

The

OPEN SPACE

magazine

issue 2

spring 2000

contents

- 1 Robert Morris Cage Contemplating/Contemplating Cage
- 33 Tom Baker *Conic Sections No. 1* by Evan Parker: Analysis for four readers
- 54 Jonathan D. Kramer Barney Childs
- 57 Steven D. Goodman Bad Timing, Bowles, and Between
- 59 George Quasha Axial Postings
- 63 _____ Preverb Posters (also pp. 91, 101, 149, 181, 195)
- 67 Kyle Gann Navigating the Infinite Web of Pitch Space
- 78 Robert Paredes Dangling Reflections on *The Bewitched*
- 93 Tildy Bayar Dirt and Toothpaste, or, on the Problem of Being a Self in Modern Life (notes on Allan Kaprow)
- 97 _____ Some Notes on Some Pieces by Sara Roberts
- 100 _____ Gary Hill's Video Installation *Circular Breathing*
- 103 David Crilly Wittgenstein, Music, and Language Games
- 106 Jon Radwan George Campbell and the Rhetoric of Art: Persuasion Through Music
- 119 Charles Kronengold Musical Constructions of Public and Private Space:
The "Tender Force" of Soft Soul
- 124 Leslie Kearney Sad Songs and Sudden Danger, or, Marcia's Balls
- 135 Warren Burt Georgina Born: *IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Avant-Garde*
- 144 Peter Monaghan A Conversation with George Lewis
- 151 George Quasha Blowing One's Own Bone, or Truth Shot Through Me Like A Whistle, She Said
- 153 Chris Mann And the question
- 155 Mary Lee Roberts Jim Randall's *Intimacy*
- 160 Benjamin Boretz Notes for Open Space CD 10
- 162 Elaine Barkin Reexperiencing *Language*, as a music Revisited
- 174 Warren Burt Too Many New CDs (Mini Reviews)
- 183 Lydia Hamessley *Audible Traces*: Introductions
- 191 Tildy Bayar "Not Before Seeing" Marc Applebaum's *S-Tog for Sound Sculptures*
- 193 Eric Lyon Gordon Mumma
- 197 Ross Feller Strategis Defamiliarization: The Process of Difficulty in Brian Ferneyhough's Music
- 203 Larry Polansky Ensembles of Note / Neighborhoods of Note (2 scores)
- 206 Benjamin Boretz Reflections on Cardew and Wolpe: Vignettes of Old Masters I
- 210 Charles Stein The Hermit / Counter Seed/ Seed Poems / A Note on *The Hermit*

The

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Benjamin Boretz and Mary Lee Roberts Editors

Tildy Bayar Reviews Editor

Contributing Editors Tom Baker Tildy Bayar Martin Brody William Brooks Warren Burt Jean-Charles Francois Kyle Gann Brad Garton Daniel Goode George Lewis Peter Monaghan Robert Morris Mark Nelson Susan Parenti Jann Pasler Craig Pepples George Quasha John Rahn Charles Stein Alicyn Warren

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spring 2000

From the Editors

This is Issue 2 of Open Space Magazine, appearing a little more than one year following Issue 1. It is, as readers may notice, somewhat bulkier than Issue 1 — but even so, we were unable to accommodate within a single volume all the texts which we intended to offer at this time. Our solution is to put out a supplement — Issue 3 — as soon as possible following No. 2 — by mid-Fall 2000, we expect. To those contributors whose work is thereby somewhat delayed, and to readers expecting to see it, we apologize; but we hope the quality of the composite will compensate for the delay.

Some of the contents anticipated for Issue 3:

Robert Morris On the presence of Milton Babbitt
Ann Warde Contemporary Indonesian Composition
Kyle Gann Interview with Ben Johnston
George Quasha Axial Stones
Howard S. Becker The Power of Inertia
Ben Johnston [a new text]
Bob Gilmore On Ben Johnston
Franz Kamin A Score
George Quasha and Charles Stein on Gary Hill
Linda Kernohan A Little Song of Dissent
Benjamin Boretz Of This and That
Mary Roberts Kyle Gann's *Twentieth-Century American Music*
Tildy Bayar, Elaine Barkin, Benjamin Boretz CD Reviews
Luke Howard Writing About Music
Alison Knowles A Score
Benjamin Boretz An Introduction to John Rahn's *Music Inside Out*
Philip Ratliff An Interview with Lukas Foss

--Benjamin Boretz and Mary Lee Roberts

OPEN SPACE also invites interested colleagues to work collaboratively to create and sustain an ongoing web-based publication/forum associated with The OPEN SPACE magazine. The online site is a context for publication of creative work, whether art or discourse or both, which may not fit into the conventional print format, by virtue of medium, subject, or form. We would like to provide opportunities to experiment in forms which are made available uniquely in this kind of space: person-to-person work exchanges; webcasting; text, audio, video, and graphics file exchanges; exhibitions; experimental community-building projects; etc.. For this enterprise we are seeking committed collaborators and contributors, especially people who want to help maintain such an online structure, and contribute to its formation and development. Currently the site implements audio, video, graphics and text files on this site. Online publication started March 1, 1999; New contents will be posted on a continuing basis. If you send us your email address we will inform you regularly of current postings. The web address is:

<http://www.the-open-space.org>

The OPEN SPACE WEB MAGAZINE is edited by Tildy Bayar, Benjamin Boretz, and Mary Lee Roberts. Inquiries and other communications should be emailed to

postmaster@the-open-space.org

contents as of July 1, 2000

Eine Kleine Gamelan Music

an open invitation to participate in a collaborative recording project offered by Daniel Goode and Larry Polansky

WebDrum

This Java Applet allows several performers from around the web to join together. This piece is by Phil Burk

Bits and Pieces

A sonic installation for the Web by Peter Traub

Singing Together, Hacking Together, Plundering Together

Sonic Intellectual Property in Cybertimes

Larry Polansky

Yudishrara's Quarter

Barbara Benary. Programmed by Nick Didkowsky in JSyn and JMSL

Technology, Me

Brad Garton

Language-Based Viseorapes and Sudiorapes

Richard Kostelanetz

Music Map - Charting the Unknown Territory of the Significant Form of Music

Ken Morrison

Collage

Craig Pepples

Three Poems (for *the forestfortherrees*)

Charles Stein

Connibal

Penelope Hyde

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Cage Contemplating

Contemplating Cage

Robert Morris

1.

I.

John Cage began writing manifestos and ended asking questions. If his questions often come in the form of declarative sentences, they are designed to problematize issues and inhibit glib reaction. In his essay, "Diary: How to Improve the World (You Will Only Make Matters Worse)," Cage quotes Thoreau: "We Yankees are not so far from right . . . who answer one question by answering another. Yes and No are lies. A true answer will not aim to establish anything, but rather to set all well afloat." To which Cage adds: "Mentioning opposites, he called them correlatives. Fuller calls them complements" (*M*, p.3).

To appreciate Cage therefore, one need not accept his direct assertions and opinions at face value; rather they are offered as helpful suggestions, as part of an unending dialogue, shaped by time and place. Seeing Cage's music in the same light, as musical probes, helps readjust our thinking away from assessing its meaning and qualities as "pure" sound, on one hand, and musical therapy, on the other—toward appreciating its synergy with human activity, purposeful or not. And not only Cage's music, but any music whatsoever.

Why start out with Cage's discourse? If Cage's statements are exploratory, then they remain useful even if they contradict each other. Zen koans: "koan" means "public record."

Excluding the Law of the Excluded Middle we have: $\sim\sim A _ A$. I wonder what Cage thought (or would have thought) of L. E. J. Brouwer's rejection of mathematical proofs by contradiction, or of fuzzy logic? He might have known of the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna who deconstructed doctrine by denying any statement *A* according to the following: not *A*, not not *A*, not both *A* and not *A*, not neither *A* nor not *A*.

Self referential sentence: "The negation of the Law of the Excluded Middle is not uninteresting."

Dr. Suzuki smiled and said, "That's why I love philosophy: no one wins" (*Silence*, p.40).

2.

Although older than Western composers who came to maturity immediately after the Second World War, Cage also sought to reconfigure the whole enterprise of music making from the ground up. An intense mistrust of nationalism and even tradition itself led young composers like Stockhausen and Boulez to reduce music to what they defined as its essential "primitives:" pitch, duration, loudness and timbre. One would then build back up to "music" by using serial techniques and principles read into the music of Webern and Debussy. Other European composers, like Xenakis, less interested in a project of applying logical atomism to music, conceived of a music based on gesture and shape using techniques and concepts borrowed from probability theory, statistics and combinatorial analysis. Once again the emphasis was on objectivity and technical means but with a platonic twist: since the mathematics used in constructing his music were the same as those used in modeling the real world of physical phenomena, Xenakis believed he could hardwire the beauty of nature into the structure of music.

II.

The interest among European composers to reduce music to its "parameters" dried up about the same time W. V. O. Quine published his famous paper, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism." His work, coming after Gödel's incompleteness theorem of 1931 and Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1945), put to rest any hope that knowledge of the world can be reduced to sense data and logic alone.

(There is a joke among philosophers: What is a pragmatist? —A logical positivist with a broken heart.)

Cage's use of chance differs from Xenakis's in many well-understood ways, but the musical model is somewhat similar. A piece is a series of sections, the number and durations of which are determined by chance; the character of each section is derived by choosing at random from a predetermined list of properties; the values of the properties are determined by chance procedures.

Cage Contemplating/Contemplating Cage

In the United States things were different. Milton Babbitt's development of serialism, while radical in import, extended structural principles found in the music of Arnold Schoenberg, a composer many European composers dismissed as "traditional," if not reactionary, despite Schoenberg's invention of the twelve-tone system. Cage, who studied music with Schoenberg in the 1930s, followed a similar path; starting with traditional values from Western and Indian music, he eventually developed a revolutionary approach to music composition that not only ignored the entire aesthetic canon of Western musical traditions, but rejected the institutions of tradition itself.

Cage's goal was not only to change music (and art) and our thinking about it, but to change the nature of thinking itself. In this he drew on traditional sources, those of Zen Buddhism and Taoism, as taught to him and others by D. T. Suzuki in New York in the late 1940s.

3.

Zen, like all forms of Buddhism, accepts the Four Noble Truths set forth by the Buddha: 1) Life is marked by pain and suffering; 2) The cause of pain and suffering is desire; 3) Pain and suffering can be eliminated by abandoning desire

I am known as a serial composer, a designation I would never use to describe myself. Many people assume that I would therefore be hostile toward Cage and chance composition. In the same breath I have heard such people say that the "sound" of a serial piece and a chance piece is about the same, since it is impossible to hear any structure in either.

More recently, chance and serialism have been lumped together as the *loci classici* of high modernism. Actually, I find Cage's music and ideas interesting and provocative, especially the ones that engage ancient Indian and Chinese philosophy. Does this make me a paleomodernist?

Thinking must change if people are to appreciate what our present music is good for. Classical music lovers are still hopelessly enmeshed in a 19th century European conception of music and its social meaning despite all the revolutions and changes of the entire twentieth-century.

III.

The different schools and churches of Buddhism differ on how one implements the Eightfold Path. When the Buddha died (of mushroom poisoning) he said, "Work out your own salvation." While this statement might be taken to mean

itself; 4) To eliminate desire, one follows the Eightfold Path: right beliefs, right thought, right speech, right conduct, right vocation, right effort, right meditation and right concentration.

Cage identifies the problems of desire in traditional Western music in many places in his writings, but the issues are perhaps most saliently addressed in his *Lectures on Nothing and Something*.

I learned that the intervals have meaning; they are not just sounds but they imply in their progressions a sound not actually present to the ear.

Tonality . . . But I had never any feeling for it: for instance: there are some progressions called deceptive cadences. The idea is this: progress in such a way as to imply the presence of a tone not actually present; then fool everybody by not landing on it.

What is being fooled? Not the ear, but the mind. The whole question is intellectual" (*"Lecture on Nothing," Silence*, p.116).

everyone is on his or her own, the Four Noble Truths are understood to be in the context of the Buddha's compassion for all sentient beings.

Desire is the root cause of other pathologies such as clinging and willful ignorance.

Buddhism's analysis of our existential predicament can seem harsh and unfeeling, but that is a reflection of one's resistance and fear.

Cage's insight about tonality is that it is not natural but cognitively constructed. This observation need not be used to reject tonality but to better understand it. Some features of certain musics are akin to language. One can identify phonological, syntactic, and semantic features of tonality and of other musical systems—for instance, the ragas of India or the gamelan music of Indonesia. (This of course says nothing about the use of music or its aesthetic features.) Thinking about different musics as different languages suggests that we don't immediately "understand" all musics, just because we understand one.

Cage Contemplating/Contemplating Cage

The implication is that our (tonal) cognition of Western music is based on expectation and that traditional music usually satisfies the desire for our expectations to be met. While there are

Western theories of music that assert that emotion is (only) aroused when our expectations are not met, such theories place strict limits on what kind of deviations produce acceptable emotions and that, in order for a piece to be "satisfying," all the deviations are to be resolved over the course of the piece. Pieces that do not satisfy expectation may have their place: they express pain and suffering, and serve to motivate the audience to social action or to accept a pessimistic outlook on life.

But Cage's use of Buddhist ideas serves not only to justify the emancipation of the dissonance. In the "Lecture on Something" we read:

When a composer feels a responsibility to make, rather than accept, he eliminates from the area of possibility all those events which do not suggest the at that point in time vogue of profundity. For he takes himself seriously, wishes to be taken

Ordinary tonal music theory often invokes musical expectation by the use of teleological dualisms to describe musical progression such as tension and release, dissonance and resolution, instability and repose. Music that has only the latter term of each pair is static, uninteresting and boring. Music that has only the first is chaotic and unpleasant.

Nevertheless, the content of the theory is independent of these dualisms. "V goes to I" and all the other rules of harmony and voice leading can be taken as rules of progression, no more, no less. The dualisms smuggle purpose into tonality, that there is a reason for following the rules.

The assertion of an endless alternation of tension and release in tonality suggests the unending alternation of desire and satisfaction=dissatisfaction in the Buddhist wheel of life, *Samsara*.

seriously, wishes to be considered great, and he therefore diminishes his love and increases his fear and concern about what people will think. There are many serious problems confronting such an individual. He must do it better, more impressively, etc. than anyone else. And what, precisely, does this beautiful profound object, this masterpiece, have to do with Life? It has this to do with Life: that it is separate from it. Now we see it and now we don't. When we see it we feel better, and when we are away from it, we don't feel so good. Life feels shabby and chaotic, disordered, ugly in contrast" (*Silence*, p.130).

While this statement doesn't imply that one should give up writing music or do away with music or art, it does indicate that one's thinking and feeling about music will produce pain and suffering as long as one desires to produce "great" music, and/or considers certain musics as better than others, and/or thinks of art as an improvement on ordinary life. For Cage, this meant the function of music and art had to be radically altered. Music would have to have features that would

Cage's observations about the unsatisfactory condition of those who wish to become great (or consider themselves to be great) should not be taken as motivated by any feeling of envy on Cage's part. We have all encountered famous and successful people for whom the term genius is warranted but who are nevertheless unsatisfied with and resentful of their lot in life. Of course, there is always some higher end or recognition to achieve, but why the corrosive cynicism?

