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| Perle, Geroge (1915-2009) |
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| George Perle (1915-2009) was an American composer and scholar, awarded a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, a Pulitzer Prize (1986) for his Wind Quintet no. 4, and the Otto Kinkeldey Award (AMS) for his books on the operas of Alban Berg. Born in Bayonne, NJ, Perle discovered Alban Berg's Lyric Suite when studying with Ernst Krenek in 1937, and went on to develop a compositional system called twelve-tone tonality from the implications of Berg's score. Collaborative work with Paul Lansky expanded on the compositional possibilities of the system (1969) and lead eventually to Perle's mature style, exemplified by the two Piano Concerti (1990, 1992) and Transcendental Modulations for Orchestra (1993). Perle's dual role as composer and scholar is reflected in his 75 compositions ranging from solo to orchestral pieces, and seven books and numerous articles on analysis and theory issues related mostly to 20th-century music. |
| George Perle (1915-2009) was an American composer and scholar, awarded a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, a Pulitzer Prize (1986) for his Wind Quintet no. 4, and the Otto Kinkeldey Award (AMS) for his books on the operas of Alban Berg. Born in Bayonne, NJ, Perle discovered Alban Berg's Lyric Suite when studying with Ernst Krenek in 1937, and went on to develop a compositional system called twelve-tone tonality from the implications of Berg's score. Collaborative work with Paul Lansky expanded on the compositional possibilities of the system (1969) and lead eventually to Perle's mature style, exemplified by the two Piano Concerti (1990, 1992) and Transcendental Modulations for Orchestra (1993). Perle's dual role as composer and scholar is reflected in his 75 compositions ranging from solo to orchestral pieces, and seven books and numerous articles on analysis and theory issues related mostly to 20th-century music.  Perle's compositional technique is based on the grouping of notes that results from inversional configurations, called ‘keys’ by Perle, in addition to the more common transpositional configurations, which he labeled ‘modes.’ The pitch language provides a harmonic framework for a texture characterized by clearly defined motives and forms within an ever-evolving texture of rhythms and tempi. The String Quartet no. 5 (the first quartet listed in Perle's catalogue) is characteristic of Perle's early works using Twelve-Tone Tonality, which feature inventive elaborations of a highly unified harmonic framework. The first Piano Concerto reveals the evolution of Perle's compositional practice from a harmonic to a melodic / contrapuntal developing-variation type working out of a complex framework, including Perle's definitions of features reminiscent of tonal music, such as modulation, common-tone progression, and imitative counterpoint. In the late works, Perle fully realized the large-scale relationship aspects of his system to create works that truly define a new language.  Perle's scholarly writings include polemical and analytical commentary on issues and approaches to music by Bartok, Berg, Schoenberg, Scriabin, and Webern. His published dissertation, Serial Music and Atonality (1962) was one of the first extended studies of non-tonal musical processes, and includes the concept of the ‘basic cell’ and the initial definitions of the cycles and symmetry Perle documented in Berg's and other composers' music. Perle's two books on the operas of Alban Berg remain definitive in their scope and level of insight into all aspects of these monumental works. In his book the Listening Composer, from a set of Lectures given in San Francisco where he was Composer-in -Residence, Perle weaves a reading of Edgard Varese's *Density 21.5* throughout, while comparing the various aspects of this piece to tonal and non-tonal works, and adding critical comments on contemporary compositional and theoretical practice. In 1993, the connections between the music and theories of Perle and the approach of David Lewin began to be explored, and has resulted in a more integrated view of various directions in theory and analysis of non-tonal music. A comprehensive collection of Perle's writings, appearing in 1995, called the *Right Notes*, is both a culmination of his scholarly career and an excellent starting point for the interested reader. List of Works:Books and Articles Perle, George. *Serial Composition and Atonality: an Introduction to the Music of Schoenberg, Berg and Webern* 1962; 6th edition, revised, 1991. University of California Press.  Perle, George. *Twelve-Tone Tonality*. 2nd edition. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996; originally 1977.  Perle, George. *The Operas of Alban Berg: Wozzeck Volume I* University of California Press, 1980.  Perle, George. *The Operas of Alban Berg: Lulu* Volume II 1985.  Perle, George. *The Listening Composer* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.  Perle, George. *The Right Notes: 23 Selected Essays on 20th-Century Music*. Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1995.  Perle, George. *Style and Idea in the Lyric Suite of Alban Berg*. Stuyvesant, NY.  George Perle, ‘*Berg’s Master Array of the Interval Cycles*,’ Musical Quarterly 63, no. 1 (January 1977) in Right Notes p. 207. Literature Dave Headlam and Phillip Stoecker, co-editors, *Theory and Practice* vol. 33 (1998).  Gary S. Karpinski, guest editor, *International Journal of Musicology*, Elliot Antokoletz and Michael von Albrecht, editors. Vol. 4 (1985).  Alphonse, Bo. Review of Perle, *Twelve-Tone Tonality*  in *JMT*. Compositions See http://georgeperle.net. |
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