

Music Review; Fest Background Music Sadly Overshadowed; A silly play gets in the way of an exquisite score in the third installment of **MicroFest 2002.; [HOME EDITION]**

RICHARD S. GINELL. [Los Angeles Times](#). Los Angeles, Calif.: [May 20, 2002](#). pg. F.4

MicroFest 2002, which by definition lies defiantly outside what passes for the musical mainstream, took a particularly bizarre turn at Pasadena's Pacific Asia Museum in its third installment Saturday night.

Within a windowed performance space on the second floor of the museum, the Shadow Theater of Anaphoria backed an hourlong shadow play of dubious value, "Their Venture Beyond the Horizons: An Odyssey Submerged in the Inner Tribes," with a shimmering, often exquisite score of alternatively tuned toccatas and meditations. Directed by composer Kraig Grady, the ensemble performed on four metal mallet percussion instruments--including two bass variants called the Mt. Meru that produced impressively deep, tolling reverberations--a battered reed organ and two stringed instruments hidden behind the stage.

There was no need to adjust one's ears for alternative tuning systems; this music had an allure and beauty that communicated immediately.

The prologue, where a silhouetted hand holding a ball gave way to projections of a comet flying through outer space, was a most striking sequence--and one's hopes immediately went up. Alas, the ensemble's sonic splendors were then lavished upon a piece of silliness burdened with antic barbed voices and so-called humor whose chief reference point was not the imaginary South Seas island of Anaphoria but good old Southern California (with mentions of McDonald's, the Santa Monica Mountains, energy bars, Charlton Heston, etc.)

The shadow play was credited to an "author" named Isafa--and according to the program notes, "Rumors have varied from Isafa being a woman of notoriety to Isafa being a collective endeavor." If you had written this play, you might want to hide behind "rumors" too.