Spending time with composers who cannot but compulsively judge and rate others, set standards and decide on certification is unpleasant and pointless. To note that some people are not as good as others at writing music according to some specified criterion is trivial. When I'm in the presence of music I don't like, I try to find something to hear that will hold my attention and engage my interest.

Cage Contemplating/Contemplating Cage

inhibit the arousal of desire on the part of the audience and that these new forms of music, in their musical and social structures, or lack thereof, would serve as models for how life might be better lived. The structural solutions to musical problems were the same as those of life itself.

4.

Cage's earliest music was based on mathematical formulae which soon he rejected as "unmusical," followed by music based on 25-tone rows of pitch-classes dispersed over the range of two octaves, obviously influenced by Schoenberg's twelve-tone system. Through his interest in percussion music, Cage became a champion of the "use of noise" as set forth in his essay of 1937: "The Future of Music: Credo." "We want to capture and control these sounds, to use them not as sound effects but as musical instruments" (*Silence*, p. 3). Cage learned of non-Western music through his association with Henry Cowell and later Gita Sarabhai who, in exchange for lessons in Western contemporary music and counterpoint, taught Cage the essentials of Indian music. Indian music helped Cage focus his compositional interests on timbre and time, as well as supply a different model of the function of music and the relation of the composer to his/her audience.

Rather than compose a music that is designed to inhibit desire, I think we need to work within ourselves until we can listen to what is there to hear, not what (we imagine) the music attempts to make us hear.

IV.

I too was introduced to Indian music early in my musical training. Perhaps that is why I enjoyed Cage's early music so much. The use of modes, percussion sounds (prepared piano) and rhythmic structures made immediate sense to me but did not suggest an exotic, non-Western atmosphere. As a freshman at the Eastman School of Music, I was fortunate to know of this earlier music since the Sibley library housed Cage's "collected works." Most other people who had heard of Cage then had no or little knowledge of Cage's pre-chance compositions.

By "structure" was meant the division of a whole into parts; by "method," the note-to-note procedure. Both structure and method (and also "material"—the sounds and silences of a composition) were, it seemed to me then, the proper concern of the mind (as opposed to the heart) (one's ideas of order as opposed to one's spontaneous actions); whereas . . . method and material, together with form (the morphology of a continuity) were equally the proper concern of the heart" ("Composition as Process," *Silence*, p.18).

Cage saw that his definition of structure was quite independent of material and continuity, and also free to observe that of the four attributes of sound, the articulation of the first three (pitch, loudness, timbre) was dependent on the last (duration). Thus, as in the tala of Indian music, structure was articulated by a series of timespans. Cage went one step further and arranged the timespans in a hierarchy so that the temporal proportion of the parts of a timespan at a given level, would be the same as the proportion of timespans themselves. Yet nothing about the structure was determined by the materials which were to occur within it, so that it could be as well expressed by the absence of these materials as by their presence. Noises, sounds, words, could all be structured as music.

Cage's idea of thinking of music as spans of time was particularly important for my compositional development. It suggested that the concept of harmonic rhythm could be generalized to x-rhythm, where x is anything that is heard. But rather than considering this idea as only compositional—poietic as opposed to neutral or esthetic—the spans of time would have to be articulated by musical events so that they could be felt by the performer and heard by the listener. Finding new ways to satisfy the interplay between conception and realization of musical time has continued to inspire my music to this day.

Such a view of structure is top-down. It is hierarchical since 1) duration is considered phenomenologically prior to pitch, loudness, and timbre, and 2) the length of the whole work and its component parts has to be decided before the material is placed within it. Cage thought of the twelve-tone system as a method to guarantee local continuity. He, like almost everyone else, did not sense that Schoenberg's music was based on a tone hierarchy, twelve-tone aggregates and row regions. Thus he could not appreciate the invention of the twelve-tone system as a direct analogy to Schoenberg's concept of tonal music. Schoenberg's music was traditional rather because it was rhetorically similar to Brahms.

Cage Contemplating/Contemplating Cage

In the mid-1940s, drawing on writings by Ananda Coomaraswamy on Indian art, Cage put together a principled compositional aesthetic. He began to dismiss personal expression as a reason for writing music—not that music should be inexpressive, but that it be impersonal. The composer's job was no longer to bring attention to himself, but to express transpersonal states of feeling, such as the Indian *rasa*-s or affects, which Cage referred to as the "nine permanent emotions." His *String Quartet* of 1950 has four movements each identified by the four Hindu stages of being associated with the seasons: Spring (creation), Summer (preservation), Fall (decay), and Winter (quiescence). Art was to imitate nature in its manner of operation.

The renunciation of personal voice that marked Indian aesthetics led Cage to appreciate Buddhist psychology. He realized that it was one's own personal preferences (likes and dislikes) that inhibited one from connecting art and life, since preferences partition the mind. Furthermore, desires and attachments are not easy to root out; they are habitually ingrained in the mind and body, even at the subconscious level. Thus, Cage

The nine *rasas* are: *sringara* (romance), *hasya* (mirth), *karuna* (compassion), *raudra* (anger), *vira* (heroism), *bhayanaka* (fear), *vibhatsa* (disgust), *abhuta* (wonder), *shanta* (peace). The *rasas* include "unpleasant" feelings and therefore encompass a wider spectrum of states than Western "doctrines of affection."

Trimurti: *Brahma* (creation), *Vishnu* (preservation and balance), *Shiva* (destruction). In some Shaivite sects of Hinduism, Shiva represents all the functions of the Trimurti but potentially (in quiescence) while his consort, *Parvati*, the *Goddess*, embodies the active principle, *Shakti*.

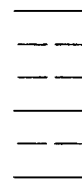
While a graduate student, somewhat influenced by what I knew then about Cage, I wrote some experimental piano pieces involving chance operations and played them for one of my composition teachers. He said that they sounded a lot like my other music, and added, "You know, you can't extinguish your personality." I

needed a methodology to make sure his choices would be not based on personal want or need. In Eastern religions, the primary methodology is yoga or various forms of meditation that are used to quiet the mind and "make it susceptible to divine influences." (In Zen, the practice is meditation and chanting, with or without other means such as studying sutras or confronting koans.)

Rather than take up meditation, around 1950 Cage chose to submit his will to asking questions of the *I-Ching*, one of the Chinese classic books. Cage's I-Ching practice was traditional; one throws coins or sticks and interprets the result to in effect produce a number from 1 to 64. One then consults the corresponding chapter in the book for guidance. The throwing of coins (traditionally, yarrow stalks) is performed according to a ritual that, among other things, makes sure the throw is at random. Cage used the I-Ching as a kind of random number generator. He would assign values of various musical dimensions to the sixty-four numbers and perform the coin or stick toss to determine which of the values to choose. In this way he would determine the characteristics, dimensions, and details of a musical composition. For instance, Cage might ask how long a piece of music

think he took my experiments as an attempt to repress a dissatisfaction with my musical self. For him, this was completely wrongheaded since a composer was obliged to find his/her individual "voice." Only then would one's music rise above the generic and be worth listening to.

Why the I-Ching for generating numbers? Any number in the range of 0 to n where n is a power of two can be represented by a series of n coin flips or broken/ unbroken lines. Let us take the series of coin tosses HTTHTH or the correspond-ing series of lines, top to bottom:



Let the first flip or line indicate the presence or absence of $1 = n^0$; the second the presence or absence of $2 = n^1$; the third the presence or absence of $4 = n^2$;

the n th the presence or absence of 2^n ; then sum the numbers. So the example codes the number $41 = 1 + 0 + 0 + 8 + 0 + 32$. The lines above represent a hexagram; each chapter of the I-Ching is headed by a different hexagram, 64 in all. Such a scheme

Cage Contemplating/Contemplating Cage

would be?, how many parts it would have?, what kinds of sounds each part would have?, and so forth, until he would be asking about each event of the composition—questions such as what clef, accidental, loudness, and so forth should this note on a staff (previously determined by the I-Ching) have? (Cage provides a list of these kind of questions in his "Composition as Process," *Silence*, p.49-50.)

In addition to consulting the I-Ching, Cage used other methods for chance composition.

Writing notes over imperfections on empty manuscript paper is perhaps the best known.

Since the resulting composition would be unpredictable before its creation, the tastes of its composer could have little to do with its character. Of course, the basic decisions that led to assigning values to the sixty-four numbers would still reflect the composer's desires and preferences, but these choices would only be of structural significance and not determine the details of continuity, material, or form. So, like Cage's method of using embedded durations to structure his earlier music, his chance composition methodology was still hierarchic in principle.

codes numbers as a series of binary digits; for example 41 is 101001 (rereading right to left). Moreover, each hexagram of n lines denotes a unique subset of a set of 2^n elements. So given the set {ABCDEF}, our hexagram indicates the subset {ADF}. Thus we have a method of matching numbers to subsets. This is useful in atonal music theory for enumerating all the possible chords ($n = 12$) and classes of chords.

But even with chance procedures the composition process was still top-down. One had to know what one was doing, i.e., writing a piece, before hand. Many more traditional composers work bottom up; they start with ideas that may or may not end up in pieces.

Hierarchies can always be manufactured in networks of relations by focussing one's attention. One can concentrate on the loudest, or lowest, or strangest, or vaguest sounds in a piece generated. In graph theory, a system of nodes connected by lines can be traversed by spanning trees, paths on a graph that omit lines that complete cyclic paths or are loops. Choose one of the nodes on the spanning tree as the first and you have a hierarchy. Each node now has an unambiguous distance function to the first node: how many nodes must be traversed on the spanning tree to get to the first node; the higher the distance function, the further down the hierarchy.

Cage's first compositions using chance procedures went a long way to suppress his tastes and preferences, but soon Cage came to realize that unpredictability as a compositional method did not preclude one from predicting an event while listening to an existing aleatoric composition simply by memorizing the composition. He says:

We've now played the *Winter Music* quite a number of times. I haven't kept count. When we first played it, the silences seemed very long and the sounds seemed really separated in space, not obstructing one another. In Stockholm, however, . . . I noticed that it had become melodic" (*A Year from Monday*, p.135).

Who am I to repress myself?

Some music theorists who subscribe to an expectation model of music cognition say they have a reason for revolutionary style change in history of music. Eventually all the deviations from a set of musical norms will become well-known and cease to surprise the listener. These deviations become the norms and even greater deviations are necessary for arousal. This continues until the system completely breaks down, ushering in a new musical period with new norms.

What's the difference between this model and addiction?

Cage Contemplating/Contemplating Cage

Cage's observation makes two points. First, that the processes of composing, performing and listening are certainly not equivalent. A traditional musical score composed by chance is certainly neither performed by chance nor must it be listened to by chance, whatever that would mean. Second, that if one wants to completely renounce preference by making prediction impossible, one would have to find ways of thwarting memory itself or reprogramming its functions. Cage initially chose the first of these options.

Indeterminacy was Cage's final technical solution to the problem of memory and desire. Compositions were designed so they could never be performed the same way twice. Cage implemented this idea in many ways by making scores that allowed the performers to interpret the

The eradication of memory can only go so far. Does one want to inhibit musical memory to the extent that each event is new and unrelated to previous events or so that previous events are not remembered at all? In other words, do we erase only relations between events, or the events themselves? Or perhaps we seek to erase what psychologists call psychological set—that is, what we expect to happen based on past experience. But what if we simply did not expect things to happen just because they have happened the same way before? Since hypotheses are incapable of being proven true, only falsified, this might be a very practical thing to do (especially when confronting new and unfamiliar situations).

With indeterminacy Cage reversed his compositional thinking from top-down to bottom-up. Even the duration of a performance was not or could not be specified, being contingent on the performance situation.

notation in different ways from one performance to another. This might be as simple as asking the performer to place notes in time as they appeared to be placed in space on the score, or asking a performers to play his/her part's pages or systems in any order, independently of any other performer in the piece. More complex methods involved providing materials to be used to determine a performance of a work. For instance in *Cartridge Music* Cage provides many transparent sheets of velum containing circles, lines, rulers, and the like to be overlaid and interpreted by rules that are deliberately worded to promote ambiguity. In fact, Cage's fecundity in thinking up new notations and performance situations was unsurpassed by composers whose reputations were based on such innovations. Prime examples include *The Concert for Piano and Orchestra* (1958) which includes 100 different notations for the soloist alone, and the three volumes of the *Song Books* (1970) including an perpetual variety of notation, indications for singing styles and vocal production, and instructions for vocal, theatrical, and electronic performance.

It's curious that Cage never asked players to improvise in his music. If "improvise" means satisfying a compositional grammar in real time, as in playing the Blues or Indian music, then improvisation would certainly not count as indeterminacy on Cage's view. If it means playing outside of any particular or ordinary musical conventions or grammars, then it might satisfy Cage since Cage himself wrote: "when you get right down to it, a composer is just someone who tells other people what to do . . . I'd like our activities to be more social and anarchistically so" (*A Year from Monday*, p.ix). Then why not free improvisation? Was Cage unable to give up the idea of composer and composition despite his ideals? Or did he think that "disciplined action" precluded improvisation? Certainly, his experiences with most professional ensembles (up to this time) did not suggest that they could be trusted to improvise with either skill or integrity.

Cage Contemplating/Contemplating Cage

Cage had made a transition from making music to accepting any sounds as music. Breaking all traditional associations between composer, performer, and listener had opened music to any possible configuration of participants. The resulting emptiness, while deep and transfiguring, was of no help in answering the question: now that everything is possible what does one do? Cage was acutely aware of this problem. He quotes a passage from the I-Ching in *Lecture on Something* that illuminates the question and suggests an answer:

When desire is silenced and will comes to rest, the world as idea becomes manifest. In this aspect, the world is beautiful and removed from the struggle from existence. This is the world of Art. However, contemplation alone will not put the will to rest absolutely. It will awaken again and then all the beauty of form will appear to have been a brief moment of exaltation. Hence this is still not the true way of redemption. The fire whose light illuminates the mountain and makes it pleasing does not shine far. In the same way beautiful form suffices to brighten and throw light upon matters of lesser moment. But important questions cannot be decided in this

In any case, indeterminacy is one way to "play outside," where sounds are sounds and free of semiotic function. Playing, listening, and composing outside requires only openness of mind. Music that has semantic and syntactic functions demands specialized knowledge, and that knowledge separates people into insiders and outsiders.

"How could there a Buddhist music?" was the answer I received from a famous Sinhalese anthropologist..

In the texts of early Buddhism, music and dance are more or less prohibited as inappropriate behavior for the clergy. Later, in Mayahana and Tantric Buddhism, music can be used for meditative and transformational purposes.

I recently bought a CD at a department store: *Buddhist Chants: Harmony of the Soul*. The liner notes entreat, "Let the gentle serenity of the ancient Buddhist Chants show you the way to deeper relaxation, more reflective meditation, and profound self-examination." The first chant, "The Universe," starts out with swept white-noise

way. They require greater earnestness
(*Silence*, p.130-1).

