

# THE ORKUSTRA

This day-by-day diary of The Orkustra's live, studio, broadcasting and private activities is the result of two decades of research and interview work by Bruno Ceriotti, but without the significant contributions by other kindred spirits this diary would not have been possible. So, I would like to thank all the people who, in one form or another, contributed to this timeline: Jaime Leopold (RIP), Bobby Beausoleil, David LaFlamme, Henry Rasof, Nathan Zakheim, Stephen Hannah, Jesse Barish, Steve LaRosa, Rod Harper (RIP), Colin Hill, Ross Hannan, Corry Arnold, William Hjortsberg, Aldo Pedron, Klemen Breznikar, Reg E. Williams, Charles Perry, Penny DeVries, Claire Hamilton, Lessley Anderson, Ralph J. Gleason (RIP), Craig Fenton, Alec Palao, Johnny Echols, 'Cousin Robert' Resner, Roman Garcia Albertos, James Marshall, Chester Kessler, Gene Anthony, Christopher Newton, Loren Means, The San Francisco Examiner, San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Oracle, and Berkeley Barb.

## September 1966

Undoubtedly the most experimental and eclectically diverse band of the so-called 'San Francisco Sound', The Orkustra were put together by the infamous Bobby Beausoleil. A larger than life character with a mixed reputation ("He was like Bugs Bunny," says Orkustra's bandmate Nathan Zakheim. "Very in your face, enthusiastic."), Robert Kenneth Beausoleil, aka 'Cupid', aka 'Bummer Bob', aka 'Bobby Snofox', was born on Thursday, November 6, 1947, in Santa Barbara, California. After dropping out of high school and let his hair grow out, Bobby moved to Los Angeles in search of fame and fortune in 1965. There, over the summer, he played a six-string rhythm guitar with The Grass Roots, a folk-rock band later known as LOVE, for only three weeks, and also made a cameo appearance (as 'Cupid') in the famous underground documentary movie *Mondo Hollywood*. After a little uncredited appearance in The Mothers of Invention's debut double album, *Freak Out!*, in March 1966 (he sang background vocals on 'Help I'm In Rock'), Bobby moved to San Francisco where he pay rent on a room in a communal flat located at 406 Ashbury Street, in Haight-Ashbury, a neighborhood known for being the origin of the hippie counterculture. "Bobby had great hustling energy and the good looks to back it up and soon became a Haight-Ashbury fixture, walking around in a black top hat, long overcoat, with his snow-white Malamute named Snofox," Orkustra's bandmate Jaime Leopold recalls. "Bobby's cherubic face and long straight hair made him look like Lord Ascot's disreputable brother who had marched straight out of 19th century England and into the Mediterranean sunshine of 60's San Francisco. Bobby may have been a golden child from sunny Santa Barbara, but he could grate on you big-time because he was so fixated on making whatever he wanted to happen, happen. Nice to have on your side, but a real pain in the ass, especially when it wasn't your interest he was hustling. He developed a bad reputation in some quarters for arrogant pushiness and self-proclaimed importance, and a social gracelessness which was a manifestation of the latter. 'Bummer Bob' was the moniker some people had laid on him and unfortunately it stuck. But Bobby was great in his way." Early in June, Bobby had begun playing lead guitar with The Outfit, a local group whose management was trying to market it as a boy band for teenage girls. The gig didn't last long, however, and in September he and the band parted ways (Beausoleil says he "upstaged" the rest of the group and they were jealous, while the band's rhythm guitarist 'Cousin Robert' Resner says Beausoleil was "untrustworthy" and was asked to leave). At that point, Bobby added a bouzouki (a long-necked Greek instrument) to his instrumental arsenal and, through a lot of "musician wanted" handbills placed around the Haight, he began recruiting musicians to be in what he envisioned as an electrified symphony orchestra. It was an unusual idea for the time and for

the San Francisco music scene. Most bands played rock 'n' roll or some version of the blues and featured a vocalist, but Bobby had a different musical vision and was determined to see it play out. "My initial loosely knit idea was to form the first symphony orchestra using electrified instruments," Bobby confirms in an interview with Klemen Breznikar for *It's Psychedelic Baby!* magazine in 2014, "and for this orchestra to play a universal form of music that blended all forms. And I wanted the performances of this music to be 'free' in a manner similar to the free jazz I listened to at The Haight Levels jazz club on Haight Street. At the time, 1966, neither my skill as a musician nor electronic music technology had evolved far enough to support this concept, but these limitations did not stop our collective from making a valiant effort to realize the pipe dream." "The process of finding musicians to join up with me for this little adventure began with handwritten notices that I prepared on 5 by 8 inch cards using pens of assorted colors to attract the attention of passersby," Bobby adds. "With these I let it be known that the 'world's first psychedelic electric symphony orchestra' was 'now forming,' and that musicians of any stripe may apply, 'all types of instruments welcome.' Interested musicians were advised to 'see the guy in the top hat with the white dog on Haight Street,' or to leave their contact information on my message board in front of the Straight Theater. Bulletin boards were very commonplace in those days, and I posted the notices on every one of them that I could find - in the Psychedelic Shop, the Haight Levels, the Digger's free store, several local markets, the Donut shop, and on my own message board in front of the Straight Theater - as well as in the windows of a few shops and restaurants I frequented regularly. The response was virtually instantaneous and surpassed my wildest expectations." One of the first musicians to express an interest in signing on was David LaFlamme (b. Sunday, May 4, 1941, New Britain, Hartford County, Connecticut), "a man in his mid-twenties who, with his pale blonde hair and mild Scandinavian features, appeared to have little of the French in his lineage," Bobby recalls. "But David 'the Flame' could sing and play a violin, and he was looking to join a band that had a place for his instrument and abilities. While he was clearly dubious at first, not quite sure what to make of the beardless boy and his grandiose ideas, David's desire to apply his talents to the challenge of a unique counter-culture musical adventure overrode his initial skepticism. The psychedelic electric orchestra concept had captured his imagination much as it had mine, and we joined forces." "What we were doing was so different that nobody really understood it. I called it 'raga rock'," David recalls. "But Bobby would hound you to death until he got what he wanted." "It is impossible to know if The Orkustra, or anything much resembling it, would have come together in that time period were it not for the dedication and resourcefulness that David contributed to the endeavor," Bobby adds about his new musical *partner in crime*. "From the beginning he brought to the equation a kind of practicality that served to counter balance my youthful impulsiveness and hyper-optimism in favor of a more pragmatic overall approach. We frustrated each other at times, the formally trained classical violinist and the self-taught rock and roll guitarist, but the formula worked." Anyway, with Bobby and David as the core of the original lineup, plus a dozens or so unknown musicians who take turns in rehearsals and gigs, the nascent group was christened The Chamber Orkustra (sometimes also referred to as Electronic Chamber Orchestra, or Electronic Chamber Orkustra, or Electric Chamber Orchestra, or Electric Chamber Orkustra). "From the beginning I intended to name the ensemble The Electric Symphony Orchestra," Bobby recalls, "[but] because our ensemble was smaller than originally envisioned, we decided to call ourselves The Electric Chamber Orchestra, as a way of signifying that we were a small group with orchestral designs."

