music

QUOG IS BEST KNOWN for its multimedia extravaganzas such as "Nude Paper Sermon" and "Ecolog," but they are now concentrating on more subtle aspects of music and theatre. And judging from their workshops, this shift in emphasis is likely to take the group in some very interesting new directions. The biggest question in my mind after seeing their two workshop presentations at the Kitchen last week was how I could ever say all the things that were on my mind without writing a book. I'll probably never get around to writing the book, but I did outline some of the chapters which it would have to include.

"Music, Theatre, and Dance": A comparison between Quog, the Open Theatre, and Daniel Nagrin's Work Group, showing how similar improvisation procedures are used in all these groups, how each of them has borrowed from the other performing arts, but how, despite everything, there is still a big difference between what the musicians do, what the actors do, and what the dancers do.

"The Mirror": Showing how Quog has taken this exercise used by actors and dancers, and

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TICKETS available at box office, Monday thru Saturday 1 P.M. - 7 P.M. Info. call (201) 779-0666. MAIL ORDERS: Enclose self-addressed, stamped envelope with certified check or money [illegible] Monroe [illegible] Time of show. Orders received [illegible] sold at Box Office. TICKETS also available at THE LAST STRAW, Bloomfield. ALL BAMBERGERS. DEAD ICE CREAM. Elizabeth & Westfield. NO-NAME, Willowbrook Mall, Wayne. SATURN, Millburn, 2nd FRONT, Pt. Pleasant. 2nd TIME AROUND, New Brunswick. THE THIRD RAIL, Belleville, TOPS & BOTTOMS, Jersey City, Warmony Venue, [illegible] River. RED BARN, Garden State Plaza, Paramus, SIX & SevenEights in Hackensack. ALL TICKETRON OUTLETS. Info call (212) 644-4400.

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adapted it for vocal or instrumental duet improvisations. How two people imitate and play off one another, using facial expressions, gestures, and often words, as well as music, and once in a while bring everything together in very exciting moments.

"Conducted Improvisation": The conducting and cueing technique devised by Quog's director, Eric Salzman, and how he controls group improvsations with it. Comparisons with Stockhausen's "Momente" and Kenneth Gaburo's things for voices and instruments, which have a similar sound although they are constructed in very different ways. Enumerating the reasons why conducted improvisation is unfeasible in theatre and dance forms. Comparing conducted with uncondcuted improvisation, pointing out how much control a conductor can assert, and indicating the potential possibilities of this relatively unexplored area.

"Audience Participation": How Salzman conducts audience improvisations with this same basic cueing system. Why this seems less forced than many forms of audience participation, and why members of the audience seem to enjoy it so much.

"New Attitudes toward Technique": The risks involved in true exploration. Contrasting the traditional performer, who never does anything in public until he has mastered the technique and knows that he will be able to control what comes out, with a Quog performer, who often overextends himself. The unfortunate results this sometimes has on pieces per se, and, at the same time, the excitement sometimes generated by this honest unself-conscious approach.

"Group Art and Group Therapy": Contrasting groups where individuals relate to each other on a very personal almost psychoanalytic level, with groups who create together in a very detached objective way, and showing how Quog seems to be avoiding both extremes.

"Voices and Characters": Pointing out the occasional moments in Quog improvisations when an improvising singer is able to bring together his personal feelings of the moment, his voice, and his gestures in a strong vivid way. Comparisons with traditional opera where this complete unity of intentions seldom, if ever, happens. Speculating on some of the potentials lying in the area of group created opera.

"Problems, Present and Future": Calling attention to individual musical and theatrical weaknesses in the group and emphasizing the amount of time it may take for the group to evolve a uniformly high technical level and a vivid group style. Enumerating the difficulties of true group creation of long pieces, and pointing out how the Open Theatre worked together for almost 10 years before attaining the magic of "The Serpent" and "Terminal." But pointing out that masterful products are really only fringe benefits, and how the emphasis, both for Quog and its audience, should always be on the process that goes on.

IT'S DIFFICULT to say much about Jim Burton's concert at The Kitchen on Saturday night, since it began half an hour earlier than the [illegible] missed altogether, the audience participation piece ending the program was not supposed to have been an audience participation piece, so I have no way of knowing what that was really about. I have heard quite a bit of Burton's music by now, however, and several things are clear despite everything.

The most striking thing about his work is the kind of sounds he uses. Someone called them "tactile," and that seems to say it for me. There is something very real about all those scraggly unrefined noises, and you really do get the impression you could reach out and touch them: the junkyard kinds of sounds he likes to put on recording tape; the sounds he gets on his "twanger" and other homemade amplified instruments; the percussion effects he gets by clanging on metal. Perhaps the music seems tactile simply because it is more related to real life sounds than to musical sounds.

He also has a unique way of presenting himself—as if it were all a goof, although you know that it isn't. He titled his Saturday night program "Asparagus—In Consequence of Being Short and Red-Headed." The printed program referred to his film score as a "noisetrack," and wryly described one composition as "a straight piece." I'm not quite sure if the humor is an important part of the music or if he is apologizing for something, but he has a very interesting head in any case, and I wish I knew more about what is going on inside it. I have the feeling that he is on the verge of somefhing, and that it will all start to be very clear before long.

—Tom Johnson

Film Course

Professional film-makers and producers will conduct two intensive five-week workshops in the techniques and practical aspects of film production this summer at NYU's School of Continuing Education. Daily sessions will be Mondays to Fridays, from 9.30 a. m. to 10 p. m., Saturdays till 5 p. m. The first workshop will be from June 26 to July 28, and the second from July 31 to September 1.

The school is also offering a practical workshop in the production and use of videotape, which will be Mondays to Thursdays in two sections, 2.10 to 5 p. m. from [illegible] more information call 598-2373.

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