La figura di Peter Garland, compositore nato a Portland, Maine, nel 1952, è una delle più misconosciute dell'attuale generazione musicale. Dopo gli studi al California Art Institute con i maestri James Tenney e Harold Budd, e con compagni come Michael Byrom e Chas Smith, Garland comincia a scrivere musica nel 1971, fortemente influenzato dal minimalismo, lo abbandonerà presto in favore di una marea più personale, anche se sempre fondato sugli insegnamenti di Tenney e di un altro suo grande mentore, Lou Harrison. Da allora, passando per fasi e cambiamenti che pure caratterizzano questi anni, Garland non ha mai smesso di scrivere, ma paradossalmente per una figura tra le più attive nel campo della musica sperimentale, di fronte ad un "corpus" compositivo consistente, nulla (se si escludono le "Natchin dances" uscite su Cold Blue ed un paio di brani brani editi dalla Cold Blue e dalla Opus One) era mai stato pubblicato fino a quando, all'improvviso, il lavoro di Peter Garland divenne oggetto di interesse critico e storico. E quindi sorprendente che nel volgere di un anno ben tre Cds a nome Peter Garland siano stati pubblicati da tre diverse etichette: la What Next di Santa Fe (più legata all'estetica); la giapponese Dk Union guidata da John Zorn e la nota New Albion.

Possiamo seguire per mezzo di questi tre lavori, molto distanti tra loro per impostazione artistica, le diverse fasi dell'evoluzione musicale garlandona.

Sono infatti presenti le due anime del musicista, quella più sperimentale degli esordi (che si percepisce anche in composizioni più recenti), e quella della maturità, dove l'influenza della musica tradizionale dei nativi americani e del Messico divenne il materiale per ampliare e completare l'inspirazione del compositore, costantemente teso alla ricerca di una musica in cui il "border music", come chiamano opportunamente il titolo di uno dei tre Cds, lavora che più esaurientemente racchiude l'essenza del Garland musicista, offrendo una visione panoramica dello suo operato. I lavori più noti sono quelli per sole percussioni: "Three pieces for percussion" o "Apple blossom" del 1972/73 richiamano alla mente la musica di Conlon Nancarrow e Lou Harrison, oltre a interpretare la spiritualità della musica degli indiani d'America, popolo alla cui sensibilità artistica Garland si sente etnicamente vicino. I brani "Canotors della frontiera" e "Old men of the fireplace" sono invece più recenti e si introducono in un universo lirico e più influenzato dalla musica tradizionale messicana, musica che Garland ha studiato sul campo durante la sua lunga permanenza in Messico. I brani sono articolati in più "cancioni" o "danzas" e, anche se presenti ancora le percussioni, si risentono di una certa indipendenza. Christopher Shulits alle percussioni e Rosalind Simpson all'arpa spiccano, per ispirazione, fra gli interpreti.

Grandi esecutori anche per gli altri due disci; nel mini-Cd giapponese (appena 28 minuti) valute da Zorn, i due brani "Nana+Victoria" e "Pensacola blanco" ci offrono il Garland del versante "indiano" e percoscente. Gua per cercare un particolare ritmo; quello che si cerca in questa tipologia di composizioni è più l'aspetto sonoro, acustico, delle pelli o dei sonagli che utilizza, ben assecondato dall'esecuzione partecipata di William Winant. Lo stesso Winant al vibrafono e Julie Steinberg al pianoforte sono poi gli interpreti di "Pensacola blanco", brano a struttura circolare che evoca immagini di quinte dell'armonia.

