

Phil Treloar *Feeling to Thought*

Of Other Narratives

tracings in the ground of
Collective Autonomy
people—practice—theory—history

Volume 4

JOURNEY WITHOUT GOAL

THE MERCURY Thursday, June 25, 1992 — 25

Encore

Hobart premiere of four new works

By SHIRLEY APTHORP

IN the world of concerts, there is no experience quite like the premiere of a new work. Much of the excitement of a first performance lies in its fundamental unpredictability; no matter how well rehearsed the performers are, the fact remains they are venturing into the unknown every time they play a work to an audience for the first time.

For some musicians, the thrill of this experience will never wear off, and it remains one of the strongest motivations for Pipeline, one of Australia's foremost contemporary music ensembles.

Tasmania seldom has the opportunity to hear world premieres of major new works. This Saturday, the opportunity will be here on a grand scale, with four new Australian works being given their first performance at the University Centre at 3pm.

Players for the concert are drawn from Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania, and include highly acclaimed trombonist Simone de Haan, Tasmanian string players Christian Wojtowicz and Rachel Bremner, and violinist Katherine Brockman, a graduate of the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music now working with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

The exploration of areas where improvised and composed music, tradition and innovation, and Eastern and Western cultures intersect is the basis for Pipeline's music-making.

Tensions between, and fusions of, diverse musical elements are apparent in all of the works, by composers Keith Humble, Phil Treloar, and Daryl Pratt.

Treloar and Pratt are known to Tasmanian audiences for their appearance in 1990 with Simone de Haan in the Pipeline Connection concert. Treloar also participated in a highly successful residency at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music in 1988 with the experimental jazz group Feeling to Thought.

Two works for string sextet and trombone, by Humble and Treloar, will be central to the program. Humble, foundation professor of music at Melbourne's La Trobe University, and Treloar, a former jazz drummer who has studied composition in Sydney, New York, Colombo and New Delhi, were inspired by Schoenberg's famous High Romantic sextet *Transfigured Night*.

Christian Wojtowicz, cellist with the ensemble and lecturer at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, says although quite different in approach, the works are linked by a shared interest in extending the limits of both music and performance.

"There is absolutely no concession as to what is traditionally possible, and that's why it's fantastic working with these people," Wojtowicz said. "You actually feel as though you're creating the piece with them for the first performance."

"They're writing for the unknown and pushing the boundaries of the possible."

"These composers are not interested in newness for newness's sake. They're interested in how far they can push the limits of roots that they actually feel themselves, so that it's a bit like stretching an elastic chord — they pull themselves away from

their traditions, but never so far that they get left behind."

Also on the program is a revised version of Treloar's *Journey Without a Goal*, for solo cello. Treloar, who is currently resident in Japan but will travel to Australia for the concerts, is keenly interested in Buddhist philosophy, which Wojtowicz feels is reflected in the piece.

One of the most challenging works he has ever tackled, *Journey Without a Goal* alternates highly rhythmic, driving, virtuosic passages with contemplative, improvisatory sections. "It's the most difficult piece I've ever worked on," said Wojtowicz. "As I practise it, I find that it's not the goal that's important, but the conquering of the difficulties on the journey."

"It's really a blockbuster," Wojtowicz and Pipeline's artistic director, trombonist Simone de Haan, who is head of studies at the Victorian College of the Arts, bring to the ensemble a lineage of unrivalled involvement in the development of Australian music. Both were foundation members of the Australian Contemporary Music (ACME) in the late 1970s, when it became the country's only ensemble performing contemporary music full-time.

ACME was succeeded by the acclaimed and highly active ensemble, Flederman, of which de Haan and Wojtowicz were members, and, in turn, by Pipeline. The composers who instigated and worked with the groups, Don Banks, Larry Sitsky, Keith Humble and Carl Vine, now number among Australia's most respected and highly commissioned.



Pipeline presenting four new Australian works at the University Centre.

With the successive ensembles, they pursued strong interests in the involvement of composers in the performing process, the exploration of emerging electronic technology, and, more recently, in the synthesis of written and improvised music.

All of Pipeline's members are recognised as leaders in their fields. For this weekend's concert, which will be played in Hobart on Saturday June 27 and in Melbourne on Sunday June 28, performers have come from their different states for a week of intensive rehearsals in Hobart.

"The combination of players, the composers, and the tradition of every ensuing Pipeline concert means that in Hobart we're getting something that couldn't be done better anywhere in the world," Wojtowicz said.

"We've all toured this kind of performance all over the world, we have all belonged to groups that have performed this type of music at the very highest level, and what we're doing is making it possible for it to happen here. That's why the group is called Pipeline. It's a carrier of the experiences of those who initiate

the experience to the listener, who then takes part and makes it something new."

The program will also include Humble's *Improvisation* for percussion, trombone, and cello, and composer/performer Daryl Pratt's improvised *Preludes and Interludes* for solo percussion. Pratt, a founder member of Pipeline, lectures in percussion at the New South Wales State Conservatorium of Music, and is widely regarded as one of Australia's finest percussionists.

Wojtowicz said: "Pipeline sees

improvisation as a fundamental element in music-making, and is very interested in finding a resolution of the conflict between written and improvised music, as well as the common ground."

"It's live music that is like tightrope walking, because the pieces have never been aired before. That's what many people who specialise in contemporary music are thrilled with — the feeling of putting everything that they know in the traditional sense on the line by pushing the skill barrier as far as they can."