*O*ver the course of his career Roger Reynolds has constructed a rich and varied array of musical landscapes. Many aspects of his work are truly unique and fascinating—his temporal structures, his sense of theater, his use of language. Moreover, he appears to have an unbounded need to devise new modes of sonic expression. However, what is most impressive is that these varied explorations always seem motivated by an intense desire to identify and study every nuance of his own personal experience, and to do so as precisely and exhaustively as possible. Every work, every new horizon, seems a record of some aspect of this individual's sense of himself in his surroundings. In turn, every work becomes a unique opportunity for each listener to reconsider his own experiences and, ultimately, to come to grips with his own place within the world. Reynolds himself said it best during an interview in 1982 with his friend and frequent collaborator Harvey Sollberger:

What can we do really, if we are honorable, what can we do except delve as deeply and thoroughly as possible into our own capacities, our own biases, tastes, decision-making processes? It seems to me that in attempting to write music that is meaningful (as opposed to that which is routine), you have to offer what it is that you have and hope that it is seen to have value. . . .*For me, honor as a composer or as a musician resides in the fullest exploration of one's own experience,* one's own ability to assess what is moving, what is interesting, what is not. And the more that one's music becomes a reflection of those necessarily idiosyncratic tastes, the more it has a chance to be something which is a) coherent, because presumably we are all to some degree coherent or we couldn't function in the world, and b) unlike what it is that other people already know or possess.

It seems to me that in these remarks Reynolds has identified the very essence of musical discourse, and it is in carrying on such discourse that Roger Reynolds surely excels.

—*Thomas DeLio,*
College Park, 1991

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Personae (1990)

*P*ersonae for violin, instrumental ensemble and computer-processed sound, is the third in a series of concerti that I began in 1984: the first two of this series are *Transfigured Wind* (a concerto for flute, ensemble and tape) and *The Dream of Infinite Rooms* (for cello, ensemble and tape). Each grows out of the calculated excesses of concentrated solo materials to which both an instrumental ensemble and a computer respond, in turn, elaborating the soloist's proposals in their own idiomatic fashion. The soloists in these works are all protagonists. Each presents materials which define his entire musical environment, not only in the technical sense that the pitches and rhythms of the musical lines become the source for the music of the ensemble and the computer, but also in dramatic terms. The soloists drive these compositions, eliciting musical statements from their partners.

Each of these concerti is motivated by specific expressive designs. *Transfigured Wind* has at its center a fanciful, improvisatory figure, while *The Dream of the Infinite Rooms* is more the reflection of an anxious imagination. In *Personae*, however, I ask the soloist to take on four roles: the conjurer, the dancer, the meditator and the advocate. The first three are concentrated in their independent presentations, but the last (the primary statement of which comes at the close of this 26-minute work) subsumes the others in a wide-ranging summation.

Each of the four personae casts its image across time. Their most direct shadows are heard from the instrumental ensemble, the more impressionistic and elastic ones in the computer's realm.

The composition begins with the soloist as a conjurer to whom the ensemble soon begins a dark response. The computer, in turn, reacts to this first ensemble statement. This succession of events is followed by the machinations of the dancer during which the computer begins to rework this very same music. The ensemble's second response follows directly and at much greater length than the first. By the time the meditator appears, the rapid and tangled evolution and response of the opening has both slowed and expanded markedly.

A little over halfway through *Personae,* the tape elaboration of the final solo begins, now no longer residue but rather a prefiguration of the advocate's closing remarks. This line, in continuous metamorphosis, lasts nine minutes, tying together many momentary references to the soloist's earlier selves, and expanding one's temporal experience beyond the idiosyncrasies of individual personae.

The work is dedicated to the mercurial János Négyesy and to other colleagues of the SONOR ensemble. John Stevens was my musical assistant in the realization of the computer tape.

The Vanity of Words (1986)
[VOICESPACE V]

*D*uring 1985 and '86 1 composed two extended pieces of computer music using F. R. Moore's program *space* and my own editorial algorithms *SPLITZ* and *SPIRLZ*.* The first of these, *Vertigo,* was based upon pre-recorded piano sounds; the second, *The Vanity of Words,* was derived from vocalist Philip Larson's reading and singing of a text that was extracted from Milan Kundera's novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being.* Both of these works use *space* to control and differentiate musical and speech sounds both from structural and expressive perspectives. The basic materials for each work were recorded *as performed* so as to capture and use compositionally all the nuances of interpretive volition which performers superimpose upon notated relationships as they interact with them.

My adaptation of Kundera's text is in three sections. Each was read in a distinctive manner (aspirate, deeply intoned, declamatory). Distinctions of this type helped me to devise the proportional design of this composition, a design strategy which I have labeled the *transformational mosaic*.* Each "tile" of such a musical mosaic is custom-made. Groups of tiles exhibit larger trends both in

terms of temporal structure and spatial character. The computer spatialization of multiple layers of textual fragments markedly improves their intelligibility and mitigates the degree to which coincident elements obscure one another. This helps the listener register and apprehend successive fragments that may occur with extreme rapidity. On successive encounters with sound materials presented in this way, a change in listening perspective allows quite different information to be clearly registered.

This 21-minute, stereophonic work was realized with the expert aid of John Stevens.