L'ultimo uscito è quello su New Albion, dal titolo "Walk in beauty": qui troviamo l'aspetto più classico della musica di Garland; il brano che dà il titolo al Cd, per piano solo, è infatti quello più accessibile, con reminiscenze di
Garland, Peter "Border Music" [Nonsequitur] (CD, 67 mins) This CD contains six pieces by composer Peter Garland, who studied with Harold Budd and James Tenney, and was also the editor of Sounding Press and author of books and articles on American music. Four of the works are from the early 70's and the other two are more recent. The music is minimal and acoustic using harp, piano, violin, percussion, and a variety of other instruments. The two more recent pieces ("Cantares De La Frontera" and "Old Men of the Fiesta") mostly feature the harp for a very ambient excursion whereas the earlier works featured might have a stronger and directed touch. A very enchanting poetic quality and quiet charm runs through the majority of these pieces. A very beautiful package, with liner notes and history, which helps to frame and document the work of this composer (DP)
PETER GARLAND: Border Music Chronologically, this retrospective selection of Garland's work starts with a muted, minimalist piece for four marimbas, with an acknowledged debt to Harold Budd — together with some contemporaneous percussion works (stark and ritualistic, including one for sirens and bullroarer), which echo the radical experimentation of iconoclasts like Cage, Varese and Partch in the 1930s and 1940s. This body of work was composed by Garland in the early 1970s, and suggests a search for his own voice. Then the CD takes a 13-year leap to 1986 and reveals a new preoccupation with indigenous Southwestern U.S. folk materials. “Catares De La Frontera,” a set of compositions for unaccompanied harp, is a kind of distilled, minimalist folk music, quite lovely, which according to Garland is based in part upon a traditional Mongolian music expressing “love and longing for the homeland” — which in this case is rural New Mexico. Another set of dance pieces, “Old Men of the Fiesta,” for combinations of violin, harp, rattles and claves, was composed in 1989-1990. This music is simple and stately, with the ritualistic quality of the earlier percussion pieces absent the aggression and desire to shock. (Nonsequitur, Box 2638, Santa Fe, NM 87504) — Bill Tilland
Peter Garland

Border Music
(¿What Next?)

Born in Maine, trained in California, and residing in Santa Fe and Mexico, composer Peter Garland has accumulated numerous musical influences. Those influences coalesce arresting on the most recent piece on Border Music, “Old Man of the Fiesta” (1989). Beginning with one of those mournful violin-based folk melodies that come echoing out of New England, out of the American past, the piece glides through a Yaqui Indian dance segment, complete with bonelike rattles, and sections of turtle-shell drumming, without ever losing its stately grandeur or its sweetness of melody and tone.

The style-juggling proves more precarious elsewhere. Some of Garland’s early percussion pieces sound more like exercises than compositions. But thanks to the two recent works framing the collection, Border Music sustains a mood of meditative mystery: the desert, under a bright moon, its inhabitants flickering over the sand like shadow puppets.

Glen Hirshberg
1992年にアメリカで生まれたピーター・ガーランドは、音楽界で注目されている若手作曲家として、カリフォルニア州に在住しています。彼は、音楽の多様性への追求が本業に寄与しています。

彼は前年にリリースした新作『ラブ・イン・ビューティー』をご紹介いたします。この作品は、彼のこれまでの音楽スタイルを深く反映しています。作曲に際して、彼は新たな手法を試み、音楽の表現の新しい可能性を探求しています。

この新作『ラブ・イン・ビューティー』では、彼は音楽の構成要素を再考し、新たな形や組み合わせを試みています。音楽の表現において、彼の目指すものは、音の美しさと、それに基づく感情の深さを追求することです。

彼の音楽は、音楽理論の枠組みを超えて、音楽とならば、音楽を超越する存在として捉えられている。このようなアプローチは、彼の音楽を、新たな視点から理解するための鍵となることでしょう。