1) Bobby Beausoleil *electric guitar, bouzouki amplified with a magnetic pickup for mandolin*

2) David LaFlamme *acoustic violin amplified with a pickup*

+

3) ? *standup acoustic bass amplified with a pickup*

4) ? *harmonica (?)*

5) ????? plus other unknown musicians

### **Thursday, October 6, 1966: 'Lunatic Protest Demonstration - Love Pageant Rally', Panhandle Park, Oak Street at Masonic Avenue, near Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California**

The Chamber Orkustra played for free during an outside afternoon unauthorized protest demonstration held in the park and organized by Allen Cohen (editor of the *San Francisco Oracle*) and fine artist Michael Bowen, with the help of local hippie communities (among them, The Diggers), after having learned from the news media that the US Government had just declared LSD illegal in California. Also on the bill: The Mocker Manor Blues Band, Big Brother and The Holding Company, The Grateful Dead, The Wildflower, (possibly) Joe Henderson Quartet. "Our first significant performance, and a defining one for the band, took place on a Sunday [*sic*] afternoon in the Panhandle section of Golden Gate Park," Bobby Beausoleil recalls. "It was the very first in a series of free concerts that would take place in that location, organized by the notorious Diggers. By this time, hundreds of young people had already migrated to the Haight community, and more were arriving every day. Many of them had but recently left the homes of their parents on a wing and a prayer, arriving in the Haight with little or no money, no street experience, and ill-prepared to provide themselves with the necessities of basic survival. The Diggers had declared it their mission to coordinate relief efforts, finding and providing essential food, clothing, communal housing, and medical treatment to the migrants, all free of charge. The free Sunday concerts in the park were urban guerrilla theater events staged by the Diggers, all in the spirit of fun and good times, to bring a sense of harmony and unity to the growing throngs of erstwhile hippies. In addition to live music, huge pots of savory vegetable stew were on hand for anyone who might be hungry." "A makeshift stage was set up under the trees and a generator was brought in to provide electricity to power the amplifiers," Bobby adds. "As we began to play, a crowd grew quickly around us. Our performance was very well received by everyone save for the cops who showed up to inform us that the crowd exceeded the number of people who could lawfully be gathered in a public park without a permit. We were allowed to play one more song before we had to shut it down. We made it a long one. Thereafter, the Diggers made prior arrangements with city officials to obtain permits, and with a flatbed truck to serve as a stage and power source, the weekend concerts in the Panhandle became a regular feature of life in the Haight for some time." "Ken Kesey showed up driving Further - I mean, everybody was there," Bobby also recalls in an interview with Klemen Breznikar for *It's Psychedelic Baby!* magazine in 2014. "My memories of the Love Pageant [Rally] are a bit blurry but I remember that The Orkustra's lineup kept changing throughout our performance and the colorful crowd seemed to stretch as far as the eye could see." By the way, the aforementioned performance of the band was filmed in black and white for few seconds by someone (Reg E. Williams?) of the Straight Theater crew and, in the video footage, we can recognize at least Bobby Beausoleil on electric guitar and David LaFlamme on violin, plus an unknown (Afro-American?) standup bass player which was wearing a hat and had short hair, and another unknown shirtless white guy with

dark brown curly locks that looks as if he was playing a harmonica and holding a microphone against it, the way harmonica players did and still may do. It is possible that there were other band members not shown in the video.

## October 1966

Among the musicians who auditioned for The Chamber Orkustra that month, there were the late standup bass player Jaime Leopold (b. Jaime Henry Leopold, Thursday, November 14, 1946, Bronx, New York City, New York - d. Thursday, March 1, 2018, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon) and an oboe player named Henry Rasof (b. Henry Leplin Rasof, Saturday, November 16, 1946, Santa Monica, Los Angeles County, California). "I began playing oboe in the 7th grade, in 1958," Henry recalls. "I played only classical music. This was with one or two community orchestras, the college orchestra, college woodwind quintet, maybe at a church." Both Jaime and Henry became aware of the nascent group after spotted Bobby's handbills around the Haight. "One afternoon, walking down Cole [Street] towards Haight [Street], I read a handbill posted on a telephone pool," Jaime confirms. "'Haight Ashbury Orchestra forming,' it read. 'All interested musicians meet at 406 Ashbury' - a location in the Haight. Why not? What did I have to lose? I was 'earning a living' and had plenty of free time. I had always wanted to play in a group. I had studied, piano, guitar, and, most recently, string bass, in high school. So I went to the apartment. It was on the first floor. Bay windows looked out on to the street. There were probably eight or ten musicians gathered in the room. The guy who was organizing the group introduced himself. He was younger than me, a very pretty kid, with lot of enthusiasm and real passion for the enterprise. His name was Bobby Beausoleil. He explained that the Haight was coming into its own as a Mecca for new culture and the youth movement. It was only natural that the Haight would have its own orchestra. Right? We all nodded our heads. Bobby whipped out a tune he had written, 'The Trees Are Green,' a simplistic well - meaning hippie ditty with a half-nice melody. I joined in the chorus singing, 'The trees are green, the trees are green, the trees are green . . .'. I was charmed by Bobby. He had a handsome rakishness, and his determined ego made me feel he was going to accomplish whatever he set out to do. He was the initiating force of the band and was constantly out hustling to get us gigs. Bobby and I became friends. We went down to a huge music store on Market Street, with a giant basement full of modern, and obscure, arcane instruments. Bobby marveled at the weird array of bowed antiquities. I bought a Czech flat-back bass for \$300 since I was pretty liquid in those days." "I moved to San Francisco in 1966 and went to live on Hermann Street across from the US Mint. Soon after, I was walking on Haight Street and saw a sign or flyer in the Psychedelic Shop, I believe, that someone was forming some sort of group and to go to such and such a place for a rehearsal," Henry also confirms. "No cell phones then, so I don't think I called anyone. A bunch of musicians were there. It was at someone's [Bobby's] house or apartment." Beausoleil was duly impressed by the newcomers and soon Jaime and Henry joined LaFlamme in the core of The Chamber Orkustra's lineup. "It was not until Jaime Leopold signed on as bassist that the first hints of a recognizable group identity began to appear," Bobby point out. "I liked Jaime as a person, and I knew on an instinctive level that he would bring good chemistry to the band. Jaime may have been a closet bass player to begin with, but he never had a rival for his position in The Orkustra. What he brought to the venture was a good deal more than an astute and passionate innate musical sensibility. To everyone in the group he was like a sort of benevolent virus, infecting us all with his intelligent wit, his wildly inventive sense of humor, and his generous nature. Seemingly with little effort, he somehow managed to make all of the oddly shaped pieces fit together in a fragile alliance, offering encouragement, mitigating arguments, and helping to keep things lighthearted and fun. This made him the most valuable