This problem is identified in Zen as an attachment to emptiness. It happens when a meditator begins to delight in the bliss of meditation at the expense of making any further progress toward enlightenment. But Cage could hardly find bliss in the reaction of his performers and audience to his indeterminate music.

[W]hen I was setting out to write the orchestral parts to my Concert for Piano and Orchestra [of 1958], . . . I visited each player, found out what he could do with his instrument, discovered with him other possibilities, and then subjected all of these findings to chance operations. After a general rehearsal, during which the musicians heard the result of their several actions, some of them—not all—introduced into the actual performance sounds of a nature not found in my notations, characterized for the most part by their intentions which had become foolish and unprofessional
(*Silence*, p.135-6).

and cheesy synthesized strings playing slow pentatonic melodies over a drone. A heavily reverberated recording of Zen chanting makes an appearance in the middle of the six-minute piece.

You won't get a wild, heroic ride to heaven on pretty little sounds." —George Ives

You don't have to be John Cage to have extremely unfortunate encounters with professionals. The orchestra is perhaps the worst case; as an institution it became reified in the first decade of the (now last) century. All attempts to reconfigure or expand it since have been pyrrhic. Orchestral music by (late) Stravinsky, Feldman, Stockhausen, Babbitt, and others, despite their new and vital conceptions, has been ignored, especially in America. Only music that continues to project a romantic or impressionistic sensibility is taken seriously and yet even those pieces have not entered into the standard repertory. As a result most progressive composers have turned away from the orchestra to chamber, solo, or electronic music. It's interesting to consider that most non-Western musical cultures do not have music for large

Cage Contemplating/Contemplating Cage

concerted groups of musicians—Indonesian music being the exception.

5.

But Cage had had social problems from the beginning. Few American composers in the Depression saw the need for the emancipation of dissonance, not to mention noise. Schoenberg told Cage he didn't have a feeling for harmony. Hence the need for manifestos. Furthermore, writing about music only made the division between one's musical ideals and the harsh realities of musical life more public. Cage found out that this split between the useless and the pragmatic, theory and practice, fantasy and reality, life and art was no more highly charged than in the musical establishment. For both the professional and amateur honor the idea that art should be useful and real (representative) while life should be lived with taste and élan, but art and life should never become mixed up.

The criticism Cage received in the 1960s insinuated he was not truly serious (read: "professional"): either he hadn't paid his dues, or he had no ear or compositional craft, or he was a charlatan, or at best an entertainer, or "only" a philosopher.

V.

As a member of an academic community, I often feel a pressure to explain, even justify, my music both to colleagues and audiences. (Cage did not have this problem.) Most of the time my comments backfire and the music is stigmatized as requiring explanation. Since I don't—can't—design my pieces to be immediately understandable, even to me (who does this deliberately, anyway?), I have found it best not to say anything at all, or to talk about something else, except under certain circumstances: workshops and composition lessons. Ironically, were I writing music in a well-established musical tradition, I could remain silent and not be misunderstood.

Only recently, have I followed Cage's cue and found a way to write about music and make it at the same time.

Mr. Cage's career as a composer lacks a certain kind of hard work . . . It is that peculiar labor of art itself, the incredible agony of the real artist in his struggles with lethargy and with misplaced zeal, with despair and with the

temptations of recent successes, to get better (*Perspectives of New Music*, 1963).

Audience member: "Anyone could compose your music."

Cage: "But no one does."

(During a question period after a reading of "Lecture on Nothing" at the University of Rochester, 1963.)

Kliban cartoon: Man standing on a step ladder, changing a light bulb. Dog, sitting nearby, looking on. Dog's thought balloon: "I could do that."

6.

Perhaps the moment of supreme insight about the interpenetration of opposites came to Cage when he discovered that absolute silence is impossible. At Harvard University, Cage entered an anechoic chamber and was surprised to hear two sounds, one high and one low. He asked the technician in charge why he had heard anything at all if the room was so silent. "The high one is your nervous system in operation, and the low one is your blood in circulation" (*A Year From Monday*, p.134). So silence was none other than sound, but unintended or unattended sound. It is what we don't hear when we are listening to one sound (the signal) at the expense of others (the background) in the aural field. It is "noise" when we find it difficult or impossible to pick out the signal.

VI.

Did Cage have *kensho* (an enlightenment experience)? "Three lectures I remember in particular. While [D. T. Suzuki] was giving them I couldn't for the life of me figure out what he was saying. It was a week or two later while I was walking in the woods looking for mushrooms, that it all dawned on me" (*Silence*, p.262).

Did Cage consider himself to be a Buddhist? "I called Mother to tell her the good news.' I said, 'I'm to be a Fellow in the Center for Advanced Studies at Wesleyan University.' . . . Mother said . . . , 'Do they know you're a Zen Buddhist?'" (*A Year from Monday*, p.69).

Cage Contemplating/Contemplating Cage

Cage's famous silent piece, 4'33" (1952), is a demonstration of this point. Whether Cage intended sounds to be in this piece, but due to the roll of the die, no sounds came up, or he intentionally chose to write a piece without sounds is not the issue. In either case, the piece suggests that any sounds, including sounds of the environment can be considered as music, and even as conventional music, in a concert hall with performers and audience situated in their standard and traditional roles. It points out that music is how you listen and not what you listen to.

Although Cage never directly makes the connection, his understanding of silence and use of the word "nothing" directly parallels the meaning of the Buddhist term *shunyata* or emptiness. But *shunyata* does not only mean nothing, it also implies presence. (Cage's choice of the titles of his most formative talks, "*Lecture on Nothing*" and "*Lecture on Something*" suggests he was quite aware of the meaning of *shunyata*.) Buddhism teaches that everything in the world is empty of self-nature and yet all things are interconnected. When we take a strand from a spider's web it all but disappears, but within the web it allows all the other strands to connect. Similarly, when we isolate anything from its context, it will eventually become stagnant and die. But if

How you hear is what you hear. Can we be sure musical experience is intersubjective? Even within the same musical language and culture?

I've followed a different path from Cage. I try to compose music designed so there are many different ways to hear it. I often think of my music as a garden with many intertwining paths, none of which must be taken or enjoyed in any particular order or way. Like Cage's music, this puts the responsibility on the listener to discover his/her own path.

I think that "Everything is empty" may be more adequately rendered in this way: "Everything is just as it is." A pine tree is a pine tree, a bamboo is a bamboo, a dog is a dog, a cat is a cat, you are you, I am I, she is she. Everything is different from everything else. And yet, so long as one and everything retain their uniqueness and particularity, they are free from conflict among themselves (Abe Masao, "Emptiness is Suchness" in *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School*, Frederic Frank, ed. (Crossroads: New York, 1982)).

it is allowed to remain in its (natural)
environment it will live but also change. It
therefore follows that no individual thing has a
permanent self, including "ourselves," since the
self either changes or ceases to exist. It is the
attempt to cling to one's present self, to
insulate oneself from change, or to desire to
become some other self that causes the pain
and suffering mentioned in the First Noble
Truth.

7.

Cage's immersion in Zen and Taoist thought
obliged him to no longer draw lines between
art and life. One of the consequences was the
eradication of a difference between writing
about music and making it. Cage's essays from
"Lecture on Nothing" onward, were structured
exactly the same way he structured his music.

"Lecture on Nothing" makes this point by
filling in the lecture's time structure of silent
durations with sentences such as: "At this
particular moment we are passing through the
fourth part of a unit which is the second unit
of the second large part of this talk" (*Silence*,
p.112). Of course, texts need not be reflexive,
for anything that could go in a piece could go
in a lecture—vocal sounds, silences,
prerecorded tapes, performances of music.

VII.

Almost everyone notices that most important
composers in the twentieth century have
written extensively about music. Besides
compositional theory and musical analysis, the
range of writing encompasses research
(Bartók), pedagogy (Hindemith), aesthetics
(Stravinsky), outreach (Copland), and criticism
(Sessions).

Does this literature help people better
appreciate new music? Yes and no. The
composer has better control over the
reception of his/her music, and the interested
musical citizen has direct access to the
composer's way of thinking.
But composers are not always the best judge
of what a listener needs to know for optimal
communication to take place (if

In writings composed after Cage embraced indeterminacy, the number of words to occupy a structural unit would be specified by chance, or in the case of the indeterminacy stories (scattered throughout *Silence* and *A Year from Monday* as well as grouped into the articles, "Indeterminacy" and "How to Pass, Kick, Fall, and Run" in *Silence* and *Empty Words*), each passage is to be read in the same number of seconds. (Short texts are heard as isolated words and long ones are word salads.) Different strands of text began to be placed in polyphony (sometimes read by more than one reader) or alternated without respect for semantic, or later, syntactic and phonemic, boundaries. Although Cage published his texts in a number of fonts and typefaces selected by chance operations, he considered all of his writings to be best read out loud, especially the latter ones in which sentences are granulated and mixed into streams of phonemes further differentiated by their visual position and appearance.

that is what is desired). Furthermore, much of this writing has backfired since the listener may only be intimidated or alienated by the stance and style of a composer's prose. In the relatively rare case when a composer's writings have inspired and enlightened the reader, a wedge may be nevertheless driven between the composer's musical output and his/her writing. For "music" is intrinsically different from "writing about music" and from "musicing about writing."

But music and writing might considerably overlap and Cage's practice of writing words and music using the same formal, compositional procedures is one way to breathe music into writing about music.

Of course, one could simply say that Cage was writing poetry. (To be sure, Cage identified his

mesostics as

"prose . . . written as poetry." His first mesostic was written to celebrate the birthday of Edwin Denby and is published in *M*. Mesostics are based a person's name written so that "each letter of name [capitalized is placed] on its own line A given letter capitalized does not occur between it and the preceding capitalized letter" (*M*, p.ix). Yet the balance between "sound and sense," so carefully guarded by most poets, never inhibits Cage's texts; they are music and words at once.

As I see it poetry is not prose simply because poetry is in one way or another formalized. It is not poetry by reason of its content or ambiguity, but by reason of its allowing musical elements (time, sound) to be introduced into the world of words. Thus, traditionally, information no matter how stuffy (e. g. the shastas and sutras of India) was transmitted as poetry" (*Silence*, p.x).

I have nothing to say and I am saying it and that is poetry as I need it. ("Lecture on Nothing," *Silence*, p.109).

adJust
yOur
HAbits.
aNOther
musiC
hAs
sinGular
charactERistics.

Not an attempt to understand something that is being said, for, if something were being said, the sounds would be given the shapes of words. Just an attention to the activity of sounds ("Experimental Music," *Silence*, p.10).

Edwin Morgan has written a poem called "Opening the Cage: 14 variations on 14 words." Each line of the poem is a permutation of the words "I have nothing to say and I am saying it and that is poetry," See *British Poetry since 1945*. Edward Lucie-Smith, ed. (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1970, p. 319).

8.

0'00' (4'33" No. 2) of 1962 is perhaps Cage's most succinct work. The score consists of the words: "In a situation provided with maximum amplification (no feedback), perform a disciplined action." Like in 4'33", almost anything can happen in performance, but the difference is that the character of the action must be disciplined. Cage might have been reacting to the unprofessional and hostile performances that had plagued the premieres of his *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* (1958) and *Atlas Eclipticalis* (1962), for, after the first performance of 0'00", he added further preconditions to the score. But Cage is not merely asking a musician to perform professionally. Anyone can perform the piece as long as he/she presents a result that represents some wholehearted practice. In any case, this work along with the Variations series asks performers to do anything that conforms to very general but concise performance directions. The generality insures anonymity and indeterminacy, the precision focuses the moment of performance.

To avoid copyright problems I have encoded Morgan's poem as pitch-classes according to the scheme: I = C; have = C#; nothing = D; to = Eb; say = E; and = F; am = F#; saying = G; it = Ab; that = A; is = Bb; poetry = B.

Morgan's poem is coded as follows:

C C# Eb E B F A Bb D F C F# G Ab
C F# F C C# B Eb E F Bb A D G Ab
C F# D F C C# B Eb E F A Bb G Ab
C A F# G B C# D F Ab Bb C F Eb E
F C E A C F# Eb C# B F G Ab Bb D
C F# B F D F G Ab Bb Eb E A C C#
Eb C# D Bb B F C F# G A F C E Ab
B Bb G C C# D F C F# Eb E A F Ab
G D C F# B F C C# Eb E A F Ab Bb
Ab Bb F C F# F C C# B G E A Eb D
Ab Bb G B Eb D F C E C C# F F# A
B Bb G C C# Ab F C F# D F Eb E A
F A D Bb B C F# G F C C# Eb E Ab
G B Bb D F Eb A C E C F# F C# Ab

(the fifth line uncoded reads: And I say that I am to have poetry and saying it is nothing)

VIII.

Clearly, such pieces are didactic and as such represent Cage's vision for a new function for public performance, to serve as a model for an anarchic human society. Cage's writings also take a similar turn. The eight part "Diary: How to Improve the World (You Will Only Make Matters Worse)," consists of a mosaic of recommendations and observations on topical political and social issues.

We open our eyes and ears seeing life
each day excellent as it is. This
realization no longer needs art though
without art it would have been difficult
(yogas, zazen, etc.) to come by. Having
this realization, we gather energies, ours
and the ones of nature, in order to
make this intolerable world endurable"
(*A Year from Monday*, p.146).

As ever, the "Diary" is full of wit and whimsy
("Let's call it the collective consciousness
(We've got the collective unconscious)" (*A Year from Monday*, p.15)), but the emphasis is
no longer on any one person's work and
achievements, including Cage's. "We had the
chance to do it individually. Now we must do
it together: globally. War will not be group
conflict: it'll be murder, pure and simple,
individually conceived" (*A Year from Monday*,
p.9). But individuality is not to be subverted

What if it doesn't want to improve?

While there is a difference between attention
on something and attention on nothing
(positive versus absolute *samadhi*), attention is
difficult. The mind wanders as thoughts lure it
away from the phenomenal present.
Composing, performing, and listening to
music wholeheartedly is an excellent way to
develop and strengthen attention.

to serve some totalistic vision. Rather society is to be changed so the individual has maximum autonomy. "Going in different directions, we get a sense of space" (*A Year from Monday*, p.12). Yet every individual has a responsibility to the whole. "Boddhisattva Doctrine: Enter Nirvana only when all beings, sentient, non-sentient, are ready to do likewise" (*A Year from Monday*, p.54). More than ever, Cage quotes and alludes to many of his like-minded friends: Marshall MacLuhan, Buckminster Fuller, Jasper Johns, Marshall Duchamp, Norman O. Brown, Edwin Schlossberg and many more. "He got the notion his ideas belonged to him. He refused to disclose them, fearing someone would profit from them. He made contracts no one cared to sign" (*A Year from Monday*, p.67).

If there is any one theme that unifies the Diary it is connectivity. MacLuhan's global village looms large and his prediction of issues facing its inhabitants is uncanny as we presently watch and participate in the expansion and globalization of the Internet. Cage is particularly concerned that technology serve his anarchic vision; we cannot afford to get out of touch. "Anarchy (no laws or conventions) in a place that works" (*A Year from Monday*, p.161). Hence one finds complaints about the phone company scattered throughout the "Diary."