この作品『ラブ・イン・ビューティー』は、彼の音楽宇宙を誇り、新たな音楽の世界を我々に提示するものであると、彼は語っています。

音楽は、音の世界であり、音の組み合わせや、音の展開を通じて、感情を表現することです。彼の音楽は、音楽の表現に新しい視点を注ぎ、新たな音楽の世界を創造しています。

この作品『ラブ・イン・ビューティー』は、彼の音楽への情熱と、新たな音楽の可能性を示すものであり、音楽愛好家たちの心をもたれることでしょう。
PETER GARLAND Border Music, Nonsequitur Records. Retrospekyviai apžvelgiantis P.G. kūrybą leidinys. 1972-1990 m. darbai turi vieną bendrą bruožą - mistišką, tačiau šviesią nuotaiką. Ši muzika graginga, tauri, apgaubta sakrališko apeigiškumo, nelyginant iniciavimo į totemą šokis... Kūrybinė sfera: nuo akademiškos (fortepijonas, arfa, smuikas) iki primityviosios (idiofonai, šnaresiai, riaumojimai ir pan.).
LIKE THE SURREALIST POETRY OF BRETON, ARTAUD, AND PREVERT, Peter Garland’s music has long had an automatic quality to it. It seems to capture that which lies just beneath the silence of one’s immediate thought. But unlike the surrealists, Garland follows what appears to be an irresistible inner direction, giving his compositions both a consistent philosophical base and a recognizable aesthetic.

There are some obvious questions raised by his recent release, Border Music, on ¿What Next? Recordings. Namely, “What borders, whose borders, why borders?” Garland explores these questions with the grace and depth of a poet. Two of the titles on the recording reflect Garland’s long-standing love affair with Mexico. In both “Cantares de la Frontera” and “Old Men of the Fiesta,” Garland captures tiny, elemental fragments of what just might be a Mexican folk tune, as one might pluck a butterfly out of the air, and places them in a transparent musical setting. The result is much like a Giacometti painting or sculpture—a body of music has been stripped down to its simplest, most naked form. Once in this form, every minuscule can be examined and experienced as it wends its way, organically evolving, from beginning to end. Yet, the respectfully acknowledged influence of Mexican and Tex-Mex musical idioms is the least interesting of the borders with which the composer is toying.

Garland’s music is distinctively avant-garde. He was writing in a minimalist style long before it became popular, and, unlike some, has developed and nurtured it into something more intriguing and less obviously repetitious. But Garland has never been one to deal completely with abstractions. His music is always firmly rooted in something organic—such as the sacred culture of a simple people. This makes it essentially folk music. This arbitrary musical border between folk and classical is blurred even further by the use of such quotidian folk instruments as a harp, a violin, and a rattle.

In contrast to the lilting lyricism of these two pieces (which were recorded at the Center for Contemporary Arts in Santa Fe) are the "Three Pieces For Percussion," completed in 1973 and performed by the highly acclaimed and talented UNM percussion ensemble. In this trilogy, Garland retains his Giacometti-like nakedness, but breaks through into harsher, more ominous territory. Employing such forces as a bass drum, a bull-roarer, eight tom-toms in unison, a pair of sirens, and a piano struck by a wooden board, Garland creates a disturbing atmosphere of raw power.

The second piece of the trilogy, "Three Songs of Mad Coyote," is a perfect and compelling musical expression of three song-poems of the Nez Perce Indians.

Ravening Coyote comes
red hands, red mouth
necklace of eyeballs!

Mad Coyote
madly sings
then the west wind roars!

Daybreak finds me,
eastern daybreak finds me
the meaning of that song:
with blood-stained mouth
comes Mad Coyote!

All of these "Three Pieces for Percussion" raise the question about another border: where does music stop and noise start? In fact, this is an age-old question, posed by such early 20th century giants as Edgard Varese. Yet many of us who have been spoon-fed by a predictable pop culture all our lives still ask it. As he musically combines a fear of the unknown with an awe of the divine, Garland seems to shout an answer through the mystical din: "If it moves you, it’s music."

The final composition on the recording is a sensual marimba quartet called "Apple Blossom." Written in Vancouver in 1972, the piece derives its inspiration from an André Breton poem known as "On Me Dit Que Lá-Bas." The piece, like the poem, is self-admittedly erotic. But unlike the "Three Pieces for Percussion," the eroticism of "Apple Blossom" does not stem from an unstoppable unleashing of inhibitions. Instead, it evokes the afterglow. The wonderings as to the whys and wherefores of a carnal and basic, yet ever-renewable mystery. And therein lies the final border Garland attempts to eradicate in every work on the recording. The one between the earthly and the spiritual.

