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## Steve Reich and More at June in Buffalo

By *ALLAN KOZINN*

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Perhaps because, at heart, June in Buffalo is a university program — it takes place on the campus of the University of Buffalo — the atmosphere is more low key than that of, say, the Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music. The lectures so far have been attended mostly by the young composers who are participating in the program and by some of the school's year-round students. Not many listeners seem to have wandered in from the community (people, for example, beyond college age).

The audiences for the concerts have been only slightly broader: at Signal's program of Steve Reich's music on Monday evening and at the Ensemble SurPlus's mixed-styles concert on Tuesday evening (haunting simplicity by way of works by Morton Feldman and Alvin Lucier; rhythmic and harmonic density in music by Bryan Ferneyhough, Lukas Foss and Charles Wuorinen) you saw a bit more gray hair. Maybe there is something to be said for a classical music festival at which the complaint is "There are not enough older listeners." But in truth, as obsessed with finding young listeners as the classical music world has become, seeking listeners at all levels of experience would seem the most sensible goal.

Of course, some of the lectures are unlikely to attract a general audience. On Wednesday morning, for example, the French composer Olivier Pasquet discussed innovations in computer music programs over the last 20 years or so, then played examples of various forms flourishing at Ircam and elsewhere in Europe: among them, combinations of acoustic instruments (and voices) with live electronics, and purely electronic sound.

Yet Mr. Pasquet edged onto a fascinating subject when he played examples rooted in techno but meant to be heard as concert music. Mr. Pasquet described this style as "nonacademic contemporary music," an awkward description for a gray area that has become pretty crowded recently.

Mr. Reich touched on this as well during his lecture on Tuesday morning. He began by playing a recording of his recent "2 x 5," a work scored for two electric guitars, electric bass, drums and piano: an ensemble that performs live along with the recorded sound of an identical ensemble (a technique Mr. Reich has used often over the last 25 years). Look at the instrumentation: the ensemble (the Bang on a Can All-Stars, in this case) is essentially a rock

band.

That is not to say that Mr. Reich has given the players Chuck Berry riffs; the music is in his trademark style, with repeating melodic figures and hypnotically shifting, tightly interlocked rhythms, though on occasion, hints of 1970s vintage art-rock seem to peek through the guitar and piano writing. The character of the ensemble was not lost on Mr. Reich, who said that his own interest in pop, growing up, had more to do with jazz than with rock, at least until the Beatles turned up. And in a particularly interesting digression, he discussed “Popcorn Superhet Receiver,” an orchestral work by Jonny Greenwood, the guitarist for Radiohead and the composer of the soundtrack score for “There Will Be Blood.”

“He is an interesting and serious guy,” Mr. Reich said of Mr. Greenwood. “I suggest that instead of thinking in terms of popular music and classical music, we are going to be thinking more in terms of notated music and non-notated music. Instrumentation is no longer a defining issue.”