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Music Festival To Pay Tribute to Lou Harrison

Santa Cruz County's own composer, Lou Harrison, again will be featured at the 1976 Cabrillo Music Festival. The festival will be a special tribute to American composers.

Lou lives in Aptos in a flat, rambling, ranch-style house next to a redwood that, he says, "was ancient even when Sir Francis Drake first sailed up the California coast."

In his house, overlooking the ocean, he writes music while surrounded by harps, clavichords and versions of oriental instruments — many which Lou himself has made — along with gongs, various percussion instruments, pianos and a celesta tuned in pure intonation, a series of tone ratios of his own devising.

So unique, in fact, are his instruments, built in collaboration with William Colvig, that the Cabrillo College Art Gallery will present an exhibition of them to coincide with the festival. The gallery will be open to the public starting with the first on-campus performance of the festival, Friday, August 13, and for all subsequent on-campus performances through Sunday, August 22. It will be open one hour before each concert and during intermission.

Currently, along with writing new orchestral work and giving concerts, Lou teaches at San Jose State University. The composer either exists in the poverty way or, if he insists

on middle class living standards, he must earn his support by other means," Lou explains.

Among his works to be performed this summer is the *Symphony on G*, which was premiered at the 1964 Cabrillo Music Festival and has since been called an American classic by San Francisco Chronicle music critic Robert Commanday.

An earlier Chronicle critic, Dean Wallace, described the 1964 premiere performance this way: "It opens with a scene of turbulent drama, heavily but not densely scored, and worked out with incisive skill. There follows one of the most gorgeous slow movements in all of modern music; then a suite of dances and finally a bright and fascinating play of pure musical intellect which... brings the whole gigantic structure to a satisfying end."

The symphony will be performed again at the August 13 concert at 8:30 p.m. in the Cabrillo College Theater.

His "Bomba" and "Fugue for Percussion" will be played the following afternoon at 2:30! during a free, outdoor concert at Duck Island Theater in San Lorenzo Park.

The "Bomba," says Lou, was composed on Telegraph Hill in San Francisco during the late '30s and has "partial resemblance to African and Cuban styles." The composer

himself has not heard it for many years. "Unless I hear the dress rehearsal, it will be as new to me as to other concertgoers," he confesses.

The *Fugue* will be played by the California Institute of the Arts Percussion Ensemble, who, as Lou says, "continue to keep my percussion works in their repertoire. I was astonished to discover that on a

moment's notice the group can play any of my percussion works like angels."

At the 7:30 p.m. August 15 concert, again in the theater, the Festival orchestra, led by guest conductor John Nelson, will play Harrison's "Seven Pastorales".

"These Pastorales were among the earliest of my neo-



LOU HARRISON

medieval and classical explorations," Lou says. "They imply in Western musical history that transition period between the late classical and the middle ages."

Finally, during a chamber music concert at 8:30 p.m. August 21 in the theater, pianist William Masselos will be soloist for Lou's *Piano Sonata No. 3*. It was composed in 1938, edited in recent years and dedicated to San Francisco's musician and impresario, Donald Pippin. The two outer movements of the sonata are lyric, the central one is energetic and structural.

This year Lou represented the United States at the League of Asian Composers in Manila, partially paid for by the John D. Rockefeller Foundation. In the early 1960s he spent two years studying in Korea on a Rockefeller grant, and in 1963 was guest composer and artist-in-residence at Honolulu's East-West Center. Lou has given oriental music concerts with Richard Dee and William Colvig, performing with them at the University of Buffalo, on New York television and at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles.

His past festival works have included an opera, "Young Caesar", and a piece for chorus

and American gamelan, "La Koro Sutro". Presently, he is composing a piece of gamelan music under auspices of the Samuel Scripps Foundation, "Kyai Hudan Mas" or Lord (or Sir) Golden Ring. It will be published as a small calligraphed book and as a recording.

New Yorker magazine carried an article on Lou in February.

"Art can be understood by considering the solemnity of children's play," he once told Commanday. "Growing up, we play at civilization, only we have to be solemn about it.

When an artist loses his sense of play, his art goes out of the window. This is how I defend the wide range of my interests."

Tickets for all Music Festival performances are available at Cabrillo College Community Services, 6500 Soquel Drive, Aptos, 688-6466; and the Santa Cruz Box Office, 1111 Pacific Avenue, and major ticket agencies. Prices for individual concerts range from \$4 to \$6, and \$3 for senior citizens with Gold Cards. Season tickets are \$30 and \$45, and \$23 for senior citizens. All performances will have student rush tickets available 15 minutes before concert time at \$2 each.