Cage's generosity shines through his work. In his writings and interviews he fastidiously identifies the sources of his ideas, citing books, quoting people, and vividly recalling personal encounters. Other articles identify and commend younger composers and artists and describe their work. Cage has written entire articles about Erik Satie, Morton Feldman, Christian Wolff, Edgard Varese, Robert Raushenberg, Jasper Johns, Nam June Paik, Miró, Marcel Duchamp and Virgil Thompson.

Fame has advantages. Anything you do gets used. Society places no obstacles. Also you become of some help to those who aren't famous yet (M, p.113).

Why do you call aloneness real and the "other" unreal? We know aloneness, resistance, the dual movement of action—defensive or aggressive. Being caught in thought brings greater isolation—we and they, my party and yours. Now can the mind go beyond isolation, beyond resistance? Can it be completely alone without being isolated? It is only then that I discover something new, something which is real (J.Krishnamurti, *Tradition and Revolution*, (Pondicherry, India: All India Press, 1972, p.72)).

The Diary's most grievous complaints are lodged against the United States for its involvement in Vietnam. "Napalm and phosphorus burn until the victim is reduced to a bubbling mass" (*A Year from Monday*, p.149). Here Cage often speaks in a Marxist mode:

What American industry decided about Puerto Rico was that Puerto Rico would be one of its consumers. Puerto Rico shouldn't import anything from any other country. The function of the governments (American and Puerto Rican) is to see to it that what industry wants is what happens Shoes and clothes made in Puerto Rico are exported to the United States. What isn't sold there goes up'n'price and then goes back to Puerto Rico (X, pp.156, 158).

Like many other well-known intellectuals and artists of the late 1960s, Cage quotes and even praises Mao Tse-tung. "Mao: Destruction means criticism and repudiation; it means revolution. It involves reasoning things out, which is construction. Put destruction first, and in the process you have construction" (M, p.207). Such sentiments are certainly unfortunate in hindsight given what we know today about Mao's political purges,

Learning is an act of purification, and not the acquiring of knowledge. Learning is purgation. I cannot learn if my mind is full (J. Krishnamurti, *Tradition and Revolution*, (Pondicherry, India: All India Press, 1972, p.53)).

The Great Step Forward, and the Cultural Revolution. Less egregious but equally embarrassing are hairbrained ideas such as "Effortless speed (seven hundred and fifty miles an hour): people blown through tunnels downhill from Boston to New York. Effortless slowing down: tunnel goes uphill. (*A Year from Monday*, p.147)" "'Your thinking's full of holes.' That's the way I make it" (*M*, p.103).

9.

IX.

The sentiments of the Diary had their effect on the music Cage composed during the same period (1965-82). Those who had not followed Cage's thinking or simply misunderstood Cage's position as "anything goes," were both shocked and delighted to hear that Cage had withdrawn his composition *Cheap Imitation* from the 1972 Holland Festival because the performers had not adequately rehearsed their parts for the performance. Most of these people did not know that Cage's piece was written in a more or less traditional notation consisting of transformations of passages from Erik Satie's music.

I am convinced [orchestral musicians] play other music as badly as they

There a difference between hearing things as transformations versus hearing the process of transformation. ("It's been moved," versus "it moves.") In the first sense, we can write $A \rightarrow B$, or $B = T(A)$, but the arrow or the T is a black box. Behaviorism. The second sense is analogue; it is the story of how A got to be B . When processes are very slow, they become non-transitive; from A to B and from B to C nothing seems to have changed, yet A is different from (what we remember of) C .

As disappointing as such "performances" are, one also comes across musicians

played mine. However, in *Cheap Imitation* there are no climaxes, no harmonies, no counterpoints in which to hide one's lack of devotion. This lack of devotion is not to be blamed on individuals . . . it is to be blamed on the present organization of society; it is the *raison d'être* for revolution (*M*, p.xv).

With *Cheap Imitation* Cage added the transformation of musical "found objects" via chance procedures to his compositional techniques. In earlier Cage works, such as HPSCHD, different musics were played simultaneously, fragmented, and or juxtaposed, but never changed under some transformational rule. Perhaps Cage was influenced by composers such as Stockhausen whose electronic compositions subjected prerecorded music, such as national anthems, to electronic mutations, but the emphasis upon transformation in his *Diary* must have been the prime motivation. Now life had influenced art; Cage's ideas about society—both local (consisting of his circle of visionary artists and thinkers) and global (a new world order)—had changed his music.

whose integrity, dedication and hard work are cause for celebration. To name only a few: David Tudor, Cathy Berberian, Gunther Schuller, Jan DeGaetani, Robert Miller, Arthur Weisberg, Bruno Maderna, Hans Rosebaud, Harvey Sollberger, Aki Takahashi, Alan Feinberg . . .

In 1975, I composed an hour-long piece for the Yale Band called *In Different Voices* to celebrate the United States Bicentennial. I divided the band into five ensembles of about fifteen players each. Some players were mobile, moving from one ensemble to another. Rather than quote or borrow, I composed music in over 50 musical styles that was played in all possibilities (once each) from all five ensembles playing in concert, to each ensemble playing different musics independently. There was only one rule of composition: make each strand of music so it would be listenable alone. The performances were given in the Yale Commons; refreshments were served.

10.

X.

The 1970s brought new inspiration to Cage.
Cage was delighted to find Henry

. . . I sat in Boulder with my back to
the audience. It was a large

Cage Contemplating/Contemplating Cage

David Thoreau's ideas on anarchy and social disobedience commensurate with his own. It must have gratifying to find solace in a major American writer's work, for Thoreau did not have to be justified or explained to Americans wary of influences from distant times and places. In homage, Cage used many passages from Thoreau's Diaries in his texts *Mureau* and *Empty Words*. While the former was designed as a lecture, *Empty Words* is a four part poem, each part granulating Thoreau's texts into smaller units for selection by chance. The units for Part I are as long as phrases, Part II.'s units are as long as words, Part III. syllables and letters, and finally just letters in Part IV. Thoreau's drawings are strewn throughout *Empty Words*, in its open spaces—of which there are many. Since the entire poem takes perhaps ten hours to read, *Empty Words* is among the most challenging of Cage's works. In fact, students at the Naropa Institute in Colorado found Part IV. intolerable and revolted during Cage's recitation. Naropa's mission is to unite Eastern and Western thought and is sponsored by the Kagyu and Nyingma Tibetan Buddhist traditions. So the outrage was quite disturbing to Cage. As a result of this experience, Cage developed a way of chanting the text to "make it more musical" (Richard Kostelanetz, interview with Cage in *John Cage (Ex)plain(ed)* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996)).

audience, about fifteen hundred people. There had been a program printed, saying that this was simply a mix of letters and silences from the journal of Thoreau. Well, after about twenty minutes, an uproar began in the audience, and it was so intense, and violent, that the thought entered my mind that the whole activity was not only useless, but that it was destructive. I was destroying something for them, and they were destroying something for me. The social situation was really miserable; however it divided the audience, and at one point, a group of people came up to protect me. Things were thrown, people came up on stage to perform, and it was generally an upsetting situation. Afterward, instead of just leaving, there was a discussion between those who remained and myself. Later, I was with friends, Allen Ginsburg, Anne Waldman, Diane De Prima, George Quasha, the other poets, and they said I had succeeded in bringing the monsters with the Buddhas" ("An Interview with John Cage," *Asterisk*, vol I, 1, p.27).

After about 1975, Cage did not introduce any fundamentally new compositional ideas into his work, but continued to work on an amazing range of projects. All of his previous technical and aesthetic innovations—I-Ching, indeterminacy, notational innovations, transformation—continued to serve his art/life. Cage's non-hierarchical, anti-professional, and anarchistic proclivities had allowed him to move even beyond writing music and texts.

Spreading myself thin. Schoenberg stood in front of the class. He asked those who intended to become professional musicians to raise their hands. I didn't put my hand up (X, p.157).

There is a point beyond which training cannot take you. Zeami, the superlative fourteenth-century Noh drama playwright and director who was also a Zen priest, spoke of this moment as "surprise."

This is the surprise of discovering oneself needed no self, one with the work, moving in disciplined ease and grace. . . . At this point, one can be free, with the work and from the work (Gary Synder, "On the Path, Off the Trail," *The Practice of the Wild* (North Point Press: San Francisco, 1990, p.148)).

I was once thinking of using the following Cage story as an epigraph for my book on compositional design:

During a counterpoint class at U.C.L.A., Schoenberg sent everyone to the black board. We were to solve a particular problem he had given and to turn around when finished so he could check on the correctness of the solution. I did as directed. He said,

"That's good. Now find another solution." I did. He said, "Another."

Again I found one. Again he said, "Another." And so on. Finally I said,

"There are no more solutions." He said, "What is the principle underlying all the solutions?" (*Silence*, p.93).

From the 1930s Cage was sporadically active in the visual arts, but he produced at least one major work: "Not wanting to Say Anything About Marcel" (stacked Plexiglass). He continued his productions of extravaganzas such as HPSCHD (1968) with the *Europeras* of the late 1980s. As curator, he organized the art show *Notations*, a collection of compositional sketches and short texts by more than a 100 composers, later published in book form. An amateur but expert mycologist, Cage became a founding officer of the New York Mycological Society in 1962. Cage continued his work for tape and radio with his *Roaratorio* (Cage reading from his text *Writings through Finnegans Wake* superimposed on a dense mix of field recordings of places and musics from places mentioned in *Finnegans Wake*, 1978-9), *Ein Alphabet* (1982), and *MXCIEX* (1984) (or *HCE-mix*, based on recorded folk-songs)) produced for radio broadcast by the WDR in the Germany.

Cage's last works were written in part to fulfill many commissions that had come his way to celebrate his upcoming 80th birthday. These works are mainly concert pieces for various combinations of (usually specified) instruments (except for *One*¹¹ for film). Many of them are of a serene and intimate character, not incommensurate with the ninth of the permanent emotions, *shanta*—peace.

Years ago, at a twentieth-century music festival, a young composer was asked why he composed music. He said his goal was to express the deepest human emotions through his music. I asked him if were to discover that some other medium besides music could he express feeling more effectively, would he drop music and devote himself to mastering that medium? Without a moment's hesitation he answered "Yes!"

I've often thought that these late pieces were written in homage to Morton Feldman who died in 1987. Their musical means and materials, while derived via chance procedures, resemble those in works like Feldman's *Durations* and *The Swallows of Salanagan*.

People ask what the avant-garde is and whether it is finished. It isn't. There will always be one. The avant-garde is flexibility of mind and it follows like day the night from not falling prey to government and education. Without avant-garde nothing would get invented (X, p.168).

That doesn't sound like a question.

If avant-garde means creativity, the results of which are inconceivable in principle, then avant-garde activity might happen within any context, traditional or revolutionary. (One must be careful here not to institutionalize revolution—or tradition, for that matter.)

Conic Sections No. 1

by Evan Parker

Analysis for four readers

by Tom Baker

Sources

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(start out reading slowly and deliberately, with a gradual accelerando to line 6)

*In 1989, Evan Parker recorded five improvisations for solo soprano saxophone, which were released in 1993

as Conic Sections Numbers 1-5. These solo improvisations are created by employing certain techniques and
*Parker suggests that *Conic Sections* has "no form in the sense of having a bigger architectural

are just a few in what is an extensive catalogue of improvisations that Parker has explored. This analysis will
notion that the playing then provides the details for," but that, "there do tend to be shapes." *Conic Section*

explore some of the characteristics of Conic Section No. 1, including sound, technique, and form. These three

No. 1 has a definite shape, and its form is a far-removed variation on arch-form. Parker explains the two types of shapes:

elements combine into a theory of hearing this piece, and this analysis is a model of that theory. *Jekkehard
"...one type ends on maximum complexity -- which is a sort of wedge form; the second type comes back...very often comes

(Tempo I)

...polyphony...

...pattern...

Jost, in his book Free Jazz, explores the validity of analysis of improvised music. "How relevant is an analysis
back...very often there are elements of da capo, back to the top." Conic Section No. 1 is an example of of the second type.

...impression of polyphony...

...polyphony...

...pattern counterpoint...

...pattern...

...impression...

of recorded improvisations made on a certain date and under certain circumstances? This will depend on the
If one looks to the clock time of the work, it is 17 minutes and 20 seconds in duration.

...counterpoint...

...pattern counterpoint...

extent to which those improvisations can be taken, beyond the immediate musical facts, as indicative of the

There is one huge structural element in the work, which is immediately audible as a shift in timbre.

...impression of polyphony...

...quality of the pattern...

...dynamic quality of the pattern...

...counterpoint...

...dynamic quality...

specific musicians' creative principles. In determining that, [certain] conditions must be met: First, formative

This structural point happens at exactly 8 minutes and 40 seconds. It is more than a coincidence that the most obvious

...quality of the pattern...

...dynamic quality of the pattern...

...polyphony...

principles are in fact present, i. e. the progress of an improvisation is not just left to pure chance, but is -- at

structural pillar occurs half-way through the piece. Its location suggests the improvisation has built up to a certain

...dynamic quality...

...dynamic quality...

...interdependence... ...dynamic quality...

least in part -- the result of the musical experience of the player...and the conception based upon it." The complexity, and then takes the same amount of time to 'wind down' to the starting point.
pattern...

...of the

...interdependence of the individual voices...

...creates a

content of a particular improvised piece is determined by many factors, one of which is the above mentioned
To further validate hearing this shift as structural, the improvisation makes two more slightly less apparent shifts. One
...interdependence... ...voices creates a fourth...

fourth voice...

...dynamic quality.....interdependence of the individual voices...

form. Parker mentions context as one of these factors. "Once you start to have an idea about what your sound
of these shifts, at 4 minutes and 20 seconds, slows down the repeating pattern, thereby causing the two added voices to drop
...interdependence... ...creates

...interdependence of the individual voices...

...dynamic quality...

is, then that becomes your reference, your context." The context of a musical work is the interdependence of
out, leaving only the fixed voice. The other shift, at 12 minutes and 50 seconds, is the same kind of shift: a slowing down a fourth
voice...
...creates a fourth voice...

(ritard).....

...creates a fourth voice...

the physical sound and the 'sound' Parker is referring to; the sound created by tradition and experience. It is
of the pattern, resulting in the same effect.

...fourth voice...

(accel).....(tempo I)

precisely this interdependence that creates a particular and personal theory of hearing. Parker is clear as to the
These first of these shifts occurs at the midpoint between the

...only one voice...

...only one voice at a time...

...only one voice...

importance of the second level of sound: "What's important to me is that my work is seen in a particular
beginning and the timbre shift, the 2nd at the midpoint (give or take 10 seconds) between the timbre shift and the
...only one...

...only one voice... ...the voices are crucially intertwined...
context, coming out of a particular tradition...people like John Coltrane, Eric Dolphy, Cecil Taylor." It is in this
end. It seems clear that there is a larger plan at work here, *and that the surface details do organize*
...only one voice at a time can move...