John Kennedy and Charles Wood once said of Garland’s music that, "It is clearly expressive of his intent to root the sacred in nature." In Border Music, Garland has followed this intent to an extreme. Every composition, in its own way and using the simplest of materials (both musically and instrumentally), quietly asks why there must even be a distinction. One does not always need a Gothic cathedral to be inspired. Sometimes a stone will do just fine.

Border Music is locally available at Alla Bookstore, Blue Moon Books, and Osho’s Tea and Coffees.

by Jamie Allen

Jamie Allen is a composer and music critic who teaches at the College of Santa Fe. His recent commission, In Memory of a Once-New World, will be premiered at the New Mexico Music Teachers Association convention this fall.
Peter Garland: *Border Music (What Next?)* We’re overdue for this seminal West Coast postminimalist on easily available disc. Sadly, his late work isn’t much represented; four of the six pieces date from 1972–73, the years of Garland’s “noise minimalism.” *The Three Strange Angels* and *Obstacles of Sleep* were incredible for their time: mammoth piano clusters, warbling sirens, whirring thundersticks, assembled with a sculptural austerity Varèse would have admired. Since then, Garland’s moved in gorgeous new directions, represented by a string quartet and piano works not included here. *Cantares de la Frontera* for harp and *Old Men of the Fiesta* for violin, harp, and rattles are reflective, modal, Lou Harrison-like, and lovably unpretentious. It’s a must-have disc for partly historic reasons, but Garland’s next compilation will be the stunner. A MINUS
Honesty Before Weirdness

By Kyle Gann

Peter Garland

Two composers in my generation are the lighthouses I use to navigate through the volatile waters of fashion. The Atlantic one is Rhys Chatham. The Pacific is lit by Peter Garland of Santa Fe, publisher of Soundings and self-appointed guardian of the American Experimental Tradition. Garland's been A Name for so long that his combination of youth and longevity works against him. I bought my first Garland record—Apple Blossom, on Opus One—when I was 18 and he was 21. Garland became famous not for his music, but for securing the reputations of anti-establishment pioneers: Nancarrow, Rudhyar, Harrison, Partch, Tenney. Being an intransigent rabble-rouser in an isolated place, he hasn't had the support systems that the self-disenfranchised can turn to in New York. The upshot is: it's taken a long time for anyone to ask what the composer Peter Garland is all about.

And what is he about? The question finally got asked by Essential Music, Charles Wood and John Kennedy's intrepid ensemble that, like Garland in Soundings, has set out to single-handedly right the wrongs of American music. Essential Music gave Garland his first New York one-man show February 7 at Greenwich House, in front of an audience swelling with the composers. Soundings has championed over the years. The music ranged from hair-raising to tuneful, and, since Garland is so identified with the experimental tradition, it suggested some surprising things about what that tradition means.

The two 1973 works were pure noise-sculpture. Three Songs of Mad Coyote began with drummers in fierce unison, like an American Indian beat but with energizing rhythmic shifts. Coyote's second "song" involved the whirs and growls of bull-roarers (flat pieces of wood whirled on strings) and lion's roars (twine scraped through a hole in a drumhead), and the third song used piano clusters that boomed like distant thunder. Obstacles of Sleep, aptly titled, revved up a pair of sirens to the highest pitch, then damped them with a yelp. As the piece continued, slowly turned ratchets made a commotion like the explosion of baseball-sized popcorn kernels, and sweeping glissandos threatened to take the black keys off the pianos. (Essential Music's percussionists produce the loudest unamplified concerts in New York.) These pieces might be the last stanzas classics of pure modernism, all remnants of classical resolution removed, and not yet infected by any trace of postmodern irony.