member of the band, because it is what sustained us long enough to enjoy our brief day in the sun, and to create something remarkably unique along the way." "Of the many woodwinds players who passed through the portals of [my house], only one, Henry Rasof, distinguished himself as being entirely right for The Orkustra," Bobby also point out. "Henry, who seemed shy and reserved at first meeting, played his oboe with a finesse and inventiveness that belied his quiet manner. He was classically trained, introspective and self-critical of his playing; yet he had the courage to stretch out and take chances and try new things. It was fascinating to watch him painstakingly make his own reeds - I had never met a musician quite so fastidious about his instrument. This kind of attention to detail is indicative of a quality Henry possessed that inspired us all to want to become better musicians. The oboe's distinctive tones and the liquid gypsy scales Henry played on it contributed more to giving The Orkustra a unique signature sound than any of the other instruments within the group. It lent to our sound the power to enchant, a quality that one of our fans aptly called 'snake charmer music.' When Henry was in the mood, he could weave a spell with that black stick of his." Anyway, other than Jaime and Henry, a lot of other musicians continued to auditioned for the nascent group at Bobby's house, but the flat was too small to contain all those people, as the latter soon discovered for his own surprise. "While I had been confident of success from the outset, I found myself ill prepared to handle the number of initial enquiries from musicians interested in trying out," Bobby confirms, "given that I had yet to secure a location to conduct auditions and rehearse my erstwhile orchestra. Of necessity, some of the first auditions took place right on the street, or in the Panhandle section of Golden Gate Park. I had gotten a bit ahead of myself." So, in short order, Bobby rented an old tin-roofed warehouse on Page Street, in the upper Haight, just a block-and-a-half from the Straight Theater (located at 1702 Haight Street at Cole Street), and he and the band immediately began conducting auditions in earnest. "Bobby or the violinist, David LaFlamme, got a line on an abandoned lumber warehouse on Page and Clayton [Street] in the upper Haight," Jaime confirms. "This was the perfect rehearsal space - an old lumber yard with huge wooden swinging doors, like an old cowboy fort. Inside a slightly dank but huge warehouse space. It would be perfect." "The auditions took the form of daily free-for-all jam sessions in the warehouse," Bobby adds. "Applicants were simply invited to sit in. It was like a kind of acid test: musicians who had the ability to improvise and who enjoyed the experience of playing in the group would find encouragement enough that they might be inclined to show up for the next session, while those who couldn't cut it tended to drift away of their own accord. I don't recall an instance when a musician was fired or asked to leave." "Initially there were twenty of us rehearsing at the lumberyard," Jaime recalls. "A potpourri of instrumentalists, some pretty good and some quite awful players. Bobby was determined to let nature take its course and see how it would all turn out. Who would stay and who would go. And sure enough, one by one, as if by some divine natural law, the ones who were supposed to go, left." "There was David LaFlamme on violin - a child prodigy from Salt Lake City whose wife Linda played excellent classical piano," Jaime continues. "They had been gigging as a duo, playing schmaltz at various straight-laced love nest bars around town. Linda was a lovely and talented pianist whom David was going to dump pretty quickly, after he fell in with the pot-smoking Haight Street crowd. On a soon-to-be-electrified oboe was Henry Rasof from LA, again, a classically trained oboist who had moved up to San Francisco in search of adventures. He sure got those in spades." So, at that point, the core of The Chamber Orkustra consisted of Bobby, David, Jaime, and Henry, plus another eight or so unknown musicians who take turns in rehearsals, including a female harpist, a clarinet player, a drummer, and a Hammond organ player that could be, or maybe not, David's wife Linda Rudman, aka Linda 'Neska' LaFlamme. "At times there were as many as a dozen musicians playing together in the warehouse at once," Bobby Beausoleil confirms, "all trying with varying degrees of success to

fit in with one another and generate some semblance of harmony. Often what resulted was the most gawdawful noise. But every once in awhile the sounds that emerged took on a transcendent quality, a kernel of promise that kept some of us coming back day after day." "The single biggest problem we faced was finding musicians who were capable of improvising in a group context," Bobby continues. "Most of the musicians who tried out could not play without a road map right in front of them. My insistence on there being a minimum of the preordained in the music we played earned me the consternation of some, and even a few accusations of being a lazy musician for not troubling myself with the fine points of the decorated staff, to which I would retort that it's hard work to play in the moment, with sensitivity and intuition. It was all academic anyway - I did not read music in any case, and those who decided to play in the band simply had to accept that. Or not. Some chose the latter and moved on." "The instrumentation changed from day to day as musicians came and went," Bobby also adds. "One day, for example, a station wagon with a trailer in tow pulled through the gate leading to the entry of the warehouse, and stopped in the driveway. Out of the car spilled a man, his wife, and five or six kids, the woman moving more slowly and laboriously than the others. The man, after verifying that auditions for an orchestra were indeed being conducted at that location, went behind the car to unload the trailer. From beneath a protective padded cloth covering emerged the most beautiful harp I have seen to this day. It was huge, made of dark woods and ornately tooled golden metal. The woman, who with her considerable girth and her long blonde hair appeared to have stepped directly out of a Wagnerian opera, was a harpist of awesome skill. She entertained us that day, performing a variety of classical pieces she knew by heart, but sadly, she was incapable of improvising with us and did not return the next. And so it went." "Dedicated musicianship and the ability and willingness to be inventive was not the only price of admission," Bobby continues. "Months of auditions and rehearsals were required to make the band ready to begin gigging, and, in the meantime, we all had to eat. Each aspiring member of the group was expected to invest their energy for hours of each day toward developing a unique sound and style of music against the vague promise of an eventual payoff. I lived on handouts much of the time in those days. Then, too, there was the drafty old warehouse we used as a practice studio, which presented its own set of challenges. It was uninsulated and unheated, with a bare concrete floor that would send the chill right up through shoes and feet, all the way to the bones of one's fingers. To ward off some of the cold and damp, we hung several lengths of musty discarded carpet padding over ropes that we suspended between the posts that supported the corrugated tin roof to partially enclose an area within the warehouse, and coaxed into service an old kerosene-burning heater that David found in a junk shop to bring some warmth to the space. We spent many an hour hunkered around that stinking heater, playing our asses off in as much an effort to keep warm as to make some good music."

#### **THE CHAMBER ORKUSTRA #2 (OCTOBER 1966)**

1) Bobby Beausoleil

2) David LaFlamme

3) Jaime Leopold *standup acoustic bass amplified with a pickup*

4) Henry Rasof *oboe amplified with a harmonica pickup*

+

5) ? *Hammond organ (maybe Linda LaFlamme?)*

6) ? *clarinet*

7) ? *drums*

8) ? *harp*

9) ????? plus other unknown musicians

## **October 1966**

At some point this month, The Chamber Orkustra settled to what could have been considered their very first "official" lineup. Other than the usual suspects - i.e. Bobby, David, Jaime, and Henry, a couple of newcomers seemed to be the right musicians for the nascent group. One was a recently San Francisco State College's English graduate named Nathan Zakheim (b. Nathan Baruch Zakheim, Monday, December 20, 1943, Sebastapol, Sonoma County, California), who played "an acoustic guitar, as far as I recall, and maybe even a classical, nylon-string guitar," as Henry Rasof point out. The son of a famous Jewish painter, sculptor and muralist named Bernard, Nathan had worked in a kosher delicatessen in the Fillmore District, driving a delivery truck all over the city. After work, instead, he drove his 1945 military issue Harley-Davidson or stomped around with his dark brown curly locks and ample full beard and a sheepskin vest, with a guitar strapped to his back. At that time Nathan lived at 1090 Page Street, the most famous hippie rooming house in the Haight, and it was probably while he walked around the neighborhood that he met Bobby Beausoleil and was then invited to rehearsed with the nascent group. The other one was Neal Barish (b. Saturday, November 24, 1945, Brownsville, Brooklyn, New York City, New York), "a particularly good flute player with deep-set sad eyes who could really blow," as Jaime Leopold point out. "I met Bobby on Haight Street," Neal recalls. "I used to see him around with his top hat and dog, Snofox. I went up to him because I heard he was putting a band together and told him that I played the flute. Before that I was just sort of playing the flute and hanging out in the amazing times of that moment." "I think our first rehearsal was at the Straight Theater before the Page Street rehearsal space," Neal adds. "I can't remember the exact address but it was 4 or 5 houses from the corner of Cole Street. I lived two doors down in a small upstairs furnished room. I was married at the time and I remember Bobby having dinner at my rented room with my wife [Debra Abbott] and I. Happy days those were." Apparently, when Neal joined the band, his audition was recorded and, with the title of 'Flute Player Audition (Practice Jam Session)', it was later included in The Orkustra's hand numbered edition (1000 copies) double album, '[Adventures in Experimental Electric Orchestra from the San Francisco Psychedelic Underground](#)' (2009; Mexican Summer - MEX 019). By the way, although Neal seems pretty sure that the band had no drummer during the time he had been with them, aural evidence of at least one rehearsal recorded at that time, indicated that a drummer, possibly one named Mark Mower, actually was in the band at some point that month.