...the voices are crucially intertwined... ...only one voice...
tradition that Evan Parker has created a physical sound for his solo improvisations. It is a sound both linked
themselves around that plan. *Parker notes that he usually knows where he is going, where he has been, but*
...intertwined... ...crucially intertwined...

...move together... ...the voices are so crucially intertwined... ...they seem...
to that tradition, yet distinct and in many ways separate from that tradition. *The actual sounds of Conic
not how he will get from here to there. *This large formal plan creates an outline for Conic Section No. 1,*

...move together...

...so crucially intertwined... ...they seem to move together...

Sections No. 1, indeed the sounds of all the Conic Sections, are produced by a combination of several physical techniques. First, the keys are being fingered by both hands in polyrhythmic patterns. This particular section *No. 1, indeed the sounds of all the Conic Sections, are produced by a combination of physical techniques.*

...to move together...

**The actual sounds of Conic Sections*

...move together...

...interdependence... ...moving/non-movingness...

techniques. First, the keys are being fingered by both hands in polyrhythmic patterns. This particular section *No. 1, indeed the sounds of all the Conic Sections, are produced by a combination of physical techniques.*

...crucially intertwined...

...moving/non-movingness...

...or perhaps creates...

...moving/non-movingness implies...

sets up a pattern of two against three in the hands. The polyrhythmic pattern starts out slowly, and as it

**In 1989, Evan Parker recorded five improvisations for solo soprano saxophone, which were released in 1993*

...moving/non-movingness implies...

...the moving/non-movingness creates another voice...

increases in speed the two rhythms become one distinct voice. As the piece draws to a close, the pattern begins

as Conic Sections Numbers 1-5.

These solo improvisations are created by employing certain techniques and

...or perhaps creates another voice...

...creates another

...quality of these patterns... ...quality of these patterns create for the listener...

to slow down, thereby deconstructing itself. The next section will show how this process is part of the form of

are just a few in what is an extensive catalogue of improvisations that Parker has explored.

This analysis will

voice...

...create for the listener an apprehension.....an apprehension

the work itself. *Along with the polyrhythmic pattern of the hands, Parker utilizes long passages of circular

explore some of the characteristics of Conic Section No. 1, including sound, technique, and form.

...integritas...

...the quality of these patterns...

of the underlying wholeness...

...the integritas...

...the underlying whole-

breathing. With few breaks in this seventeen minute piece, the technique of circular breathing makes for

*These three elements combine into a theory of hearing this piece, and this analysis is a model of that theory. *Jekkehard*

...an apprehension...

...the integritas...

ness of the aesthetic image...

...the underlying wholeness...

...the integritas...

a very fluid and apparently seamless music. "The circular breathing and the continuous sound is a very

Jost, in his book Free Jazz, explores the validity of analysis of improvised music.

"How relevant is an analysis

...the integritas...

...quality of these patterns...

useful way of getting the solo engine up to speed for me." *Getting the engine up to speed involves the

of recorded improvisations made on a certain date and under certain circumstances? This will depend on the

...the underlying wholeness of the aesthetic image...

...quality of these patterns...

combination of the polyrhythms and the circular breathing, along with the key ingredient: speed, and creates

extent to which those improvisations can be taken,

beyond the immediate musical facts, as indicative of the

...the integritas...

...the quality of these pat-

(CUP HAND OVER MOUTH)

terns create for the listener...

a music that seems to move forward in time at a very quick pace, but at the same time seems not to move at

specific musicians' creative principles. In determining that, [certain] conditions must be met:

First, formative

...for the listener...

...the integritas...

...the apprehension...

(GRADUALLY REMOVE HAND)

...of an underlying wholeness...

...underlying wholeness...

all. Parker explains the effect: "There's an analogy with the spokes on a revolving wheel. Everything's in

principles are in fact present, i. e. the progress of an improvisation is not just left to pure chance,

but is -- at

...the integritas...

(REMOVE HAND COMPLETELY)

...the underlying wholeness...

...of the aesthetic image...

...image which transcends...

motion, the rim of the wheel is supported by the spokes, but when the whole thing is turning you don't see
least in part -- the result of the musical experience of the player...and the conception based upon it."

...the integritas...

...underlying wholeness...

the spokes anymore. If the thing didn't have the speed of rotation, it would make sense to count the spokes

The content of a particular improvised piece is determined by many factors, one of which is the above mentioned

...aesthetic image which transcends...

...quality of these patterns...

and think about them one at a time. But the whole point is to get the thing revolving and the spokes are only
form. Parker mentions context as one of these factors.

"Once you start to have an idea about what your sound

...aesthetic image which transcends...

...creates...

...an apprehension of the underlying wholeness...

...of the aesthetic image...

there to enable the rim of the wheel to turn...[the] pieces fit together in that way in order to generate the speed

is, then that becomes your reference, your context."

*The context of a musical work is the interdependence of
...the integritas...*

...image which transcends spatial or temporal limitations...

of movement which is the music." This moving/non-movingness, generated by the speed of the pattern,
the physical sound and the 'sound' Parker is referring to; the sound created by tradition and experience.

...spatial or temporal limitations... ...integritas...

...transcends spatial or temporal limitations... ...things... ...things...
creates the impression of a polyphony of voices. *When the pattern gains enough speed and the two
It is precisely this interdependence that creates a particular and personal theory of hearing. Parker is clear as to the
...reality...

...things are in constant flux... ...reality... ...are in constant flux...
polyrhythmic patterns combine to make one voice, two other voices become audible. Both above and below
importance of the second level of sound: "What's important to me is that my work is seen in a particular
...things, or reality, ...

...things, or reality, are in constant flux... **...dynamic quality...**
the first voice (fixed voice), other voices become apparent. Above the fixed voice is a 'soprano' voice, created
context, coming out of a particular tradition...people like John Coltrane, Eric Dolphy, Cecil Taylor." *It is in this*
...constant flux...

...constant... **...constant flux...**
by overtones, which fades in and out of prominence, usually consisting of three to four repeated pitches in a
tradition that Evan Parker has created a physical sound for his solo improvisations. *It is a sound both linked*
...dynamic quality... **...things, or reality,...**

...constant flux... **...hearing the pattern...**
very high register. Below the fixed voice, appears another voice, the 'bass,' created by tones below the fixed
to that tradition, yet distinct and in many ways separate from that tradition. **The actual sounds of Conic*
...constant flux...

...hearing the pattern as dynamic...

voice, which also fades in and out of prominence in the same fashion as the soprano. These two voices never
Sections No. 1, indeed the sounds of all the Conic Sections, are produced by a combination of several physical techniques.

...hearing the pattern as dynamic is the result...

...pattern as dynamic...

...result of many factors...

occur simultaneously; but through their interdependence on the fixed voice, they create an impression of a

First, the keys are being fingered by both hands in polyrhythmic patterns.

This particular section

...hearing the pattern...

...including the very repetition itself...

...repetition itself...

polyphony of three voices. *Parker suggests that Conic Sections has "no form in the sense of having a bigger

sets up a pattern of two against three in the hands.

The polyrhythmic pattern starts out slowly, and as it

...result of many factors...

...A isn't A the second time around...

architectural notion that the playing then provides the details for," but that, "there do tend to be shapes."

increases in speed the two rhythms become one distinct voice.

...very repetition itself...

As the piece draws to a close, the pattern begins

...A isn't A...

...second time...

(ritard).....

...the effect is not just psychological...

Conic Section No. 1 has a definite shape, and its form is a far-removed variation on arch-form. Parker
to slow down, thereby deconstructing itself. The next section will show how this process is part of the form of

...the very repetition itself...

(ritard).....(accel).....

explains the two types of shapes: "...it ends on maximum complexity -- which is a sort of wedge form; or it
the work itself.

...(tempo I)

...A isn't A the second time around...

comes back...very often there are elements of da capo, back to the top." Conic Section No. 1 is a clear example

**Along with the polyrhythmic pattern of the hands, Parker utilizes long passages of circular breathing.*

With

...not just psychological...

...A isn't A...

...somehow more real...

...not just psychological...

of the second type. If one looks to the clock time of the work, it is 17 minutes and 20 seconds in duration.

very few breaks in this seventeen minute piece, the technique of circular breathing makes for a very fluid and seemingly

...more real...

...more real...

...somehow more real...

...voices...

There is one huge structural element in the work, which is immediately audible as a shift in timbre. This
seamless music.

"The circular breathing and the continuous sound is a very useful way of

...the voices possess a connectedness...

structural point happens at exactly 8 minutes and 40 seconds. It is more than a coincidence that the most

getting the solo engine up to speed for me."
...connectedness..

**Getting the engine up to speed involves the combination of the*
...voices...

...overlapping in timbre...

...overlapping...

obvious structural pillar is half-way through the piece. Its location suggests that the improvisation has built
polyrhythms and the circular breathing, along with the key ingredient: speed, and creates a music that seems
...timbre and register...

...pattern counterpoint...

...overlapping...

up to a certain complexity, and then takes the same amount of time to 'wind down' to the starting point. To
to move forward in time at a very quick pace, but at the same time seems not to move at all. Parker explains
...pattern counterpoint...

...the entire pattern...

further validate hearing this shift as structural, the improvisation makes two more slightly less apparent
the effect: "There's an analogy with the spokes on a revolving wheel. Everything's in motion, the rim of the

...movement...

...movement...

...the entire pattern seems to be moving forward...

shifts. One of these shifts, at 4 minutes and 20 seconds, slows down the repeating pattern, thereby causing the *wheel is supported by the spokes, but when the whole thing is turning you don't see the spokes anymore.*
forward...

...forward then backward...

two added voices to drop out, leaving only the fixed voice. The other shift, at 12 minutes and 50 seconds, is
If the thing didn't have the speed of rotation, it would make sense to count the spokes and think about them
...deconstructs...

(ritard to the end)

...retrograde...

the same kind of shift: a slowing down of the pattern, resulting in the same effect. The first of these shifts
one at a time. But the whole point is to get the thing revolving and the spokes are only

occurs at the midpoint between the beginning and the timbre shift, the 2nd at the midpoint (give or take 10
there to enable the rim of the wheel to turn... *...[the] pieces fit together in that way in order to*

seconds) between the timbre shift and the end. It seems clear that there is a larger plan at work here, and that
generate *the speed of movement which is the music."*
...deconstruct...

the surface details do organize themselves around that plan. Parker notes that he usually knows where he is
This moving/non-movingness *generated by the*

...pattern...

going, where he has been, but not how he will get from here to there. This large formal plan creates an out-
speed of the pattern, *creates* *the impression*

...integritas...

line for Conic Section No. 1, which the content of the work is free to find and improvise its way through.
of a polyphony of voices.

BARNEY CHILDS (1926-2000)

JONATHAN D. KRAMER

Barney Childs was a quintessential American artist and intellectual. Both as a composer and as a writer on music, he always held true to his rugged, pioneering individualism. He relished his position as an outsider, looking in and goading establishment types to be an intellectually responsible and honest as he was. For the past several years, we heard little from Barney, as the gradual debilitation of his final illness silenced him, first as a composer and then as a writer. It was a great loss. Now he is gone forever, and that is an even greater loss. People like Barney do not come along very often. I am continually thankful that we had him as long as we did, and that he shared his cantankerous and provocative ideas as freely as he did. He kept those of us who listened to him honest, or at least he tried to.

He was strongest in an adversarial role. Woe to the lecturer or conference presenter speaking in Barney's presence with less than ironclad logic, or who spoke prescriptively about what kind of music one should write or value, or who glibly assumed that American music represents an extension of European cultural values! When he constructively criticized other's articles—pre-publication, of course, because he was too much the gentleman to go on the offensive in print—they had the advantage of a careful reading by a brilliant mind.

Barney's status as an outsider was reflected in his academic career. He began his undergraduate work at the decidedly counter-cultural Deep Springs College, in a high desert valley of eastern California. Deep Springs was so isolated that it was impossible to bring in any radio or television stations. There were only 26 students, who not only pursued academics but also assumed substantial responsibility for the management of the college and for running the associated farm and ranch. Barney next attended the University of Nevada and subsequently studied English literature for several years as a Rhodes scholar at Oxford. He returned to California to earn a Ph.D. in music and English at Stanford. He then taught English for nearly a decade at the University of Arizona, before returning to Deep Springs as dean and also as the *entire* English and music faculties. Barney later taught at the Wisconsin College-Conservatory in Milwaukee, and finally landed at the University of Redlands, where he was first associated with the experimental Johnston College and later became Professor of Composition and Music Literature.

For the book *Contemporary Composers* (edited by Brian Morton and Pamela Collins), Barney wrote (in part): "By the circumstances of having lived much of my life in non-metropolitan parts of the American West, by not studying composition formally until my early twenties, and, when I did study, by working with New World composers, I have had no interest in the international music scene and its directions and stances, and the attendant polemics seemingly required. I'm not trying to prove anything."

Barney's knowledge was prodigious. He was extremely well read in poetry and literary theory. He knew a tremendous amount of music, of all styles, including jazz. Yet his opinions were unpredictable. Because of his sense of egalitarianism, he was never impressed by a composer's professional credentials. He always went straight to the music, and I for one could never tell what he would like and what he would hate. He did tend to distrust composers accepted by the musical establishment, perhaps holding them to a higher standard than others, though he was willing to support widely respected composers in whom he believed. Thus he frequently defended the music of Elliott Carter and Aaron Copland, both of whom he had studied with in the mid-50s.

Barney wrote a tremendous amount of music, in a vast variety of styles (he was skeptical of the concept of musical style). His compositions were widely played for some time but are now heard less often. This is a shame, because some of them are quite wonderful. He traversed many compositional methods, including a healthy amount of indeterminacy, which gave him the unjustified reputation as not being very musical. In fact, he had an excellent ear, and the music in which he used it—such as the concert band work *The Golden Shore* can be very beautiful. I hope that his music will be studied and performed, because within its vast variety there are some real gems that deserve to be kept alive.

Barney Childs

He also wrote prose about music. Some of his articles—particularly those on time and rhythm—are widely read and respected, but others are not well known. The latter include pieces written as lectures and keynote addresses, and also essays published in obscure journals. His papers, while often not constructed linearly and thus difficult to read, are full of defiant statements and provocative ideas. I hope someone will edit his collected writings, so that his challenging wisdom will not be lost in the vapors of time.

Barney's egalitarianism is evident in his prose. Just open to any page, and you will find quotations from major authors next to citations of unknowns, extracts from important publications (usually literary) next to excerpts from private correspondence, or discussions of compositions known to everyone next to those seemingly known to only Barney and their composers. Yet Barney treated them all with equal seriousness and respect.

He was particularly helpful to other composers, offering commissions, performances, recordings (through Advance Records), and recommendations to performers. He usually favored the unknown, the promising, and the unjustly neglected, and in many cases he made a noticeable difference to someone's career. For example, he gave me my first commission ever, for a piece that turned out to be my most performed work, requested in 1973 for the princely and much appreciated sum of \$125! My piece, called *Renascence*, was for clarinet and tape delay system. Barney performed it several times with his close friend, faculty colleague, and long-time collaborator, the superb clarinetist Phil Rehfeldt. Barney's championing of the underdog extended even to composers long gone. He once asked me to do research in the archives of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music for information on Frederick Ayres, an obscure American (of course!) composer of the early twentieth century, of whose importance Barney was convinced and for whose music he worked tirelessly.