The later works, 1988-90, were less abstract, melodic and even gentle. Garland's recent style is a nonrepetitive minimalism, each contrapuntal line shaved down to only three or four notes, yet still full of unexpected twists. Drinking Wine, whose translated-from-Chinese text Dora Ohrenstein sang in dark, ghostly tones, featured the Roy Harris-like octaves and wide consonances of Garland's piano style (Philip Bush on piano). A Green Pine, another Ohrenstein vehicle, had accordionist Gult Knevsky rocking endlessly between triads on C, B-flat, and G. A fabulous pianist, Judith Gordon (a Yo Yo Ma accompanist), brought delicacy and color to Walk in Beauty, a multimedia piece based on the Navajo peyote ceremony. It began with, and finally returned to, a hesitant repeated-note melody over a pair of chords a whole-step apart.

Essential Music's most ambitious coup was the world premiere of Garland's Roque Dalton Songs, with Nils Vigeland conducting an 11-piece ensemble. The drum blasts, slapstick, maracas, and sharp harp pizzicatos that differentiated the songs timbrally were as powerful as the violent political poems they accompanied, written by short-lived Salvadoran guerrilla-poet Dalton (1935-75). As strings and percussionhammered out blunt isorhythms, David Fry's distinctly annunciated tenor pierced through the ensemble, but his chantlike line, often limited to four notes, wasn't written to underscore the poetry's drama. Not a touch of tone-painting did Garland indulge in, yet the tense emotionality of the whole gave Dalton's indictment a stern authority. The songs were as hard-edged, uniform, impassive, and vivid as a panel of Mayan hieroglyphics.

Rough and bristling, the Dalton Songs showed the influence of the Latin American composers Garland has often championed, as well as his political concern for Central America. But some of the music, at least in surface respects, was nearly the most conventional I've reviewed in this column. In Garland's music—as in that of Nancarrow, Cowell, Harrison, and Ives—bizarre noises coexist happily with major triads. The American experimentalists never fell for the anti-consonance exclusionism that cut serialization (and more recently, free improv) into a one-dimensional aesthetic. Music in the Am Ex Trad, doesn't have to be weird, simply honest. Honest music will sometimes sound weird—everyone has a few thoughts and feelings outside the experience of others—but the honesty comes first, not the weirdness. In the second movement of Walk in Beauty, Gordon played soft clusters from which she sustained triads; the shimmering effect added, not shock value, but a purity the clearest consonance couldn't have equaled.

Or, as Garland put it to me after the concert, "I was afraid my music would be eaten alive in New York. It has a sentimental side to it. New York music is about proving you're the most baaad-ass composer in town." Garland's not a very baaad-ass composer, but he's one of the best.
PETER GARLAND - BORDER MUSIC
(\textit{CD by Nonsequitur}). This man studied with Harold Budd and James Tenney. Does that say anything? Budd is, in my eyes, a romantic minimalist. Tenney is a composer whose compositions are straight, no detours, no deviations.
The music on this CD follows both courses. There are works for harp that I can easily play for my grand-mother. There are also compositions for percussion that would instantly give her a stroke. Still: the first category is quite nice to listen to (but then again, I have never heard a harp play a dirty note). Also: the percussion-pieces are sharp, hard, and direct. Beautiful. Cool, precise.
In between these extremes we find others, like ‘Apple Blossom’ for 4 marimba’s that are played extremely softly, like ‘Obstacles of Sleep’ for 2 sirens, amplified ratchet, piccolo’s, lion’s roar, and 2 piano’s.
Garland’s music certainly has personality. It’s the constant and consequent compositional language that appeals to me.
Peter Garland Border Music

*(WHAT'S NEXT? WN0008CD)* Garland studied composition with Harold Budd and James Tenney; takes Lou Harrison as his mentor. He roots the 1986 written-for-harp piece *Cantares De La Frontier* in Mongolian music, but its All-American wide-open harmony and yearning stillness go all the way back to Edward MacDowell (via Cage and Copland). Stillness and sonority — and bullroarers — dominate his 70s percussion-works. His recent *Old Men Of The Fiesta*, a series of utterly plainspoken, stately little folk dances, reinstates the distance between this longstanding American tradition of vernacular innocence, and every Euro-composer except Satie (if you pretend Erik’s badass bad-faith wasn’t part of the point). As uncalculated as a music-box: short-circuit your own cynicism and you’ll get there too.