### **THE CHAMBER ORKUSTRA #3 (OCTOBER 1966 - NOVEMBER 1966)**

1) Bobby Beausoleil

2) David LaFlamme

3) Jaime Leopold

4) Henry Rasof

5) Mark Mower *drums, percussion*

6) Neal Barish *flute amplified with a pickup*

7) Nathan Zakheim *acoustic guitar, and maybe even a classical nylon-string guitar*

### **Thursday, October 27, 1966**

The Chamber Orkustra's today rehearsal at their warehouse on Page Street was recorded. The tape, which by the way has a terrible audio quality, contained four tracks: 'Excursions', 'Trees Are Green', and two different versions of a song titled 'Gypsy', although the original name could have been 'Blue Gypsy'. According to Henry Rasof, who has listened to the tape, aural evidence indicates that a drummer (Mark Mower?) was present at least on one of the two versions of 'Gypsy', while possibly a second guitar (Nathan Zakheim) was present at least on 'Trees Are Green'. Also according to Rasof, a flute (Neal Barish) was present on 'Trees Are Green' and on one of the two versions of 'Gypsy' (the same who had the drums), while he himself was not present with his oboe on 'Trees Are Green'. Needless to say, Bobby Beausoleil on electric guitar, David LaFlamme on violin, and Jaime Leopold on standup bass were instead present on all the tracks. By the way, in 2009, a couple of tracks apparently taken from this rehearsal, were later included in The Orkustra's double album, '[Adventures in Experimental Electric Orchestra from the San Francisco Psychedelic Underground](#)'. One was 'Trees Are Green', although retitled as 'Dancing In The Park', and the other was 'Gypsy', although retitled as 'Bouzouki Blues Experiment'. According to Henry Rasof, who has listened to the album, 'Dancing In The Park' sounds the same, while 'Bouzouki Blues Experiment' could be taken from this rehearsal or maybe from another one. Also, to added more confusion, a year later, in 2010, an obscure Italian label named Qbico Records, released an untitled song performed by The Orkustra as B-side of the Arthur Doyle Trio's 12-inch picture disc single '[Nature Boy](#)' (Qbico 100). According to the liner notes, the untitled song was recorded today during the aforementioned rehearsal. After listen it, Rasof confirmed that the song was 'Gypsy', although aural evidence indicates that this version apparently is not the same as the two that were on the tape, because this one have also cymbals!

### **November 1966**

The Chamber Orkustra's lineup expanded to a 8-piece after the addition of a cello player named Stephen Hannah.

#### **THE CHAMBER ORKUSTRA #4 (NOVEMBER 1966 - LATE NOVEMBER 1966)**

1) Bobby Beausoleil

2) David LaFlamme

3) Jaime Leopold

4) Henry Rasof

5) Neal Barish

6) Nathan Zakheim

7) Mark Mower

## 8) Stephen Hannah *cello*

### **Late November 1966**

At the end of the month, Neal Barish, Nathan Zakheim, and Stephen Hannah leave The Chamber Orkustra. "My time with the band was very limited... maybe 2-3 rehearsals," Stephen Hannah recalls. "I didn't think there was much musicianship from many of the members (excepting Neal of course) and didn't think it had much of a future... so I stopped coming. Though I stayed good friends with Neal and his wife Silver, I never did follow what became of The Orkustra. I did of course learn of the horrific later career of Bobby Beausoleil... to my shock and sorrow." "I don't even know why I quit the band," Neal Barish also recalls. "Some of our rehearsals were amazing. After I quit, I regretted it. But life goes on somehow. I guess I heard different future calling." By the way, while Natham Zakheim and Stephen Hannah disappeared from the music scene at that point, Neal Barish changed his name to Jesse Barish (1968), moved back to L.A. (1970), and in a few years became a successful singer and songwriter. So, after a couple of months, all the try-outs narrowed the number of dedicated players with an ability to improvise down to five musicians. "We were left with a core of good players, although I can't really count myself," Jaime Leopold point out. "If you play the string bass, you're more than likely to get the gig. As it turned out we all had a similar vision of what the band should be about."

### **THE CHAMBER ORKUSTRA #5 (LATE NOVEMBER 1966 - DECEMBER 1966)**

- 1) Bobby Beausoleil
- 2) David LaFlamme
- 3) Jaime Leopold
- 4) Henry Rasof
- 5) Mark Mower

### **Thursday, December 1, 1966: Pooh, 120 Julian Avenue, b/w 15th Street and 16th Street, 1 Block West of Mission Street, Mission District, San Francisco, California**

Tonight at 8:00pm, "The Orcustra [*sic*] (8 piece electric chamber orchestra) plays contemporary and improvised works" announced the November 25 edition of the *Berkeley Barb*. As far as I know, this was the only concert held at the Pooh (after Winnie the Pooh, of course!), a loft turned into a coffee house where they served coffee and food by donation, and that was mainly used as a stage by a local theatrical group known as the Pitschel Players. By the way, although the aforementioned *Berkeley Barb* advertised the band as a 8-piece, according to a review of the show that appeared in the December 16 edition of the *San Francisco Oracle*, The Chamber Orkustra, as they were credited, were already reduced to their "classic" 5-piece lineup by then. "Of course we were all out of our minds and fairly insane on stage, submerging ourselves totally in the music," Jaime Leopold recalls. "We tried hard to listen to what was going on at that very moment, so we wouldn't sound like a cacophonous scream fest. We were usually quite stoned of course."

## December 1966

Mark Mower was replaced by a new drummer named Terry Wilson. "I don't know how we recruited this next cat, but Terry Wilson must have heeded the clarion call and came to a rehearsal in the cold warehouse," Jaime Leopold recalls about the newcomer. "Terry was a Detroit transplant with a young four-year old son, Markie, and an excellent jazz drummer who had played in Charles Lloyd's band back in Detroit. Terry was a great musician and taught us all a lot. He and I became pretty close - we two especially enjoyed the weed-world and jazz." "The moment when the magic combination finally clicked into place happened somewhere in the midst of the first jam we ever played with Terry Wilson, who immediately afterward came on board as our drummer," Bobby Beausoleil also recalls. "Not one of the several drummers we had tried out previously could hold a candle to Terry. Short in physical stature, with curly reddish brown hair, an aquiline profile, and an infectious laugh, Terry was a drummer who came from a jazz tradition, and that made all the difference. Improvisation came naturally to him, and he played with an inventiveness that was nothing short of astonishing. Like any really good jazz drummer, he was always in sync with the bass, always knew just when to accent, when to drive the melody, and his timing was impeccable. And yet, he was more than willing to step outside the traditions of his jazz background to co-invent with the rest of us a style of music that only occasionally flirted with jazz. When The Orkustra began to play concert gigs, rock drummers from other bands would stand in the wings, jaws agape, watching Terry play. "Where did you learn those rhythms?!", they would ask him later, and Terry would just smile." Anyway, with Terry Wilson on board, The Chamber Orkustra finally settled into their last and definitive lineup! "As a group identity emerged, it became evident that the band would bear little resemblance to my original brainchild," Bobby adds. "A group comprising only five musicians hardly constitutes an orchestra, electric or otherwise, but as we explored and experimented with the concept we discovered fairly early on that realizing a comprehensible form of improvisational music was much more easily achievable with fewer players. It seemed to become exponentially more difficult to play as a cohesive unit with each added musician. There was also an economics consideration. Fewer band members meant that gig money would not have to be split as many ways. But more than any other reason, we chose to keep the membership small because we liked the way we sounded with just the five of us. It was simply what worked." "We had no vocalist and that was intentional," Jaime also adds. "Our idea was an improvising free-form instrumental group which would explore different strains of music from the classical, jazz, and Arabic schools. We were an early, eclectic, 'world music' with extreme psychedelic tendencies, band. A poet friend, whose name escapes me, gave us a fine motto: 'Light Shows for the Blind.' We had bumper sticker made with our photos and the 'motto,' although almost no one we knew had a car. As far as the music, we all had input. Terry brought jazz tunes like Nica's Dream (Horace Silver), Blues March (Benny Golson), a tune called Bombay Calling by the tenor saxophonist Vince Wallace, who had played tenor on the hit Rockin' Robin back in the '50's - a wonderful Indian-influenced jazz tune. David reworked classical themes and came up with several tunes like one we called Punjab's Barber, based on a theme from the American composer, Samuel Barber. I contributed a bass riff à la orientale which became an Arab style number we called Camel Crossing. We all threw in our ideas and wrote things together. We even played a couple of tunes [Flash Little Walkin Box' and another unknown one] given to us by Nick Gravenites, the great Chicago bluesman, who wrote the famous tune Born In Chicago for the Paul Butterfield Blues Band. Nick had written a rock opera and was delighted to find someone to play his serious stuff. You could say we gang-raped practically every musical genre save Country Western." "[John] Coltrane's 'A Love Supreme' is a good example of music we were influenced by," Bobby point out in an interview with Klemen Breznikar for *It's Psychedelic Baby!* magazine in 2014. "Most of our compositions