He was not only supportive but also extremely loyal to his friends, students, and organizations. He attended almost every national meeting of the Society for Composers, Inc. (originally known as the American Society of University Composers), missing only one (prior to his decline in health) because of an ear infection that prevented him from flying. During these conferences, Barney was at just about every concert, a record no one else came close to matching. The organization treasured Barney, and aware of his unique brilliance and despite the controversy surrounding his opinions, repeatedly invited him to deliver keynote speeches, to lecture, or to participate on panels.

He was equally loyal to the journal *Perspectives of New Music*, on whose editorial board he served for several years. It was typical of Barney that he liked to disparage *Perspectives* because of what he saw as its orthodoxy (in private he used to refer to the journal as "Defectives of New Music"), but he was nonetheless more than willing to work hard reading, evaluating, and criticizing article submissions, in an effort to help the journal become broader and better.

Barney's greatest strength was in continually challenging people to examine and re-examine their beliefs. This quality was evident in everything he did, in particular in his teaching. Consider, for example, this list of questions that he had a composition class study carefully and discuss deeply:

What is a "masterpiece"?

Does "the test of time"—i.e., permanence—determine esthetic value? Is old work better than new work?

Are certain sorts of musical structures of greater validity or merit than others? (How do you feel about writing fugues?) Or certain kinds of instruments and combinations (string quartet vs. saxophone quartet? violin vs. baritone horn?)? Or certain approaches to music (kinds of musical analysis? Kinds of composition techniques?)?

What counts, the finished musical work or how it got that way? Is what's important in a score itself a realization of its process, or is it an end-product independent of its

creation (a painting by Norman Rockwell vs. a painting by Jackson Pollock)?

Does the merit of a piece of music depend on its ability to "stand up" under analysis, to reveal all manner of orderings and hierarchies? What do you think of pieces composed by chance means? Of improvised pieces? Of "totally organized" pieces?

Do you agree with Henry James when he says that a painter is responsible for every inch of his canvas? Does the composer have any responsibility? If so, how and to whom?

Does the flow of history determine esthetic importance?
Is the highest form of esthetic response a feeling of awe, of profundity, of "wow"?

Are certain musical "styles" better than others? Are some kinds of music by nature better than others?

Are a "great" jazz performance and a "great" classical work equivalent in "value"?

Are there bad sounds as such? What makes them so?

What about prizes and awards—the Pulitzer Prize, say?

What about labels? That is, a critic might call a piece he hears expressionistic or neo-classical or nationalistic; are these of value?

Is better music harder to play? That is, is performer virtuosity a necessity of good music?

Assuming the composer has, to his knowledge, built certain relationships and orderings into his composition, should you be able to hear them in a performance? Does knowledge of these make the piece better?

If you call something "great," does this make it so? If something is presented or dealt with as a work of art, is it one?

Should the composer be able to explain his composition? Should he have to?

What parts or qualities of music, if any, are universal, beyond cultural limits?

This list may be taken as Barney's manifesto, in the form of queries. These are the things he thought about, and that he felt every composer should be concerned with. I fervently hope that we will continue to ask ourselves such questions, even though we no longer have Barney Childs to goad us into doing so.

Bad Timing, Bowles, and Between

Steven D. Goodman

In memory of Paul Bowles, born December, 30, 1910 in Queens, New York, died of a heart attack November 18, 1999 in Tangier, Morocco.

Bad Timing was the name of the film [Nicolas Roeg's *Bad Timing: A Sensual Obsession*, 1980], which, only when I saw it for the third time, threw "Paul Bowles" into readable relief across the bed sheets. The name, that is, on the book bearing the title *The Sheltering Sky* that lay open on the bed in the hotel room in Morocco. Morocco is where the protagonist, an obsessive research psychoanalyst played by Art Garfunkel, decided to take his new love interest, a decidedly impulsive woman played by Theresa Russell.

Intrigued, I sought out this Bowles, and I awoke, as have many before me, to the exquisite craft of what he wrought under that Moroccan sky. His short stories seemed to compress to an incandescent point an especially brilliant unpleasantness. I found myself abandoned, as if in the midst of an important surgical procedure. Left feeling that I was witness to an emergency room surgeon, deftly cutting through to the heart and its innermost workings. But, wait, he didn't actually cut at all. He merely *indicated*, an unsettling observer revealing the sinister sheen of his scalpel, as if he *might* cut through the surface, and if he *should*, well, it would all be over in an instant. (This operation would be over soon, and the only evidence that it had taken place at all would be a certain lingering sensation, a startled remembrance, as if something had ended badly.) And then, as if I was hallucinating the whole thing, calm was restored, the imaginal breach in the surface smoothed over again. As if nothing had occurred at all. And yet.

Years later, I happened across Liz Smith's "gossip" column for 14 April, 1988. The headline read: "Bertolucci Reads Cult Novel in Quest for 'Emperor' Encore". She informs us:

Now that his movie "The Last Emperor" has won nine Oscars, what will director Bernardo Bertolucci do for an encore? Well, the day after the Oscars, the Italian contacted the Gotham Book Mart for a copy of the Paul Bowles cult novel *The Sheltering Sky*. The book was rushed Air Express to L.A. for a meeting at Paramount that took place yesterday. This is one of the famous North African stories, full of Arab cruelty, torture and death in the relentless desert.

No wonder the movie itself was greeted with hostile incredulity, more or less. No wonder Mr. Bowles had the good sense to leave the shores of America, and continue, elsewhere, "without stopping". No wonder Terri Gross, of National Public Radio's "Fresh Air", almost stopped breathing as she "interviewed" Bowles.

Gross: So, um, what do you write about, then, mostly?

Bowles: Death.

Gross: Um, right, death. (Pause). Um, what do you mean?

Bowles: We are here. And then we are no longer here.

Astonishment and unease seemed, silently, to ensue. And rightly so.

For Bowles, often they come as desert waifs, harbingers of destiny and chance, workings of the evil eye. (Or, perhaps, the unseen plan of the Great One.) They are Bowles' own talismans of the heart, the work animated by the forces of place. As if Bowles worked to show that place, and to locate it within a larger surround, an impending sandstorm. How to name this adventure, where everything familiar, upon reflection, is already an uncanny presence, the imaginal returning, on its own, to the Source?

He himself tells us in his autobiographical *Without Stopping*:

"Mug", I said it again, and the word sounded so strange that I continued to say it, again and again, until I found myself losing touch with its meaning. This astonished me; it also gave me a vague feeling of unease. How could "mug" not mean mug?

Between "mug" and mug, that breach of coherence, smoothed over, "again and again", each time different, yet the same in its being different, this "between" is (again, yet) different now, for it is uttered, made visible, audible, and this move is "me" moving into shock, breaking through and showing forth - it is the fleeting (terror) of recognition: I "am" that between I am aware of. This again, and again is Bowles' gift, uncompromisingly moving "me" into that new place: between "me" and me.

All else is displacement, delay, and weariness. Weariness waiting for suspense, the suppression of delay, responses coming between the routine. And for this, the possibility, without stopping, of the shock, the glance back, by the one looking into the mirror, directly into the face of the one looking, that is the relentless kindness of Bowles.

AXIAL POSTINGS

Through the following pages of this magazine at irregular intervals there are a dozen or so separate **AXIAL POEMS** in the form of single lines¹, displayed on full pages with typographic particularity. While not chosen according to what surrounds them or with any specific order in mind, but according to an "unnamable" principle, they nevertheless serve somehow as "posters of their locations" — indeterminately situation specific. They have open resonance with their environment. Their form is intended to "free" them into local specificity while retaining *self-variance*. Such *open resonance* is a principle of their "construction," individually and as a body of work. Their incursion here as "Preverb Posters" is one of their various reading situations. My statement about them here is not intended to explain them or instruct in how to read them — which would be counter to their poetic intent as **AXIAL** (small-capped to distinguish it from a range of other usage) — but to present a portion of the thinking that supports a practice and its underlying principle.

Each page works in its own way on an **AXIAL PRINCIPLE** — a principle discussed elsewhere here regarding its non-linguistic expression in the **AXIAL STONES** — that is, **the principle by which freedom of being arises as self-aware language turning freely upon its occasion**. As a principle, the **AXIAL** is not a technique or style or device, but it may acquire certain technical or stylistic tendencies relative to individual practice. Where an **AXIAL** act is true to its own principle, it will eventually subvert these tendencies, so that at times it may appear unfaithful to its own modality. The **AXIAL** functions as a **declared space of practice** — here I am referring to language practice — in which language may discover itself as alive and willful and free of accumulated habits. The space is self-interruptive, self-(re)organizing, self-(re)orienting. It shuns its own success as a danger to principled survival, yet it is in love with its own production, which generates further instance of its possibility. For that reason every **AXIAL** statement stands alone. That is, even when it stands in a field of resonance and collaborates with statements all around (as in a group like the one here or in its original composition within *The Preverbs of Tell*), it retains its aloneness as a freedom of being. It suffers every connection as if it were "original sin" — principle of a first wrong turn — in the process of self-immolating. Its cleansing of pattern ends in a free embrace, enacted within appropriate reading.

What, then, is appropriate reading? Something discovered on the spot. A leap into the fire and out at once, a flight in Between. Every flight invents a sequence ordering the data of the topos, a periplus, a mapping of actual bodily trajectory, the concrete presencing that reverses our thrownness in an instant of time. But we are not necessarily stuck with any one of these orderings — therefore they are free to be truly meaningful, belonging as they do to their moment, where real meaning resides. Chosen meaning exists here by force of self-action. If I map the actual territory I travel, my map is the most accurate possible plan of my occasion, where I fall true. My condition thereby is **AXIAL**, and the language I speak is Preverbal. We could talk here of Preverberation, as an **AXIAL** lexicographic rendering of intensive resonance at or near zero point, accorded by freed speaking. Such resonance is projective of its occasion, it throws its possible connectedness before

¹ These **AXIAL LINES** are taken from *The Preverbs of Tell: News Torqued from Undertime*, an ongoing work currently comprising some 4,000 lines (Book One in Four Series complete, Book Two in progress), The "structure" of the Preverbs as a sequence of lines is open and never definable beyond certain basic formal agreements: e.g., each line is complete in itself; it is not a product of energetic process as evolving sequence, but begins as close as possible to "zero momentum," so that the energetics is individuating and site/situation specific; and each line comes to an end before runover in the basic six -inch word-processing line. Thus, despite evident sequence which sometimes seems locally resonant, the absence of reliable or binding sequential connectedness leaves every line radically open in resonant possibilities. The title, in one aspect, expresses its connection with Blake's "Proverbs of Hell" (from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*) — the template of proverb (single line wise sayings), an always surprising, heretical and antithetical view and general unpredictability.

it / around it, it fills out its field and is radial. That is why anyone who *hears* it may feel "chosen" by it, as if something is "meant" to be, synchronistic, aligned in the expression. *Resonance at the event horizon creates radical context.* Everything surrounds itself with meaning.

So a Preverb occupies the space of wisdom-mouthing, twisting the tongue of truth to include its field of variants, even those not yet considered, yet inevitable. AXIAL wisdom includes its contraries as true friends, baptizes its devils in their own blood. It drives out sanctimonious closure such as the priestly voice on Sunday that encloses divine words in pre-human comforting tonality. Such closure cannot reach into the heart of present being. We need a crack to crawl out through. A Liberty Bell to sing its cracked peace. The AXIAL self itself cracks, hears itself by tracking what it lacks, knowing itself as never more than a sound away. A given AXIAL line can lead us out, and pushes a surface toward its *outer*.

An AXIAL statement may seize attention below the threshold of syntax, in the moment before a reading knows it is in a sentence, and carry it over the abyss of unintelligibility by sheer synaptics. When the mind lands, so to speak, it may flood with multiple syntactics as a condition of realizing that *real* meaning is never without (perhaps unexperienced) choice. An AXIAL moment tends to be self-instructive in the valences of elective likeness. And thinking about it or speaking about it itself tends to slip into AXIALITY, which can feel a little like dreaming awake. Meaning showing up at once as absolute, vanishing and at variance with itself. A syntactic act can have the structure of sensing that one is being followed, a sudden turning, and catching one's own mind bearing down upon one.

These simulations of being thrown into free space may be training for the great cutting loose at the end of our efforts. At least it does no harm to allow art that kind of force of destiny. One must consider that the mind may be incapable of divesting itself of the wisdom impulse, with all its opportunity for addictive self-delusion, chateau-like constructs where the ego glowers in secret luxury. So faced with an impulse toward wise saying, one can choose among the paths, including, perhaps:

- to give in to a known thought, a wise way tested on enough minds to assure a certain restfulness;
- to think better, according to a philosophical or theological method, to accept the challenge of wise saying;
- to resist with, say, a blank stare, or otherwise (meditatively) allow space to show, to sidestep the habitual, to seek a shift below the threshold of experienced wisdom;
- to ride it wild till its root knowing twists free.

The Preverbs test-drive the latter. One tries to develop a certain touch — perhaps to stimulate, even if necessary to provoke, the thinking impulse to further awareness in saying itself. It's a kind of persistence in folly, to paraphrase Blake, giving the fool his realized moment. Perhaps if not to see the full face of one's private angel, at least to read its lips.

The sound in which one's individual folly is spoken is first of all that of one's own voice. The integrity of that voice is profoundly at stake in the AXIAL. Poets are often obsessed by "finding one's own voice" which usually means something like distinctive style or a sounds-like-me tone. Success in this direction can be effective, charming, even powerful. It presents a sort of image of a stable self. In the AXIAL, however, the notion of knowable stability of self is continuously in question. Yet the actual voice individuates, in unpredictable ways, as if its source precedes the known personality. AXIAL utterance aims to return to that source in any way possible, or to keep the channel open, and primary poetic function in a sense may be just that maintenance of the open.

In meditating this possibility of openness I come up with a notion of **ZERO POINT VOICE**, which stands for **the point of origin in speaking that allows an optimal release, negligible pre-patterning and minimal momentum**. Each line is generated on the spot from an energy arising *just now*. In my theory this "point" (of course not really a point) accesses what I call the **UNDERTIME** of the poem, the time that runs below any formalized rhythmic time, perhaps a sort of ur-time, but in any case a full-potential time that allows radical particularity in any given line. This degree of particularity serves a **METAPOETIC PRINCIPLE** that allows **every poetic act the possibility of an original poetics** and, therefore, is **non-exclusive as regards poetic possibility**.

With respect to minimal momentum, there may of course be carryover from line to line (when the AXIAL lines are grouped in apparent sequence, as in *The Preverbs of Tell*) but there also may *not* be any, indifferently. So the AXIAL as poem space has no built-in principle of beginning or ending or even continuing. It is open, in a potentially unlimited number of ways. So the mystery of continuance is particular and ultimately arbitrary from an aesthetic point of view--leaving only an ontological or magical possibility. The line therefore can be AXIAL, meaning that its center of gravity is open, reversible, and variously in motion.

