

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

'Statute of Liberty' is of Indeterminate Origin

By JONATHON WARD

This review-in-progress of a work-in-progress is written using techniques of indeterminacy. These techniques allow artists (and reviewers) to create works without determining beforehand precisely what will happen. They were used by composer Rick Russo and writer Chuck Reichenthal in creating "The Statute of Liberty," portions of which were performed at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music Jan. 19. The reviewer felt the fairest way to represent the work was on its own terms.

To do this, the reviewer randomly selected a number to determine the length of the review and assigned letters to chosen categories: A.) notes the reviewer took to describe the performance; B.) notes the reviewer took during an interview with the artists; C.) the press release from the Brooklyn Arts and Culture Association announcing the performance; and D.) spontaneous and improvised reviewer reaction to the performance and interview.

In this review (as was done for the composition), the categories were sequenced by drawing playing cards. Each card represented one of the lettered categories. Since this is a review-in-progress of a work-in-progress, the reviewer only used 28 words from each category, leaving some meanings indeterminate.

The review begins.

"The Statute of Liberty" is a unique musical theatre piece that unites dramatic vignettes, original electronic music, traditional songs and narrative, all of which come together in a . . .

. . . features an original score by Rick Russo, an original

book by Chuck Reichenthal, and the talents of actress Bronwyn Rucker and composer-pianist-performer Roger Hayworth . . . described as a "reflective . . ."

" . . . piece about freedom with a clause . . . despite our being free men we have limitations on our freedom . . . I feel a loss of freedom . . . music is far greater than . . ."

. . . The program has been made possible, in part, through a grant from Meet the Composer with support from the Music Theatre Project, the Mary Flagler . . .

. . . The show begins with recorded Broadway music . . . band rendition of medley which includes "Over There" . . . Rucker reads "Think not of huddled masses but individuals carrying worldly possessions like . . ."

. . . electronic sound segment in which Russo scrapes microphone across mixer, plays tape, taps table and plays castanet . . . Rucker reads "Americans are by nature coy, brave, hospitable . . . America is . . ."

. . . Why is this piece being reviewed this way? Art was once coherent expression. It's not now, in many cases. It spreads incoherency. Should artists expect coherent reaction if . . . ?

. . . Reichenthal: I have 60 pages of notes from performance on things I want and don't want . . . more humor . . . more traditional music . . . Russo: Results are like death to me . . .

. . . a "reflective look at the past and present, with insights into the future; and a focus on the saga of the Statue of Liberty and New York City."

. . . it's fun to create with indeterminacy because you don't have to take any responsibility for what you mean, you don't have to care what the public thinks it . . .