* Details concerning these procedures can be found in *A Searcher's Path, A Composer's Ways* (1987), Institute for Studies in American Music, and in "A Perspective on Form and Experience," *Contemporary Music Review* (1987, Vol. 2, pp. 277-308).

almost continuously, coalescing into a densely inferential, kaleidoscopic mosaic. *Variation*, then, is not a succession of restatements, of variants on a theme (or in this case three themes); it is not an engine with boxcars following, but rather a set of sonic fragments continuously interacting with one another.

In performing this work the pianist is challenged to infuse each fragmentary element, whenever it recurs, with the same emotional and volitional qualities that attached themselves to it when it appears in its fully integrated form (as *capriccioso, grave* or *scorrevole*). In other words, although the reappearance of musical materials drawn from the basic themes is inevitably disturbed by breaks in continuity and the interposition of "foreign" materials from other thematic cells, not only the objective musical data (pitch, rhythm, articulation) recurs but also its interpretive glossing reappears, integrated into a rich sonic tapestry intended to be a dizzying weave. *Variation*, then, is a mobile of unusual breadth, within which arrays of musical shards constantly reform: obscuring, illuminating, linking, contradicting, informing, resonating.

—*Roger Reynolds*

Roger Reynolds' early musical outlook was shaped by a combination of experimental tradition in America, particularly Varèse and Cage, and the explorations of the Second Viennese. His career has been marked by the combination of composition with organizational efforts and writing on behalf of twentieth-century music. Andrew Porter observed in *The New Yorker* that "Reynolds is at once an explorer and a visionary composer, whose works can lead listeners to follow him into new regions of emotion and imagination."

A co-founder of the now legendary ONCE group that first presented to American audiences the music of challenging composers working in the United States and Europe during the '60's, Reynolds went on to stimulate activity in Paris, Tokyo (the CROSS TALK series), San Diego, San Francisco and New York. His writing has included two books, *MIND MODELS* (Praeger, 1975, revised 1992) and *A Searcher's Path* (1987, the Institute for Studies in American Music), along with numerous articles.

Reynolds has been recognized by the Guggenheim, Rockefeller, Koussevitsky, Fromm and Suntory Foundations, the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the British Arts Council and the Library of Congress. In 1989 he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his string orchestra composition, *Whispers Out of Time*. His music has been featured on the Edinburgh Festival, at Warsaw Autumn, Music Today (Tokyo), the Helsinki Biennale, Darmstadt, New Music Concerts (Toronto) and the New York Philharmonic's Horizons '84, while his recordings reflect an ongoing interrelation in his work with text and technology. *Whispers Out of Time* (on a poem by John Ashbery) and *Transfigured Wind II* (for flute, orchestra and computer-generated sound) are on New World 80401-2, and *COCONINO* (an algorithmically derived string quartet) is on Gramavision R2 79440. Reynolds' music is published exclusively by C.F. Peters Corporation of New York.

SONOR was established in 1975 as the resident contemporary music ensemble of the University of California, San Diego. Members of SONOR appear throughout the world in major international festivals performing a repertoire which reflects dedication to research, preparation and performance of a wide spectrum of twentieth-century music with particular emphasis on recent works by American composers.

János Négyesy was born in Budapest, Hungary and studied at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music. Before joining the faculty at the University of California, San Diego, he lived and worked in Berlin, Paris, Vienna and New York. Long an advocate of new music, Mr. Négyesy has appeared at major festivals throughout the world, performing on an electronic violin as well as on the acoustic instrument. Mr. Négyesy premiered John Cage's *Freeman Etudes* in Ferrara, Italy in 1991, one of many premiere performances he has given of works by such contemporary composers, in addition to John Cage, as Attila Bozay, Carlos Fariñas, Vinko Globokar, Roger Reynolds, Robert Wittinger and Isang Yun.

Rand Steiger has conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, CalArts Twentieth-Century Players, SONOR and the California EAR Unit, including frequent premiere performances. As a composer he has received

commissions and performances from many ensembles including the St. Paul and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestras, Speculum Musicae and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, with which he served as Composer Fellow for two seasons. His works are recorded on Crystal, New Albion and New World.

Aleck Karis, at home with both contemporary and classical works, has recently appeared at festivals in Bath, Geneva, São Paulo, Los Angeles, Miami, Caramoor and on the Warsaw Autumn Festival. He is the pianist for Speculum Musicae and has recorded for Bridge, Nonesuch, New World and CRI. His teachers include Artur Balsam, Beveridge Webster and William Daghlian. He is presently on the faculty at the University of California, San Diego.

Philip Larson is accomplished with music from the Middle Ages to the present. He has premiered many contemporary operas and solo works, and has recorded with Pomerium Musices, the New Music Choral Ensemble, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony and SONOR. Larson was a founding member of the Extended Vocal Techniques Ensemble and joins with Edwin Harkins in [THE] (a music-theater duo), which has appeared in Europe, Japan, Canada and Australia. He is Associate Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego.

Roger Reynolds

János Négyesy • Violin
Rand Steiger • Conductor
SONOR ensemble

Philip Larson • Baritone
Aleck Karis • Piano

NEUMA

1	**Personae** C. F. Peters	26:07
2	**The Vanity of Words** C. F. Peters	20:12
3	**Variation** C. F. Peters	21:54
		Total	68:13