were structured in a similar way, too, where there would be a strong melody or musical pattern motif to provide a framework for the improvisations that so largely defined our music. However, we primarily influenced one another. David and Henry were classically trained, Terry was a jazz drummer, Jamie was into jazz and blues, and I brought more of a rock orientation and Asian influences to the mix. We learned from and took cues from one another to create a unique sound." "Thus provisioned, The Orkustra - a musical aberration of unprecedented pretentiousness - set out to enlighten the people of San Francisco with its own brand of rock and roll truth," Bobby concluded.

#### **THE CHAMBER ORKUSTRA #6 (DECEMBER 1966 - APRIL 16, 1967) / THE ORKUSTRA (MARCH 5, 1967 - JULY ??, 1967)**

- 1) Bobby Beausoleil
- 2) David LaFlamme
- 3) Jaime Leopold
- 4) Henry Rasof
- 5) Terry Wilson *drums, percussion*

#### **Saturday, December 24, 1966: 'Midnight Mass', St. John The Evangelist Episcopal Church, 1661 15th Street at 120 Julian Avenue, Mission District, San Francisco, California**

The Chamber Orkustra's performance (that was actually on Sunday, December 25, because they wound up playing right after midnight) was recorded and one song, 'Gypsy Odyssey', was later included in the band's albums, '[Light Shows for the Blind](#)' (2006; RD Records - RD 16) (where it was credited as 'St. John's Cathedral Jam') and '[Adventures in Experimental Electric Orchestra from the San Francisco Psychedelic Underground](#)' (2009).

#### **December 1966/January 1967 (?)**

Apparently, at some point between late 1966 and early 1967, The Chamber Orkustra left the warehouse on Page Street and since then they never had again a regular rehearsal space. So, according to Henry Rasof, from then on, the band rehearsed sometime at someone's (he recalls a guy with a beard and curly hair, maybe Nathan Zakheim?) apartment on 20th Street, somewhere between Mission District and Potrero Hill, and where "on New Year's eve or some other occasion there was some sort of orgy that I missed," Henry point out with regret, and sometime in a garage, or warehouse type space on the ground floor, located somewhere in SF and rented by a sculptress who "had sex with everyone in the band except me," Henry point out with regret again. Also, around the same time, Bobby Beausoleil left the communal flat at 406 Ashbury Street and (probably) went to live with Rasof on Hermann Street, a rented house with a lot of people sharing the rent, located in the Lower Haight neighborhood. "I'm not sure Bobby lived there, I think he did, but I won't swear to it", Henry point out.

#### **Sunday, January 1, 1967: 'The New Year's Wail / Whale!', Panhandle Park, Oak Street at Masonic Avenue, near Golden**

## **Gate Park, San Francisco, California**

The Hells Angels Frisco threw a big free outdoor party in the Panhandle at 2:00pm on New Year's Day, to thank the Haight-Ashbury's doper community, The Diggers, for raising money for bailing their two members Hairy Henry and Chocolate George out of jail, after the pair had been arrested for low-level crimes (i.e. letting a passenger ride illegally on a motorcycle and interfering with an arrest) less than two weeks earlier, on December 17, 1966, during the 'Death and Rebirth of the Haight (aka Death of Money)' parade that The Diggers held, in part, to celebrate the death of money and rebirth of the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood. Anyway, The Diggers helped to promote and publicized the 'Wail / Whale!' event, of course, and they also arranged for Big Brother and The Holding Company, The Wildflower, The Grateful Dead, The Orkustra, and John Handy Quintet, to play using the back of an eighteen-foot flatbed truck as a stage. The infamous local deejay and promoter The Buddha, aka Buddha from Muir Beach, emceed the event. "The Orkustra's association with the Diggers was initially an outgrowth of simple proximity to one another," Bobby Beausoleil recalls. "The old warehouse on Page Street that we used for a rehearsal studio was located directly across the street from a derelict wooden [six-car] garage [located at 1762 Page Street] that the Diggers had procured and made into their headquarters. Above the doors of the garages was a whimsical sign proclaiming them to be the 'Free Frame of Reference,' the Diggers' free store, where second-hand clothing, blankets, kitchen utensils, and sundry household items could be had for the asking. As members of The Orkustra and some of the Diggers encountered one another on a daily basis, a casual relationship was formed. Emmett Grogan, one of the Diggers' founding members and chief instigators, took a particular shine to The Orkustra. He liked our free-form musical style and devil-may-care attitude, being so much like his own nature, and invited us to play the first of the free concerts in the Panhandle." Anyway, according to a review of the event, which drew a couple thousand mostly young people representing a cross section of people living in the Haight at the time, that appeared the next day in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, The Chamber Orkustra, as they were credited, was the first band to play that day.

## **Friday, January 6 - Sunday, January 8, 1967: Cedar Alley Coffee House, 40 Cedar Street, Polk Gulch, San Francisco, California**

A couple of handbills and a couple of ads were printed for these weekend gigs (two shows each day, 9:00pm (or 9:30pm) and 11:00pm on Friday and Saturday, and 2:00pm (or 2:30pm) and 4:00pm on Sunday). In the two ads that appeared in the *Berkeley Barb* the band was advertised first as 'Electronic Chamber Orchestra The Orkustra' (December 30, 1966) and then as 'The Orkus'tra Electronic Chamber Orchestra' (January 6, 1967), while in the two handbills the band was billed first as 'The Orkustra A Concert of Electronic Chamber Orchestra', and then (in the one self-made by Bobby Beausoleil) as 'The Orkustra Electrified'. "For a while we had a weekly Sunday afternoon show at the Cedar Alley Coffee House, part of an arthouse movie theater off Cedar Alley near Polk Street," Jaime Leopold recalls. "Bobby created and put up posters all over the Haight. People actually showed up." "The Cedar Alley Coffee House was not too far from our warehouse headquarters in the Haight-Ashbury," Bobby Beausoleil also recalls. "This was normally a folk music venue, so all but Jaime (on standup bass) played sitting down for these early gigs." "We baffled and confounded the folk music crowd for weeks as we worked on polishing our performances and sorted out the bugs in our amplification system in front of a live audience, picking up some converts along the way," Bobby adds.

