

Bl. b. c. ^{musical}
MUSIC 2-4-73

A dignified presence amidst giggles and a walk-out

By JOHN KRAGLUND

After last night's performance of Roman Haubenstock Ramati's *Discours* (1972), the capacity audience at Goethe Institute began to chatter with such enthusiasm there seemed some doubt the concert would ever continue. Whether the subject was the piece by the avant-garde Polish composer is doubtful. It seems more likely they were discussing the elderly gentleman who indicated his opinion of the music by marching off, with considerable dignity, across the brightly-lit narrow space between the performers and the guests of honor.

Guitarist Siegfried Behrend and his wife Claudia Brodzinska-Behrend, who made a sort of vocal contribution, were equally dignified, as they ignored both the departing guest and the giggles of other listeners. But then it must have seemed an exceedingly mild protest to anyone who has been associated with Darmstadt and the Stockhausen Circus.

Discours is described as being for guitar, voice and percussion instruments. Listing the guitar separately seemed so much nonsense, as it was treated as another percussion instrument, to be beaten, scratched and other-

wise tortured. Similar things happened elsewhere, but Ramati's piece had the distinction of being remarkably unmusical.

It was one of two works in which Mrs. Behrend took part. The other was Luciano Berio's *Sequenza III* for voice solo. This is one of the type made famous by Kathy Barberian.

It is also the sort of piece that only seems worth the effort on the part of performer and listener if it establishes some sort of communication, through moods, humor or even a few words that may stir the imagination. Mrs. Behrend's voice only conveyed sounds. Perhaps her range is too limited or maybe

she was no more inspired that inspiring.

Behrend's most fascinating contribution to the event as in two of his own compositions. *Modulos for Guitar* (1971) was actually a study piece, intended to show students the possibilities of new techniques, for performing avant-garde music. Now that he has shown us how, perhaps the next time he comes to town he will explain why.

His *Three Spanish Dances* had the distinct advantage of introducing some rhythmic vitality—a much-neglected commodity in this recital—extending the excitement that had been mildly introduced by Granado's *Spanish Dance No. 5*.

Before all this, Behrend had provided gentle elegance and musical sensitivity in guitar music by Luis Milan and transcriptions of lute music by John Dowland. He had also introduced some delightful dance rhythms—despite apparently awkward fingering—in a *Suite in G* by Lodovico Roncalli.

For the rest there were pieces like Tomas Marco's *Albayalda*, which used a drinking glass as a slide and featured a metal rod and small metal balls, rattling around on the strings. And then there was the premiere of Lothar Klein's *Eclogues*, with a particularly attractive, sad little melody in the second movement.