Here, out of the base of physical voice engaged in an **AXIAL POETICS**, there is a complexity of *voice-urge* — what makes it begin. It arises out of itself, as it is, where it is and in relation to anything whatsoever, with no obligations to continuity, logic, or any other principle of linkage/necessity, therefore open to all continuities on an immediate basis. In practice, this means that the voice gathers itself anew in each line. There is uninterrupted risk. The wish is to avoid stabilizing and intrinsically coercive forces such as stylized voice, e.g., literary/musical elevation, "personal voice" as carrying the thrust of personality, etc. The voice arising from its zero point is in some sense transparent to complex intentionality, and optimally avoids manipulating in the direction of fore-given aesthetic. The key here is "optimally," and the interest in **OPTIMAL POETICS** or a "poetics of the optimal" is not purist but *open*—that only in the condition of openness can a thing be optimally itself. Hence the AXIAL, which is the condition created by an open matrix. In an AXIAL situation the voice can perform its presence in multiple ways within the verbal matrix.²

The notion of ZERO POINT has a range of implication, especially with respect to poetic function in the environment, however defined.³ To be conscious of it implies a discipline of attention that

² It is obvious that much of what I have associated with the AXIAL can be claimed in one way or another for any number of poetic systems, and I am aware that a number of systems produce powerful and profoundly open works in the sense intended here. I personally do not like to use procedures and prescriptive systems. I tend to view the great works, for instance, of John Cage and Jackson Mac Low as due not to their systems as such but to what can only be called poetic genius or some other word that means the same (i.e., something finally undefinable). When Mac Low writes a non- (or at least minimally) procedural work like *Bloomsday*, with its spectacular level of language self-reinvention and visionary richness, one might conclude that his procedures were something like a support but not the main event. (Obviously, others have used Cage/Mac Low-like systems with not very exciting results.) The AXIAL is not anti-procedure (my particular practice is processual rather than procedural), but it exists in declaration of the values of openness and freedom of movement and mind that is previous to the issue of method. How one achieves it is an individual matter.

³ Subsequent to theorizing a ZERO POINT VOICE I have become aware of ZERO POINT PHYSICS, which views, for instance, the so-called vacuum as paradoxically a *plenum* of vast energy potential, and at least one physicist has convinced me that our interests may be on common ground. My understanding has not advanced to the point where I'm competent to discuss this.

I have long been aware that the STILL POINT of CranioSacral Therapy invites comparison with what happens in release of the voice, as well as with the concerns of zero point physics. The term of course resonates with T.S. Eliot's use in "Burnt Norton" (*The Four Quartets*), section II: "at the still point, there the dance is /... neither arrest

goes beyond a conceptual focus on the *zero point* itself. It implies a state of listening to and through the voice that returns at every opportunity to the condition of freedom from extraneous momentum. This attention allows a potential deepening of participation in the *undervoice* and the source of the *rhythmus*, a radical reformulation of the rhythmic impulse itself as singular event. One taps in to the self-refining nature of a poem's energy, which is stepped up energy in many degrees of living intrinsic modulation. To be able to go with it one must discover the special attention appropriate to the poem by joining in the poem's own listening. *Its* listening requires *its* zero point. Optimally, poet/reader in each instance entrains to the voice of the poem as close as possible to its zero point. This involves a kind of release into the source of voice itself.

The intention of this release is to induce a state of AXIALITY. The underlying assumption would be something like the view that freedom of movement, at root, is the STILL POINT / ZERO POINT of primordial possibility. In this state the "wisdom impulse" is AXIALIZED, which means that it is introduced to its primordial energy in such a way that opens dogma to Being. And that could be an original role of the poetic.

—George Quasha

nor movement...." This vision of suddenly realized timelessness ("To be conscious is not to be in time") derives from Dante's vision of eternal stillness in the last canto of the *Paradiso*. Interestingly, "still point" used as a technical term in CranioSacral Therapy denotes the act of causing a momentary suspension in the fundamental pulsation of the body (the "craniosacral rhythmical impulse"); the effect is to mobilize the system's inherent self-correcting abilities.

The Monroe Institute reports that their research — on brain waves, biofeedback and hemisphere synchronization (and the "binaural beat") — has led them to theorize a NULL POINT in neurological activity wherein, following specific hemisphere-synchronizing impulses aurally introduced to individuals, physiological measurements "indicated that the body's electrical polarity shifts into a neutral phase." This *neutral phase* reportedly allows more conscious control of mind activity in a desirable direction: "Subjects consistently reported this [neutral phase called "null point"] to be a productive 'window' for taking off in any desired mental direction. At the null point you may purposefully and consciously decide exactly what you choose to explore."

A further area of comparison is the Japanese notion of *Ma* — something like the *time-space between* (therefore empty) — which is valued even more than the things or events it separates. It is the space of deep integration.

Preverb Posters

A set for Open Space

George Quasha

eyes
take away
what they
see

sayings from afar
sound just
around
the corner

Navigating the Infinite Web of Pitch Space

Kyle Gann

Given any two pitches, a third pitch is almost always implied.

For example, say I have a tone vibrating at 550 cycles per second (C#) and another at 660 cps (E). Both pitches are harmonics of a third pitch that vibrates at 110 cps (A). (That is, 110 is the greatest common denominator of 550 and 660.)

The exception to this opening statement is the case in which one pitch is an overtone of another. If I have a tone at 440 cps (A), and another at 880 (A an octave higher), no third pitch is implied. This simple consonance does not require (or suggest) mediation by a third pitch.

Let us consider pitches more distantly related. Suppose I have two pitches vibrating at 400 and 270 cps respectively. Both are harmonics (the 40th and 27th, respectively) of another pitch vibrating at 10 cps. But 10 cps is too slow a vibration to register as sound. By bringing 10 cps up several octaves

$$10 \times 2 = 20$$

$$20 \times 2 = 40$$

$$40 \times 2 = 80$$

$$80 \times 2 = 160$$

we arrive at a pitch more simply related to both 400 and 270 than either is to the other. 400/160 (5/2) and 270/160 (27/16) are simpler fractions than 400/270 (40/27). They can get by with smaller numbers, and are therefore more consonant. Consonant is often taken to mean sweet-sounding or pleasant, but it really means intelligible. By definition, the smaller the numbers in a pitch ratio, the more consonant it is.

One could say that pitches represent a family situation. Take two people. You check their backgrounds and find out that they are fourth cousins to each other. This implies a common ancestor. If that common ancestor is so far back in history as to be no longer living, then find the parent of one of the persons, and that parent may be more closely related to each of them than they are to each other. We say these days that, given any two people, there are no more than six degrees of separation between them: sufficient common denominators can be found to link them together and show their relation. Similarly, any two pitches are related in some way, perhaps more closely, perhaps less closely - but the relationship between them can always be found. The more distant it is, the more intermediary pitches are implied.

More accurately, since we are dealing with arithmetic and not human relationships, pitches exist in a web situation. Points in a web are all connected to each other. The further apart two pitches are in the web, the more different pitches are touched on in trying to connect them. Why do we try to connect them? To make their coexistence intelligible.

Let's take another approach to our example. Played together, pitches at 400 and 270 cps form an interval denoted by the fraction or ratio 40/27. The ratio means that if we take 270 cps as 1 (or 1/1), 400 cps is represented by 40/27. This ratio can be factored out:

$$\frac{40}{27} = \frac{2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 5}{3 \times 3 \times 3}$$

Any subset of these numbers will provide us with pitches more closely related to both 1/1 and 40/27 than they are to each other. For instance,

$$\frac{2 \times 2}{3} = \frac{4}{3} \qquad \frac{2 \times 5}{3 \times 3} = \frac{10}{9}$$

$$\frac{5}{3} = \frac{5}{3} \quad \frac{2 \times 2 \times 2}{3 \times 3} = \frac{8}{9}$$

$$\frac{2 \times 2 \times 2}{3 \times 3 \times 3} = \frac{8}{27} \quad \frac{5}{3^0} = \frac{5}{1}$$

This gives us six pitches, each more consonant with both 1/1 and 40/27 than those two pitches are with each other. In fact, discounting pitches that are octaves of each other (multiplication or division of a pitch by 2 always produces an octave, another pitch with the same pitch name), these are the only six pitches more consonant with both those pitches than they are with each other. Ignoring further multiplications by 2, we've gone through all the available permutations.¹

This provides us, then, with a scale whose members make 40/27 and 1/1 intelligible (I have multiplied ratios by 2 or 4 where necessary - that is, transposed them up or down an octave or two - to bring them all into the same octave):

16/9	(2 x 8/9)
5/3	
40/27	
4/3	
5/4	(5/1 x 1/4)
32/27	(4 x 8/27)
10/9	
1/1	

Translated into musical terms, this produces a scale as follows:

Ratio:	Pitch name:	Cents above C:
16/9	Bb-	996.1...
5/3	A	884.4...
40/27	G-	680.4...
4/3	F	498.0...
5/4	E	386.3...
32/27	Eb-	294.1...
10/9	D-	182.4...
1/1	C	0.0

The minuses in the pitch names are taken from a tuning-specific pitch notation developed by Ben Johnston, of which more will be said later. Briefly, they indicate that the pitch has been lowered by 21.5 cents, or a 81/80 ratio (called the syntonic comma).

The solution of this problem is of particular interest, because the interval 40/27 has had a notorious history in European music. It represents the so-called "wolf fifth," the "wolf" interval one finds between D and A in a scale tuned to pure C major. That is, in the scale

C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
1/1	9/8	5/4	4/3	3/2	5/3	15/8	2/1

¹ Those who still find this method of describing pitch relationships confusing might find further simplification in an article on my web page at <http://home.earthlink.net/~kgann/tuning.html>.

the interval D to A is $9/8$ to $5/3$, and $5/3 \div 9/8 = 5/3 \times 8/9 = 40/27$. In the major scale as given here, the so-called I, IV, and V chords are perfectly in tune, but the ii chord on D is simply unavailable because it sounds woefully out of tune; its fifth is 21.5 cents flat, causing audible beats between the two tones likened to a wolf's howl. In 16th-century Italy, the existence and seeming unavoidability of this interval led to experimentation with harpsichords containing notes with more than 12 pitches per octave. As late as the theoretical writings of Anton Bruckner in the 19th century, the interval between the second and sixth scale degrees is to be treated as a dissonance and resolved as such, not taken as a "normal" perfect fifth of $3/2$. To avoid the wolf fifth entails one set of difficulties, with which Europe struggled for centuries; to embrace the wolf fifth, to make it intelligible entails a different set.

Perhaps, ultimately, a more interesting set.



In 1984 an offhand comment by my composition teacher Ben Johnston sparked in me what would soon become an enduring interest in pure, arithmetically defined tunings. Several years later, I acquired a synthesizer that allowed me to retune each pitch to within 6/10 of a cent of whatever I wanted. By this time I was over 30 years old, and had been composing for two decades in a 12-pitch, equal-spaced scale, the same one most American and European musicians use. Suddenly I found myself faced with an interior infinity of possible pitches. The landscape of pitches had seemed simple and firmly anchored in a base-12 arithmetic. Now I was without moorings, floating free from the gravity of the fixed half-step. To be intuitively creative in such fluid and unfamiliar circumstances was, for me, impossible. Not until 1992 did I manage to write a piece of music that could only be conceived in terms of pure microtonal tunings. The gestation process took eight years, during which my theoretical speculations were virtually continuous, manifested in entire notebooks filled with charts of multidimensionally nested fractions.

The step-by-step logic I outline in the opening paragraphs of this paper represents the logic by which I eventually came to map my new pitch universe. There are certainly other ways to do it - Harry Partch, La Monte Young, and Ben Johnston himself had already come up with different, if sometimes parallel paths.

Briefly, and to oversimplify, Young in his The Well-Tuned Piano had come upon a 12-pitch tuning that provided new intervals on the piano, intervals based on the number 7 rather than on the European number 5. But I was not using piano, for the most practical of reasons (a piano must be tuned and retuned several times before and after a microtonal performance, vastly diminishing the chance of one's getting performed), and so I was not limited to 12 pitches. In his sine-tone installations, Young works with closely-spaced harmonics in the upper reaches of the harmonic series. But common, performance-oriented synthesizers did not provide me with sufficiently exact pitch resolution to climb that high in the harmonic series. Partch derived scales and tonalities from symmetrical overlays of overtone series' and undertone series'; to some extent, Ben followed him in this direction. But first of all, I wasn't entirely convinced of the relevance of an undertone series, and anyway I found by experimentation that, with the limitations of tuning resolution on my synthesizers, undertone chords sounded unusably muddy.

I am no carpenter. Frankly, I am all thumbs. I was not going to build instruments as Partch did. My approach to tuning could only evolve from the nature of the instrument I had available, which was the synthesizer. I found confirmation for my approach in the writings of ancient Greek musicians such as Ptolemy, who thought of pitches not in terms of the harmonic series (a phenomenon unknown at the time) but in terms of complexes of ratio-defined intervals. And I found that I could explore the new pitch universe I was lost in interval by interval if, for each interval, I found other, more familiar intervals related to it that I had already explored.

I will offer two examples from my subsequent music.²

How Miraculous Things Happen (1997)

In terms of pure, ratio-defined tuning, the interval that musicians call a minor third is defined by $6/5$, and a major third by $5/4$:

² Both pieces of music I discuss are recorded on a compact disc: Custer's Ghost, Monroe Street msm 60104, available from <http://www.monroestreet.com>.

pitch:	C	E ^b	E
ratio:	1/1	6/5	5/4
cents:	0	315.6	386.3

One of the myriad interesting facts of the mathematics of the octave is that, approximately halfway in-between 5/4 and 6/5 lies another, relatively consonant median ratio: 11/9 (347.4 cents). This means, of course, that in-between the major triad (C E G) and minor triad (C E^b G) one can locate a neutral triad with an 11/9 third that is neither major nor minor. (Charles Ives was fascinated with this possibility when he worked with quarter-tones in the 1920s.) In fact, it is the tendency of 11-based intervals to generate what we think of as quarter-tones.

Once given this information, the temptation to write music in which a minor tonality gradually slid into major through that 11/9 interval was irresistible. For maximum illusionary smoothness, I wanted my pitch line to get a running start. I postulated a series of fairly simple ratios through which my long-term melody would rise in the key of A major from B to C#:

pitch:	B-	B	B ^L	C ⁷	C	C [↑] -	C#
ratio:	10/9	9/8	8/7	7/6	6/5	11/9	5/4
cents:	182.4	203.9	231.2	266.9	315.6	347.4	368.3

I also wanted a pitch line moving in the opposite direction down to C# from D:

pitch:	C#	C# ^L	D ⁷	D-
ratio:	5/4	9/7	21/16	4/3
cents:	386.3	435.1	470.8	498.0

Ultimately, then, I based the music around a succession of ten pitches within what musicians define as a minor third (to be precise, 316 cents), from B to D in the key of A. Again, the accidental notation here is Ben Johnston's.

To simply play this line in isolation is tonally meaningless, and the ear does not automatically relate it to the key of A major. But by supporting each pitch in that line with harmonies made of pitches that relate each pitch to A 1/1, one can create a meaningfully microtonal chord progression that derives a certain musical inexorability through ultrachromatic voice-leading.