**Saturday, January 14, 1967: 'Pow-Wow - A Gathering Of The Tribes For A Human Be-In', Polo Fields, Golden Gate Park, 1232 John F. Kennedy Drive, San Francisco, California (*The Chamber Orkustra canceled*)**

The Chamber Orkustra were invited to play for free during another outside afternoon (from 1:00pm to 5:00pm) event in the park organized by Allen Cohen and Michael Bowen, with the help of The Diggers (for a free distribution of 75 twenty-pound turkeys) and acid guru August Owsley Stanley III, aka 'The Bear' (for the production of a massive amounts of his 'White Lightning' LSD). The occasion was a new California law banning the use of LSD that had come into effect on October 6, 1966. However, the power went out just right before the band's set, so finally they did not played, although "someone pushed me onto the stage, where I tooted my oboe for a while by myself - acoustic," Henry Rasof recalls. The impromptu performance was even immortalized by legendary cinematographer and director Jerry Abrams in *Be-In*, a rare short film with psychedelic effects released later that year. "There are two very quick shots of me in my red shirt on stage with the oboe," Henry confirms. "It was not amplified, so no one could hear except maybe people right next to the stage, if at that. I don't know what I played - maybe just improvised." Also on the bill: Big Brother and The Holding Company, Blue Cheer (in attendance but unable to play for lack of time), Quicksilver Messenger Service, The Grateful Dead featuring Charles Lloyd, Jefferson Airplane, Loading Zone, Sir Douglas Quintet, Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snider, Timothy Leary, The New Age featuring Country Joe McDonald, Dizzy Gillespie, Richard Alpert, Dick Gregory, Lenore Kandel, Jerry Rubin, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Michael McClure, Robert Baker, Buddha (MC).

**Friday, January 27 - Sunday, January 29, 1967: Cedar Alley Coffee House, 40 Cedar Street, Polk Gulch, San Francisco, California**

Billed as 'The Orkustra Electronic Chamber Orchestra', the band played two shows each day, 9:00pm (or 9:30pm) and 11:00pm on Friday and Saturday, and 2:00pm (or 2:30pm) and 4:00pm on Sunday.

**Friday, February 3 - Sunday, February 5, 1967: Cedar Alley Coffee House, 40 Cedar Street, Polk Gulch, San Francisco, California**

Billed as 'The Orkustra Electronic Chamber Orchestra', the band played two shows each day, 9:00pm (or 9:30pm) and 11:00pm on Friday and Saturday, and 2:00pm (or 2:30pm) and 4:00pm on Sunday.

**Friday, February 10 - Saturday, February 11, 1967: The Forum, 2455 Telegraph Avenue at Haste Street, Berkeley, Alameda County, California**

The band was advertised as 'Electronic Chamber Orkustra'. One show each day, started at 10:00pm.

**Friday, February 24, 1967: 'The Invisible Circus / Rite Of Spring Event', Glide Memorial United Methodist Church, 330 Ellis Street at Taylor Street, Tenderloin, downtown San Francisco, California**

A 3-day (February 24-26) and 72-hour free environmental community happening presented by The Diggers, Artists Liberation Front, and Glide Foundation. More than 10,000 people attended the Friday evening show, although news of the event had spread mostly by word-of-mouth (except for a couple of radio spots, the event was not advertised in the print media). Inside one of the church halls, the Fellowship Room, The Diggers set up a fake wall made of newsprint on which they projected pictures of planet Earth. At 8:00pm and with a clash of cymbals, a team of amateur topless belly dancers burst through the paper, followed by The Chamber Orkustra, playing an Egyptian-tinged jam. "This event was a neo-pagan free-for-all 'happening' staged by The Diggers and their counter-culture cohorts in the inner sanctums of Glide Memorial Church, [and] it would prove to be a pivotal point in my life," Bobby Beausoleil recalls. "Opening ceremonies for the Invisible Circus festivities included a troupe of half-naked female dancers performing to experimental music by The Orkustra. Our collective efforts were a rollicking success from my point of view, but the church fathers and city officials saw it from another perspective." "All I remember was playing there and some people were masturbating in an elevator," Henry Rasof also recalls. "Some topless women standing behind or in front of large paper screens while we played." As the girls shimmied, the audience rose to its feet and danced with them. Bobby Beausoleil grabbed a chair and lifted a blond belly dancer onto it. "We started doing a sort of dance where I was playing specifically to what she was doing, and she was dancing specifically to what I was playing," Bobby points out. "It was beautiful. It was spontaneous and fun. I had no idea what anyone else was doing, or if anyone was tuned in to what we were doing." Then he began licking the sweat off her breasts. The performance made an impression on at least one member of the audience, the famous underground experimental filmmaker Kenneth Anger. Kenneth was entranced with Beausoleil's impish beauty and assertive movements so, after the show (The Chamber Orkustra ended their performance at 9:00pm), while the band was packing up their equipments in the parking lot of the church ready to go home, a captivated Anger cornered Bobby in the darkness and, without so much as an introduction, he pointed a finger at Bobby and declared, "You are Lucifer!" Subsequently, Anger offered him the leading role of 'Lucifer' in his upcoming short film *Lucifer Rising* (actually he had already assigned the role to another young man, but once he saw Bobby that night everything changed in his mind). "Something about my antics during the performance caught the interest of Kenneth Anger, who had joined the burgeoning crowd gathering at the church complex that evening," Bobby confirms. "Later, as the band was packing the truck in preparation for departure, the filmmaker, who was as yet a stranger to me, approached and engaged me in conversation. Would I please play the part of Lucifer in his movie, he asked me. But I'm a musician, not an actor, I demurred. That's okay, he countered, all you have to do is be yourself!" "Kenneth Anger's reputation as a filmmaker had preceded him only slightly into my sphere of activity," Bobby adds. "The grapevine in my neck of the bay area underground carried rumors of *Scorpio Rising*, his previous film, which I had not yet seen. This vague knowledge combined with the animated fashion in which he spoke of his 'love vision' for *Lucifer Rising*, his current work in progress, was enough to convince me that he was genuine. Almost immediately my mind made a leap. I doubt that Mr. Anger was in any way prepared for the counter-proposal I made to him: that I would consider playing the role of the rebel angel in his film if he would consider allowing me to compose and perform the music for its soundtrack. We both struck a deal with the devil that night." So, Bobby accepted the offer and, other than composing and performing the film soundtrack as he recalled, the agreement that he made with Anger also included that the filmmaker would provide for the young musician's basic needs and would allow him to live in his house, but that he would not be paid for appearing in the film. By the way, "a few tapes remain from the Glide Memorial concert," Jaime Leopold recalls, "which Bobby sent from his jail cell to a guy in Switzerland who produced an actual LP of the gig."

You can buy one on line. Not very good, if I say so myself, and not just because it was poorly recorded. But, look, we had a wonderful time together, playing and trying to make a go of doing something very different, i.e. crazy stuff and no vocalist. We stayed true to our aesthetic." The aforementioned album was '[Light Shows for the Blind](#)' (2006), where three songs from that gig were included: 'Flash Gordon', 'Bombay Calling', and 'Punjab's Barber' (which was actually 'Excursions' under a different title). The same three tracks were also included, three years later, in that other album, '[Adventures in Experimental Electric Orchestra from the San Francisco Psychedelic Underground](#)'. Also, in 2009, 'Flash Gordon' and 'Bombay Calling' were released (as side A and B respectively although track titles do not appear on the disc) as a total white single pressed in only 300 hand numbered copies by Mexican Summer Records (as MEX017).

