

WIP's snickers at Clinton underscore gender gap

Oh, the guys were going at her. The other morning on sports radio, the station that calls grown women "girls," they were talking about Hillary Clinton.

Specifically, how she didn't turn them on and, graphically, how a certain body part flatlined in response.

She's a United States senator. She's the first viable female presidential candidate. And the boys are talking about whether she's hot.

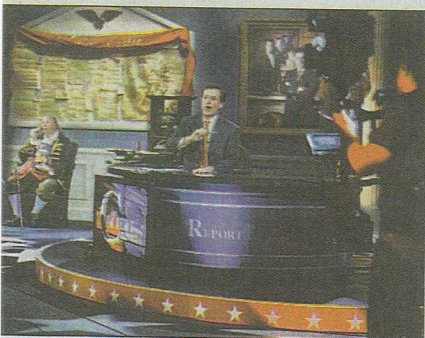
Karen Heller



As if they would find any 60-year-old woman hot.

Or take a female politician seriously.

When Don Imus slimed the Rutgers basketball team racially and sexually, he lost See **GENDER** on D6



ERIC MENCHER / Inquirer Staff Photographer
s Ben Franklin chomped on Doritos, Stephen Colbert taped "The Colbert Report" at Penn's Zellerbach Theatre Monday night. He's there through tomorrow.

Colbert, Nutter, Matthews — and Ben

It's always a party at *The Colbert Report*, but things are a little different when the show comes to Philadelphia, and a lengthy lineup comes before comedy. *Nobody seems to mind.* More than 1,000 ticket-holders milled Monday for two hours around the Zellerbach Theatre at Penn's Annenberg Center, as Comedy Central's Stephen Colbert took his show on the road for the very first time.

Couples and cliques mingled together, united in each case by somebody who



Jonathan Storm
Television Critic

had scampered to the computer to snap up some of the 3,600 seats for the four-day event, the minute Colbert announced his trip March 17. Most tickets vanished online within five minutes.

Corey Meissner, 21, and See **COLBERT** on D7



KEN HOWARD / Metropolitan Opera
scene from Glass' "Satyagraha" with Richard Croft as Gandhi. The opera and Tan Dun's new "Piano Concerto" could coast in on their creators' popular successes.



the music man

You name it — if it's improvised, **Elliott Levin** plays it, often hustling from one obscure gig to the next. Plus, he writes poetry.

By David R. Adler
FOR THE INQUIRER

Zankel's Warriors of the Wonderful Sound and the Odean Pope Saxophone Choir, two of Philly's best real-time jamming

Elliott Levin, says a fellow musician,

JACI DOWNS

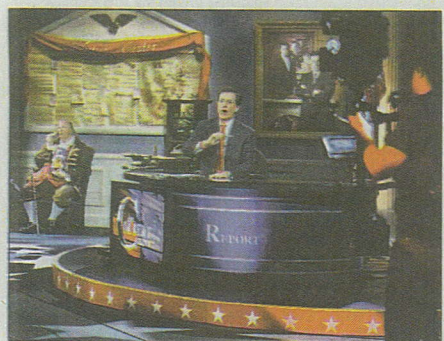
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Tan Dun, Philip Glass get away with a lot

By David Patrick Stearns
INQUIRER MUSIC CRITIC

Success was all but decreed for Chinese composer Tan Dun and his

Piano Concerto, premiered over the weekend by Lang Lang and the New York Philharmonic.

Philip Glass returned to the grand opera stage with a new production of *Satyagraha* at the Metropolitan Opera, and the young, pierced-

and-tattooed audience — plus a flock of Tibetan monks — were all set to adore the opera, seemingly no matter what happened.

Critic's Notebook

Both events had more in common than their prestigious circumstances. These composers seem oddly immune to failure. They have acknowledged downturns, but not ones that stick.

See **NOTEBOOK** on D4



the music man

You name it — if it's improvised, Elliott Levin plays it, often hustling from one obscure gig to the next. Plus, he writes poetry.

By David R. Adler
FOR THE INQUIRER

If live, improvised music is happening in Philadelphia, there's a good chance Elliott Levin is involved.

