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# DATEBOOK

## New Works For Earplay's Season Finale

By Marilyn Tucker  
Chronicle Staff Critic

The Earplay collective of Bay Area composers ended its eighth season at the Cowell Theater Monday night with a stimulating program of five chamber pieces, three of them world premieres by local composers.

The new works were Henry Onderdonk's "A Moment of Decision," performed by violinist George Thomson and pianist Karen Rosenak, Richard Festinger's "Head Over Heels" for solo piano/electronics, also performed by Rosenak, and John Thow's Sextet for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano and conducted by Thomson. In addition, Luciano Berio's *Sequenza IXa* (1980) for solo clarinet was performed by Peter Josheff, and Morris Rosenzweig's "Another Order of Cat" for flute, clarinet, violin, cello and piano, was conducted by Thomson.

Onderdonk's "A Moment of Decision" is a beautifully crafted lyric arch. In one long seamless breath, the performers managed to convey Onderdonk's quiet musings that gradually took on a more forceful and impassioned tone, followed by a retreat to old beginnings.

In Festinger's "Head Over Heels," Rosenak offered a cat-and-mouse game with her own playing, which was the expressive influence on the electronically produced tape sounds. The piece was catchy and full of verve, something to look forward to hearing again.

Thow's three-movement Sextet was a lively study in contrasts, both in its elements of composition and the fact that it required an amazing virtuosity from individual performers and precise feeling for ensemble as well. In the second movement, one might savor the throbbing cello song of Sarah Freiberg enhanced by other instruments, at the same time being gently amused by the glitter of Janet Kutulas' flute and Rosenak's piano. This movement was posed between peppy sections, the last one an inventive free-for-all.

In addition to the above performers, players included Peter Josheff on clarinet, Marty Simonds on violin, and Phyllis Kamrin on viola.

Josheff also distinguished the opening work on the program, the Berio *Sequenza*, one of the Italian composer's studies in extended playing techniques for a solo instrument. Josheff brought out the music's compelling architectural form in the way he offered the long-held notes that dominate the *Sequenza* in a variety of guises and disguises.

Rosenzweig's "Another Order of Cat" was light as air and quite enjoyable. The composer himself referred to it and an accompanying musical piece as a musical cartoon.

Kutulas, Josheff, Simonds, Freiberg and Rosenak performed a fetching "Cat."