

# Composer explains music at concert *review*

By Linda Irwin  
special writer

The Detroit Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, in the fourth in a series of five concerts, presented composer George Rochberg as its guest Friday evening in the Guild Hall, Christ Church Cranbrook.

He began the evening by discussing his approach to creating, citing an intensive study he made of Schoenberg in 1948.

Until 1954, his work reflected his

personal conception of serialism. During the last 15 years he has incorporated atonal and tonal sound, using both pre-existing and original materials.

All of his pieces are single movement works with discernible, different sections. There is nothing accidental in his music. He plans everything and shapes it to his satisfaction. Only then does he offer it to the public, because he believes in it.

**HIS FIRST WORK**, Duo Concertante (1953) for violin and cello, accurately interpreted Rochberg's intent that we not hear two instruments, but rather eight separate strings.

The musicians successfully demonstrated how much resonance could be achieved, sounding like a trio, then a quartet, at times strong and expressive, then lyrical. A lush, full sound was developed with separation of notes very noticeable.

The second work, Serenata d'Estate (1955), a 12-tone piece, was markedly different from the first. This was very atmospheric, nature

music, in which the six instruments shared equally in carefully expressing the feeling and subtle changes occurring as the work progressed.

There were separate sounds, occasional intensity as the volume increased, then quiet, precise playing of the repeating themes. Rochberg seemed very pleased with the Ensemble's experience with interpretation of the music.

Following an intermission, Rochberg introduced his more recent works. He has always felt close to the natural process. The third work, "Slow Fires of Autumn," (1978) is an original title brought about by his

feeling of poignance at the end of summer as the seasons change.

He said that while visiting Japan he had heard a lullaby in the key of F Minor. He incorporated it at the end and used it as a source to develop the rest of the piece.

**PERFORMED BY FLUTE** and harp in a concentrated, expressive way, it resulted in silence throughout the room at the finish, followed by enthusiastic applause from the audience and the composer alike.

The last work, Quartet for piano, violin, viola, and cello (1983) was an

extremely intense, strong piece. Rochberg, in introducing it, said he had not heard it performed in a while and this sense of intensity had caught him unaware when he listened to it in rehearsal.

He seemed most pleased with the interpretation, concentrating and being moved during its performance.

The attention of each musician to the other and their collective ability with the work contributed to its success. The applause afterward showed both audience and musicians had clearly enjoyed the evening.

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