At 54, the West Philadelphia native has a long and accomplished record in the jazz avant-garde. He's been involved with pianist Cecil Taylor's large ensembles since the early 1970s. He's worked extensively with Marshall Allen, the late Tyrone Hill and other members of the Sun Ra Arkestra.

You can hear his raw tenor sax and piquant flute pierce the dense aural fabric of Bobby

Zankel's Warriors of the Wonderful Sound and the Odean Pope Saxophone Choir, two of Philly's best working jazz groups.

Tonight at Chris' Jazz Cafe, Levin (pronounced luh-VIN) will lead his quartet, featuring Brian Marsella on piano, Jason Fraticelli on bass and Ed Watkins on drums. (When Allen joins the group, it's known as UB313, named for the recently discovered dwarf planet, the farthest known object orbiting the sun.)

Chris' is an unusually mainstream venue for Levin, who turns up practically every See **LEVIN** on D5

Elliott Levin, says a fellow musician, "plays anything with everyone" and elevates others' performance.

Music

Elliott Levin Ensemble

9 p.m. at Chris' Jazz Cafe, 1421 Sansom St.
Tickets: \$8. 215-568-3131



SOCIAL CIRCUIT

Ex-Eagle and cancer survivor Vince Papale (center) is honored at the Coaches vs. Cancer gala. **D3**

LEVIN from D1 night in one obscure room or another: the AxD Gallery, the Bubble House, the Media Bureau. He sits in with rock, funk and African drum bands. He plays Balkan music with the West Philadelphia Orchestra (WPO) and collaborates with the trip-hop poet and performance artist Gabrielle (Plum Dragoness).

Philadelphia jazz artists may face a shortage of available bookings, but Levin seems to find every last one. "Man, I really do hustle," he says, "but that's what I've had to learn to do to survive playing music."

A large-framed, frizzy-bearded figure in painter's pants, a tilted skull cap and a single dreadlock worn like a braid, Levin looks as offbeat as he sounds. Not just a musician, he's an embodiment of Philadelphia's underground culture, and a role model for younger players who admire his versatility and uncynical approach to art.

"He's a bear — a gritty, honest bear," says WPO violinist Katt Hernandez. Gregg Mervine, the WPO's leader, adds: "Elliott plays anything with everyone, cuts across all disciplines and always elevates the performance of those around him."

Guitarist Rick Iannacone, a creative partner of Levin's for decades, allows that his friend's openness toward any and all gigs could be perceived as overzealous, even unfocused. "Some would say, 'Why play with these cats, or with those cats?' But the thing about Elliott is he has no agenda except to share music."

"I had the luck and misfortune not to come from a musical family," says Levin, who shares a Center City rowhouse with Ruth, his girlfriend of 15 years, and their cat, Mr. Bobo. "I came into music on my own and listened to everything."

Levin's father was an architect, but his uncle was Kal Mann, lyricist and cofounder of Cameo Parkway, the seminal rock and R&B label. "We didn't have much of a connection," he recalls, "but I did get exposed to that music through him." For Levin's 16th birthday, his older sister, the Los Angeles visual artist Barbara Romani, gave him albums by Ornette Coleman and Eric Dolphy. His interest in avant-garde jazz began to take focus.

After gaining proficiency on flute, Levin received his first tenor sax as a gift and had the opportunity to study with John Coltrane's former teacher, Michael Guerra.

"I started listening to Albert Ayler, John Gilmore, Marshall Allen," Levin recalls, and he made that hard-bitten, expressionistic '60s sound his own. "Sonny Rollins was also very influential. Being around Philly, there's such a wealth of knowledge and history, it makes you feel proud. For a sax player it's one of the best places to be, definitely."

Levin's first gig in New

York, at age 20, was with Taylor, the avant-jazz pioneer, at Carnegie Hall, "a hard one to top." He'd met Taylor while attending the pianist's seminars at Glassboro (now Rowan) University.

The avant-garde proved economically unstable, of course. So in 1983 he accepted a touring spot with Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes, and ran with it for 10 years.

"To go back and play these gigs on the childin' circuit after Cecil ... that's what I had to do," Levin says. "The guys in Cecil's band, [drummer]

Sunny Murray, [saxophonist] Jimmy Lyons — these were my heroes, and even they weren't getting gigs."