## **March 1967**

Bobby Beausoleil moved into Kenneth Anger's house, who at that time lived in a rented flat on the ground floor of the William Westerfeld House, a large nineteenth-century Victorian house referred to by locals as the 'Russian Embassy', and located across the street from the northwest corner of Alamo Square, a residential neighborhood and park in San Francisco, at 1198 Fulton Street. Bobby put his bed in the front parlor, on top of old pillars that had once been part of another Victorian house, and painted bright murals on his walls. Anger lived in the rear of the flat, which he'd painted black with silver dots. A mirrored ball hung from the ceiling; when lit, it reflected light off the dots, giving the walls the appearance of studded black leather. Though Beausoleil denies having been Anger's lover, which was the rumor going around Haight-Ashbury at the time, in all other ways their relationship seemed one of sugar daddy and boy toy. Anger let Beausoleil live rent-free. He also bought Beausoleil a Studebaker truck that had been sawed in half with the back replaced by a funny little camper built to look like a log cabin. One day Anger gave his fallen angel a stone wing that had come from a broken statue. "It was an odd relationship," Bobby admits. "He was fascinated by me ... I'm not gay, and I was not interested in him in that way." At that point, after Bobby left the communal house on Hermann Street and went to live with Anger, Henry Rasof also moved out from there and went to live not far away, into a large apartment located at 315 Sanchez Street. "Jaime Leopold already lived there with Susan, his girlfriend," Henry recalls. "Larry the roadie lived there too. Maybe someone else. We rented two floors, there were 3 or 4 bedrooms. Also, a friend of my ex-girlfriend's lived there for a while too." "It is possible we [The Orkustra] rehearsed there sometimes, but I can't swear to it," Henry adds. Anyway, it was at the Russian Embassy that, over the following weeks, Anger began filming *Lucifer Rising*. As mentioned above, Bobby appeared as 'Lucifer', but also The Orkustra appeared as themselves. "I was in the film Kenneth Anger made starring Bobby, *Lucifer Rising*," Jaime Leopold confirms. "I walked down a staircase wearing a crow's head. An Anger trip, you know, everybody parading around in costumes. A raven's head, it was. That's the film that disappeared - Bobby told me he took it from Anger in retribution because Anger had broken his bouzouki." As in most Anger productions, filming was low budget and sporadic. On one occasion, Anger hired a light show to drench Beausoleil's naked torso with zebra patterns as he stood in front of black velvet, raising and lowering his arms. Another time Anger filmed his Lucifer smoking a joint from a skull-shaped roach clip contraption. Beausoleil's new living arrangement didn't bode well for his band. "It was a psycho scene, quite frankly," David LaFlamme confirms. "Kenneth Anger was a nut case, and Bobby was getting nuttier, and with these other people hanging around, it just wasn't a healthy working environment." At the end of the summer, however, the film went on hiatus for several reasons, so this early footage starring Bobby and the band was instead used by Anger in a different short film, *Invocation of My Demon Brother*, in

August 1969.

**Saturday, March 4, 1967: Sokol Hall, 739 Page Street, Haight-Ashbury, San Francisco, California**

The band was billed as 'Electric Chamber Orkustra' on the poster. Also on the bill: The Charlatans, Lynne Hughes. The show, which lasted from 8:30pm to 1:00am, was presented by Northern California Psychedelic Cattlemens Association Ltd.

**Sunday, March 5, 1967: 'Bedrock One - a rockdance-environment happening benefit for the communication company in honor of the c.i.a.', California Hall, 625 Polk Street, San Francisco, California**

Although wrongly advertised as 'The Orkus'tra', as far as I know this was their first gig without the 'chamber' part in their name. "Not wanting to limit ourselves to playing similarly small 'chamber' venues, we modified our name to make it more ambiguously representative. Henceforth we were always known as, simply, The Orkustra," confirms Bobby BeauSoilel. "When we were playing only small venues like coffee houses this worked fine," adds Bobby in an interview with Klemen Breznikar for *It's Psychedelic Baby!* magazine in 2014. "Then we started playing outdoor concerts, college auditoriums and concert halls, so 'chamber' didn't work anymore. That's when we decided to be [only] The Orkustra." The show, which lasted from 8:00pm to 2:00am, was produced for the Communication Company (a sort of "newspaper" and printing press that printed a lot of broadsides in the Haight on behalf of The Diggers) by The Experimental Theatre Co-Op and L.A.M.F. The show was the first in a series directed by Chester Anderson. Also on the bill: Steve Miller Blues Band, Dino Valenti, Richard Brautigan & The Caped Crusaders, The San Francisco Mime Troupe, The Committee, The San Francisco League For Sexual Freedom, Duncan Pierce, Alan Dienstag & The Pack, The Diggers (canceled), Warren Hinckle III (editor of Ramparts) (MC), Mark Comfort (MC), plus surprises. Rituals by The Radha Krishna Temple. Lights by The Lysergic Power & Light Company.

**Thursday, March 30 - Friday, March 31, 1967: 'April Fool's Dance-Concert and Costume Ball', California Hall, 625 Polk Street, San Francisco, California**

Also on the bill: Hedds, Sparrow, Outcasts, Santana Bluz [*sic*]. Lights by Headlights. One show each day, from 8:00pm to 2:00am.

**Tuesday, April 4 - Sunday, April 9, 1967: The Rock Garden, 4742 Mission Boulevard, Mission District, San Francisco, California**

The band was misspelled as 'The Orkestra' on an early ad printed for these shows, but a later one was printed with the correct name of 'The Orkustra'. Also on the bill: The Only Alternatives (aka The Only Alternatives & The Other Possibilities), Steve Miller Blues Band. One show a day, started at 8:00pm. "The Rock Garden was a great club - the best light show, and an excellent sound system," Bobby Beausoleil recalls.

**Friday, April 7, 1967: New Orleans House, 1505 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, Alameda County, California**

One show, from 8:30pm to 9:30pm. Lights by Scum of the Earth.

**Sunday, April 9, 1967: 'Benefit For The Berkeley Citizen', New Orleans House, 1505 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, Alameda County, California**

One show, started at 12 noon. Also on the bill: The New Age, The Congress Of Wonders, Annie Johnston & The Cleanliness & Godliness Skiffle Band, Malvina Reynolds, Paul Arnoldi, Larry Hanks, Notes From The Underground, Eric Vaughn. Lights by Bob Holt.

**Tuesday, April 11 - Sunday, April 16, 1967: The Rock Garden, 4742 Mission Boulevard, Mission District, San Francisco, California**

The band was billed as 'Electric Chamber Orkustra' on the ad and the poster printed for these shows. Also on the bill: Buffalo Springfield. Light & Environment by Scott Bartlett and Paul Hawkin. One show a day, started at 8:00pm. "We met Steven Stills, Neil Young, and other members of Buffalo Springfield," Bobby Beausoleil recalls, "but we did not socialize with them much. They were very L.A. - we were bay area weird." "We were playing for a week at a Mafia-owned rock club out on Mission Street [*sic*] called the Rock Garden," Jaime Leopold also recalls. "We were opening for Buffalo Springfield who were recording for Atlantic [Records]. Someone convinced Ahmet Ertegun [president of Atlantic] to come and hear us play. But not at the club. After the gig we went to a small house way out there in South San Francisco, where the 1940s tract houses grew. About 3 am a long black limo pulled up and out popped the Man. We played a couple of tunes in this tiny living room. Then he excused himself and left. A man of few words, especially when he wasn't too impressed."

**Wednesday, April 19, 1967: Sproul Hall, above Upper Sproul Plaza, UC Berkeley (University of California at Berkeley) campus, Barrow Lane, Berkeley, Alameda County, California**

One show, started at 12 noon.

**Wednesday, April 19, 1967: 101 California Hall, UC Berkeley (University of California at Berkeley) campus, Sather Road, Berkeley, Alameda County, California**

An evening show which started at 8:00pm and was presented by The Friends of Mingus.

