improv." Saxophonist **David Edminster** emerged from a miniature rain forest of sadly drooping, neglected pine trees and dust covered ferns above and beyond the audience as drummer **Eric Coursen** created a disruptive syncopation which inspired dancer **Patrick Scully** to break away from his deep musings and swing precariously from one of the I-beams far above.

As the piece progressed, expanded and deepened, the dancer climbed down from his pondering perch, explored the seeming-

ly safe territory of the shopping mall arboretum, reminding the audience of the sober fact of the extinction of the real rain forest beyond the pleasant greenhouse theatre we were enclosed by.

In **Carel Thomas' work**, "The Reconstruction of Light," a thoughtful weaving of improvised music, poetry, and the appearance of child angels dancing through the audience, many numinous possibilities, both musically and poetically, were manifested. The music, encompassing many styles, encouraged us to realize our own light within, under the grey frost of our fear and doubts, and to greet the "new colors coming" in a mutual exchange of reflection and acceptance. The recitation of the poem, "New Colors Coming," helped evoke imaginistically what the music steered us towards acoustically. The sounds created by the ensemble were actually learning from the light and colors evoked and vice versa, creating an interactive occasion for the audience and players alike.

The fifth and final piece, "Pete Linman and Some of His Friends," involved the use of the composer's, "conduction style," i.e., communicating to the musicians via hand signals, vocal cues, and signs "as a way to create and direct the flow of the improvisation." However, Linman created a musical mishmash which only confused, exasperated and disappointed me. ©