Levin didn't suffer through it, however. "I grew up listening to [Philly soul] on the radio, and I never really wanted to play it," he admits. "But when I started to learn it, I understood how amazing it was."

He also understood his place within a jack-of-all-trades Philly tradition. Coltrane had played R&B with Earl Bostic. Sam Reed, Levin's sometime-colleague in the Saxophone Choir, led the Uptown Theater band from 1963 to 1971. Iannacone, along with several of Sun Ra's horn players, backed soul singer Billy Paul.

"We were doing the best of the avant-garde when we could, and when the other gigs came we'd do those," Levin says. "It balanced out somehow, for years. I loved it."

Little wonder that Levin's environment informed his

own art. "I don't know what I call my music," he says, "but it's certainly influenced by a very American aesthetic, which I consider all the stuff that comes from the blues."

Levin debuted in 1978 with *Olduvai Music*, yet to be reissued on CD. Aside from several titles on the CIMP label, he hasn't recorded a lot under his own name. In 2006, however, ESP-Disk released *Live Upstairs at Nick's*, a long-shelved recording by New Ghost, Levin and Iannacone's jazz-punkish quartet.

In New Ghost, Levin is a front man in the Frank Zappa-Captain Beefheart mold, launching into prankish spoken-word asides when not playing sax and flute. He is a published poet, in fact, with work appearing in several anthologies and his own volume, *Does It Swing?*

"As I studied music I started hearing the rhythms, the improvisational nature of running words together," he says. "I've watched the whole rap and hip-hop phenomenon, and it really came out of the same thing I was doing. Before that it was the Beat poets, Gil Scott-Heron, people I grew up listening to."

On a recent Friday night at the Paul Green School of Rock, Levin brought poetry and music together once more, playing free-form duets with Iannacone. Looking something like Tommy Chong and Christopher Lloyd, the middle-aged pair faced a sparse, initially baffled audience of teenage students.

Iannacone played acoustic guitar, creating a bed of percussive textures and rich abstract harmony. The music took a fascinating route, logical though unplanned. Before long, the students were listen-

ing closely.

Levin blew atmospheric flute and then began to read: *Finally From Flat Bushed Avenues of Sharp Rushed Street Road Menus*

of boiled egg & bagel carts ... un-opened Targets and Gourmet

Cafe stoned roaming hearts ... Beat to the fits and starts of sizes and prizes, a bit big or small... until your feet beat

retreat in a King's County mall...


More verse, more flute, and then Levin worked up to a furious burst of Ayler-meets-Hendrix on tenor sax.

A few days later, Iannacone spoke of a primal quality in the music. "There's a freedom and trust we have that moves beyond any kind of analytical place," he added. "Elliott has tapped into his ancestors. ... When he plays that saxophone, you're not only hearing Coleman Hawkins, or Junior Walker, you're hearing that black-Jewish thing he has. You see an ancestral thing going on."

6. Horton Hears a Who? (Fox)	5.9 mil.	139.5 mil.	5	1,845
7. Smart People (Miramax)	4.1 mil.	4.1 mil.	1	3,700
8. The Ruins (Paramount)	3.4 mil.	13.5 mil.	2	1,203
9. Superhero Movie (MGM)	3.2 mil.	21.3 mil.	3	1,273
10. Drillbit Taylor (Paramount)	2.0 mil.	28.4 mil.	4	927

SOURCES: Exhibitor Relations Co. and ACNielsen EDI Inc.

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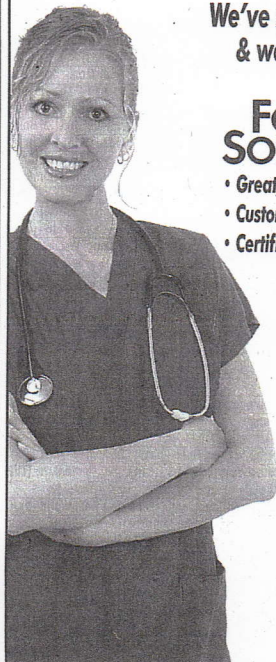
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