**Friday, April 28 - Sunday, April 30, 1967: 'Dance Concert', New Orleans House, 1505 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, Alameda County, California**

One show each day, which lasted from 9:30pm to 1:30pm on Friday and Saturday, and from 8:00pm to 12 midnight on Sunday. Lights by Scum of the Earth. "The other brush with a real recording opportunity happened when we played at the New Orleans House in Berkeley for a week [*sic*] and had some interest from a record company who sent an A&R guy up from LA to check us out," Jaime Leopold recalls. "All

those LA sharks were after the next new thing to come out of the San Francisco. Maybe we would be the next big deal. We came off the stand, completely sweated out and foaming at the mouth from an hour's musical gymnastics, reeking of the smells we'd brought back from our visit to the camel-dunged oasis in the Sahara desert. I immediately started babbling at this record guy who quickly whips out some Binaca, and says very sincerely from behind huge styleless glasses, 'Son, would you like some liquid sunshine?' Huh? At first I thought he was talking about some new Acid from down south. Then I looked down at the small ampoule he was handing me. He was telling me that I stunk and he could at least take care of the breath part. It derailed my rap and the guy faded out the door, back to L.A. And that was the end of our potential recording career." "We had all smoked a joint before that gig at the New Orleans House when that LA record company showed up," Jaime adds. "That's why I probably came off as insane to the guy. I was totally blasted out of my gourd. That weed turned out to be a real deal killer in the end."

**Friday, May 5 - Sunday, May 7, 1967: 'Motherload', Avalon Ballroom, 1268 Sutter Street at Van Ness Street, Polk Gulch, San Francisco, California**

Also on the bill: Big Brother & The Holding Co., Sir Douglas Quintet. Lights by The North American Ibis Alchemical Co. These shows, which started at 8:00pm each day, were promoted by the Family Dog, a production company founded a year earlier by Big Brother and The Holding Company's former manager, the great late Chet Helms. "The Avalon Ballroom gig with Big Brother was a blast," Bobby Beausoleil recalls. "Janis [Joplin] was just beginning to hit her stride with the band. It was when we got booked for this gig that we realized that the 'chamber' part of our band name had to go."

**Tuesday, May 9, 1967: 'The San Francisco Scene', CBS TV (*broadcast date*)**

The Orkustra and other unidentified SF rock bands appeared in *The San Francisco Scene*, a television essay on the SF adult rock sound produced by the great late radio and television personality, Dick Clark, and broadcasted tonight at 10:00pm on the CBS national network. Although I never have a chance to see this programme, I think, but I could be wrong, that The Orkustra were filmed by CBS when they performed at the Panhandle Park back on January 1.

**Monday, May 22 - Thursday, May 25, 1967: Both/And, 350 Divisadero Street, Haight-Ashbury, San Francisco, California**

"We once had the unique experience of playing a week at the Both/And, a prestigious San Francisco jazz club," Bobby Beausoleil recalls. "Since we weren't really a jazz group, we considered it an honor to have been invited to play there." "One our last gigs was at the Both/And club on Divisadero, the famous jazz club where I had seen Ornette and Ike and Tina Turner and the whole revue, on their postage-stamp sized stage," Jaime Leopold also recalls. "And there we were, playing our little hearts out on a Monday or Tuesday night. I came off the stage and practically stumbled into alto sax player, John Handy, who was making a big name for himself after eclipsing his old boss, Charles Mingus, at the Monterey Jazz Festival. He said, 'There something going on up there.' I couldn't tell from his inflection if he meant something

good, or something bad. 'Paranoia strikes deep, into your heart it will creep creep creep.'"

**Sunday, May 28 - Tuesday, May 30, 1967: 'Ancestral Spirits Festival - Benefit for Haight-Ashbury Karmic Bail Fund and the Church of One', California Hall, 625 Polk Street, San Francisco, California**

The band was misspelled as 'The Orkestra' on the poster. Also on the bill: Sandy Bull, Flying Circus, The Epics, The CIA, The Outfit, The Bearing Straight, The Loading Zone, The Richard Honeman Quintet, The Ancestral Spirits, The Sparrow, The New Salvation Army Band, Notes From The Underground, The Sangeet, Lightning Rod and The Circuit Breakers, Little Bo and Co. Lights by Aurora Glory Alice, The Flying Circus, and Bob Holt. One show each day, from 8:00pm to 2:00am. "More a romp than a gig," Bobby Beausoleil recalls, "the Ancestral Spirits Festival was an event that teetered on the thin line between rock concert and chaos. The promoters had so overbooked the event that the performers were falling all over one another in an effort to play their parts. What the beneficiary 'Haight-Ashbury Ball' was supposed to be I haven't the foggiest recollection."

**Friday, June 2 - Saturday, June 3, 1967: New Orleans House, 1505 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, Alameda County, California**

**Saturday, June 10, 1967: New Orleans House, 1505 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, Alameda County, California**

**Saturday, June 10 - Sunday, June 11, 1967: 'Honoring Muhammad Ali - Free Festival', unknown venue, Hunters Point, San Francisco, California**

Also on the bill: The Loading Zone, Charlatans, Steve Miller Blues Band, Phoenix, Ulysses Crockett Afro Blue Persuasion, Anonymous Artists of America, Sonny Lewis Quintet, Haight Street Jazz Band, Conga Drums, B.J.+s, San Francisco Mime Troupe, Committee, Raquels, Earth, B.A.Q., Radha Krishna Temple, P.L.T.'s, and surprise guests.

**Sunday, June 18, 1967: Constitution Park (aka Provo Park), 1901-1999 Allston Way at Grove Street, downtown Berkeley, Alameda County, California**

A free afternoon outdoor concert which lasted from 2:00pm to 6:00pm. Also on the bill: New Age, and others.

**Sunday, July 16, 1967: Constitution Park (aka Provo Park), 1901-1999 Allston Way at Grove Street, downtown Berkeley, Alameda County, California**

A free afternoon outdoor concert which lasted from 2:00pm to 6:00pm. Also on the bill: New Age, Motor, Liquid Blues Band.

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The Orkustra disbanded. "The band fell apart after Bobby became involved with the underground filmmaker and above ground nutter, Kenneth Anger," Jaime Leopold recalls. "A wonderful, flamboyant cultivator of the young and feckless, who seduced Bobby with visions of filmatic greatness and a large banana." "The other members of The Orkustra did not share my enthusiasm for the *Lucifer Rising* project, and this contributed to the disintegration of the band," Bobby Beausoleil confirms. "While this development was disappointing and a serious setback, I would not allow it to be an insurmountable obstacle. Barely missing a beat, I began to seek out other free-spirited musicians to join me in a band that would eventually come to be called The Magick Powerhouse Of Oz." So, Bobby went to form the aforementioned The Magick Powerhouse Of Oz (and later he becoming involved with the infamous Charles Manson's 'Family' cult, but that's another story), Terry Wilson went to play with The Charlatans, Jaime Leopold and David LaFlamme teamed up with Dan Hicks to form the original lineup of Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks (David also put together his own band, It's A Beautiful Day, around the same time), while Henry Rasof stayed in San Francisco working odd jobs for a while, before returned to Los Angeles where he went back to college and got a B.A. in music at UCLA. "Jaime, David, Henry, and Terry (wherever you are), in the grand scheme of thing The Orkustra may have been only a flash in the Panhandle," Bobby concluded, "but I will cherish the memories of our little adventure and value what I learned from the experience for all of my days. Thank you for having the courage to traverse the unbeaten path and for letting me be a part of bringing to the world something different and new. Playing with you was inspirational, and an honor. My hat is off to you."