For instance, the combination of the tonic A 1/1 and the opening B- at 10/9 implies a third pitch of which both pitches are harmonics. That pitch is a very low G-. Transpose it up into the same octave and you will have G- 16/9. The B- 16/9 is harmonized with the major triad:

B-	10/9	$16/9 \times 5 = 80/9$	$80/9 \div 8 = 10/9$
D-	4/3	$16/9 \times 3 = 16/3$	$16/3 \div 4 = 4/3$
G-	16/9		

A is the 9th harmonic of G-, and B- is the 10th (or 5th) harmonic. Therefore a triad on G- makes the relationship between A and B- intelligible.

A similar logic finds a similar chord with which to harmonize C[↑] - 11/9. This pitch is the 11th harmonic of the pitch of which A is the 9th harmonic: thus 11/9. Again, the implied pitch, of which both 1/1 and 11/9 are harmonics, is G- 16/9.

The ten melodic pitches that run through How Miraculous Things Happen are harmonized with the ten chords shown in Example 1. Each chord serves the function of intelligibly relating its melody pitch to the tonic A. The pitch gamut of most of the piece was drawn from the pitches needed for these ten chords. At the end of the work, a few additional pitches appear for the purpose of transposing the 11/9 note to the key of F#.

This may be the best opportunity for explaining Ben Johnston's notation:

+ raises a pitch by 81/80, or 21.5 cents.

- lowers by the same amount.

7 adjusts for the 7th harmonic by lowering a pitch by a ratio of 35/36, or 48.8 cents.

L, an upside-down 7, raises a pitch by 36/35, or 48.8 cents.

↑ raises a pitch to an 11th harmonic by multiplying it by 33/32, or adding 53.3 cents.

↓ lowers by the same amount, 32/33 or 53.3 cents.

has the same value it usually did in 16th century theoretical treatises, 25/24 or 70.7 cents.

b likewise lowers by 24/25, or 70.7 cents.

In addition, it is assumed that C E G, F A C, and G B D are all purely tuned triads in a 4:5:6 ratio.

Note that in the musical examples, some of these accidentals are combined: an arrow attached to a sharp, for example, or a line attached to the top or bottom of a sharp to add a 7 or L. Pluses and minuses, however, are never attached to other accidentals.

It might be noted that the pitch C#, the goal pitch of the melodic line, is harmonized not with an A major triad as might be expected, but with F# minor. What keeps happening in the piece is that A minor keeps trying to turn into A major (through that 11/9 interval), but every attempt is thwarted by the bass line moving to F#. At last, in the final measures of the piece, the entire process shifts to the new key, and F# minor transforms into F# major via that same 11/9 (actually 55/54 now, with respect to A: $11/9 \times 5/3 = 55/27$ or $55/54$). The desired goal was blocked, but finally opened up again in a new channel, which - or so it seemed to me at the time - is how miraculous things happen.

"Sun Dance" from Custer and Sitting Bull (1999)

In the "Sun Dance" scene from my vocal/electronics piece Custer and Sitting Bull, the progression became somewhat more complex.

The challenge of the movement was to depict the sun dance that Sitting Bull led prior to the Battle of the Little Bighorn. During the dance, Sitting Bull cut a hundred notches of flesh in his arms and legs, letting the blood run down until he had a vision. The vision was of white soldiers and cavalry falling down, as a voice said, "I give you these because they have no ears."

I wanted the music, then, to express a trancelike state through a very slow resolution of dissonance, dissonance that was dwelt upon and savored at some length. The harmonic skeleton of the movement moves gradually, over and over, through a series of intervals moving from a perfect fourth above the tonic F# (actually a slightly smaller interval to begin with) through several definitions of tritone up to a perfect fifth:

pitch:	B7	B-	B	B↑-	C7	B#L-	C#↓	C#-	C#
ratio:	21/16	4/3	27/20	11/8	7/5	10/7	16/11	40/27	3/2
cents:	470.8	498.0	519.6	551.3	582.5	617.5	648.7	680.5	702.0

One tritone that is not used is the traditional 45/32 tritone (590.2 cents) of early European tunings, which is a complex, derived interval arrived at by adding a major second (9/8) to a major third (5/4). Only 8 cents away, 7/5 rendered 45/32 superfluous for my purposes, and offered more exotic possibilities.

This "scale" - although the pitches are closer than I would use for a scale in the sense of a series of steps that a melody could move up and down on - represents an intriguing progression of relative consonance and dissonance. 4/3 and 3/2 are among the most consonant possible intervals. Moving away from either of them, one quickly encounters much more dissonant intervals with a tendency to form acoustic beats: 21/16, 27/20, 40/27. Moving still further, one encounters 11-based intervals that are more consonant, but close to quarter-tones within a European-based musical system: 11/8 and 16/11 (both intervals common in Arabic music). And in the middle one finds two strikingly consonant tritones, 7/5 and 10/7, even though European history has never allowed these tunings for the much-maligned (and unfairly so, clearly) "devil's interval."

Each interval is accompanied by a scale which makes the interval pitches more intelligible. Since the derivation of six pitches from 40/27 has already been done, let us take its inverse, 27/20:

$$\frac{27}{20} = \frac{3 \times 3 \times 3}{2 \times 2 \times 5}$$

Taking subsets of these numbers and multiplying freely by two, we obtain:

$$\begin{array}{lcl} \frac{3 \times 2}{5} = \frac{6}{5} & \frac{3 \times 3}{5} = \frac{9}{5} & \frac{3}{2} \quad \frac{3^0}{5} = \frac{8}{5} \\ \frac{3 \times 3}{2 \times 2 \times 2} = \frac{9}{8} & \frac{3 \times 3 \times 3}{2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2} = \frac{27}{16} & \end{array}$$

This series of pitches, then:

Ratio:	Pitch name:	Cents above F#:
9/5	E	1017.6...
27/16	D#	905.9...
8/5	D-	813.7...
3/2	C#	702.0...
27/20	B	519.6...
6/5	A	315.6...
9/8	G#	203.9...
1/1	F#	0.0

defines a scale of which each note (besides 1/1 and 27/20) is more consonant with 1/1 and 27/20 than they are with each other; the scale makes the relationship of 27/20 to 1/1 intelligible.

The intervals from 21/16 to 3/2 run through the bass of the "Sun Dance" as drones. Over each drone, scale notes (not always the entire gamut available) are used as in Example 2. At various points in the middle of the movement, quite active beats are audible, caused by a complex relation between the drone pitches. At the point of maximum consonance, when 3/2 is reached, the voice enters (my own voice pitch-shifted downward, actually) chanting "I give you these because they have no ears." The effect is of pitch relations going gradually out of, and then back into, focus over several minutes. A page of the score is given in Ben Johnston's notation in Example 3.

The "Sun Dance" movement concludes with the "Battle of the Greasy-Grass River," which is a translation of the Sioux name for the Little Bighorn. At the end of the battle depiction (which juxtaposes two tonalities a 10/7 apart, one representing the Sioux and the other the U.S. Cavalry), I made my most extreme exploration yet of ratio-defined dissonance. As the bodies lay mutilated on the battlefield, I wanted sustained chords that would suggest the stillness of death, but whose pulsing beats would nevertheless writhe with all the charged emotionality of the scene. I selected, then, the most mutually-complexly-related pitches I had available to compose the chords shown in Example 4.

Superficially, these are generally seventh or ninth chords of various types revolving around the tonic F#, but the extreme incommensurability of the individual notes results in a wild array of sparkling beats, vividly audible at sufficiently high volume. The final chord, the most dissonant, is an interval complex of ratios reducible no smaller than 3780:5103:5600:6750 - which means that it takes those numbers of vibrations for the pitches to all return to their original phase relation. In addition, I added small, steadily rising glissandos to the lower drone notes to subtly change the rate of beating within each chord.

One will note that that final dissonance, like much of the piece, is based on the wolf fifth 40/27. It seemed appropriate that the spirit of the wolf should pervade an American Indian scene, and particularly that the wolf should howl at that tragic moment. The whole experiment confirmed for me what Harry Partch so eloquently said about the difference between equal-tempered dissonance and purely-tuned

dissonance: it's "a whole different serving of tapioca."



My mathematical explanations of my music sometimes create the mistaken impression that my music is highly precompositionally structured, that I write "mathematical music." Actually, I belong to a theoretical tradition that I see as peculiarly American, starting with Henry Cowell's book New Musical Resources. It is common, within this tradition, to expend abundant theoretical energy developing the raw materials with which one composes; then, when one actually comes to compose, to proceed freely and intuitively with few or no precompositional determinants. An analogy would be a painter who goes to tremendous lengths to chemically design his own paints and colors from scratch, but who then, having completed that task, picks up his brush and, as spontaneously as possible, paints what he sees. Any theoretician of the future who finds Golden Sections, Fibonacci series', pitch rows, Schenkerian urlinie, and other global structural devices in my music can rest assured that they were not put there consciously. I am no proponent of mathematical methods of composing (though I am not necessarily opposed to them either); but the materials of which music is made are inherently mathematical, or at least arithmetical. And when it comes to pitch materials, I prefer to create my own pure, organic ones rather than use the presets that come out of that mechanical box, the piano.

Of course, the way I design a tuning imposes its own structure on my music. This is true of all music, a fact rarely recognized. Every piece of pitch-oriented music is an exploration of a tuning; the tuning pervasively influences where the music can go, what sounds good in it, what types of behavior it will follow. I feel more comfortable being conscious of this fact than I used to be when the influence was unconscious. One problem with music at the moment is that thousands of composers have spent the last hundred years exploring one of the dulllest, most colorless, least fulfilling tunings ever devised by man.

There are as many approaches to microtonality as there are microtonal composers. My approach aims at making microtonal intervals intelligible. To take a common and representative example, the F that defines the subdominant in a C major scale is not the same F that acts as the 7th harmonic in a dominant 7th chord on G; the first F, 4/3, is 498 cents above C, and the second, 21/16, is 471, more than a fourth of a half-step flatter. My microtonal music recognizes this difference, which the ear intuitively picks up and comfortably assimilates if given half a chance.

The advantage of working the way I do is that I can go further and further out and always find my way back. Let's say I, for whatever whimsical reason, become enamored of the interval 105/88.

$$\frac{105}{88} = \frac{3 \times 5 \times 7}{2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 11}$$

I can make that interval meaningful, intelligible in the piece by approaching it, or coming back from it, or harmonizing it, via the other pitches implied: 35/32, 35/22, 15/11, 15/8, 14/11, 18/11, 7/4 and so on. Hopefully I can bring the listener to feel where that note is in relation to the tonic or some familiar chord, rather than simply introduce it as some strange, arbitrary pitch 305.8 cents away.

My experience with other people's perception of my music has suggested a recurring pattern. At first hearing, the music seems bizarrely out of tune. But on subsequent second and third hearings, the chord progressions quickly acquire a feeling of inevitability, thanks to the purity of the harmonies and the consistency of the microtonal voice leading. I am wildly in favor of the diversity represented by the range of microtonal composers, but I do believe that, if microtones are going to become common practice once again - and the imperialist hegemony of this horridly bland, beat-ridden, 12-pitch equal-tempered scale be broken once and for all - we need a body of music representing a microtonal practice that makes theoretical sense to the ear. My music and this article are an attempt to begin providing that. We need not cling to the infinite web that runs throughout the fluid universe of pitch, but if we want to learn to navigate that universe, we have nothing better to cling to.

182	204	231	267	316	347	386	435	471	498
996	1088	0	0	0	182	0	231	204	0
498	702	933	765	702	996	884	933	1088	884
	471	617	498		498			702	

Example 2: "Sun Dance" from Custer and Sitting Bull
Drone pitches and related scales

Ratio:	Cents:								
7/4	968.8			9/5	1017.6			9/5	1017.6
3/2	702.0	16/9	996.1	27/20	519.6	3/2	702.0	8/5	813.7
21/16	470.8	40/27	680.5	6/5	315.6	11/8	551.3	7/5	582.5
7/6	266.9	4/3	498.0	9/8	203.9	9/8	203.9	6/5	315.6
1/1	0	1/1	0	1/1	0	1/1	0	1/1	0



Ratio:	Cents:						
21/16	470.8	4/3	498.0	27/20	519.6	11/8	551.3
						7/5	582.5

Ratio:	Cents:								
				16/9	996.1	7/4	968.8	5/4	386.3
12/7	993.1	16/11	648.7	40/27	680.5	5/3	884.4	6/5	315.6
10/7	617.5	4/3	498.0	4/3	498.0	8/5	813.7	7/6	266.9
8/7	231.2	12/11	150.6	10/9	182.4	3/2	702.0	9/8	203.9
1/1	0	1/1	0	1/1	0	4/3	0	1/1	0



Ratio:	Cents:				
10/7	617.5	16/11	648.7	40/27	680.5
				3/2	702.0

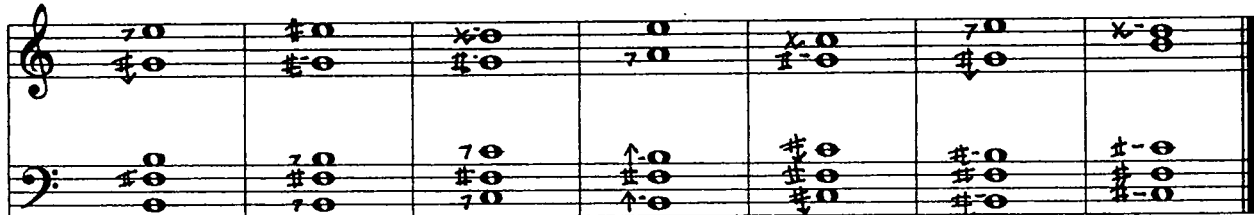
Example 3: Measures 48-51 of "Sun Dance/Battle of the Greasy-Grass River"
from Custer and Sitting Bull (in Ben Johnston's pitch notation)

$\text{♩} = 100$

The musical score consists of six staves, each representing a different instrument. The Flute staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Synthesizer parts are in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of two sharps (D# and E#). The Rattles, Drums, and Wood blocks parts are in a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature starts as 12/16, changes to 9/16, then 12/8, and finally 4/4. The music is characterized by complex rhythms with many beamed notes and rests. Various fingerings (5, 7, 9) are indicated above notes. The Flute part has a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Synthesizer parts have a key signature of two sharps (D# and E#). The Rattles, Drums, and Wood blocks parts are in a key signature of one sharp (F#).

**Example 4: "Sun Dance/Battle of the Greasy-Grass River
from Custer and Sitting Bull
Dissonant chords following the Battle Scene**

(Actual chords an octave lower)



Ratios to F# 1/1:

7/4	15/8	25/14	9/5	45/28	7/4	25/14
12/11	8/7	8/7	7/6	10/9	12/11	27/20
1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1
27/20	21/16	7/5	11/8	16/11	10/7	40/27

Cents above F#:

968.8	1088.3	1003.8	1017.6	821.4	968.8	1003.8
150.6	231.2	231.2	266.9	182.4	150.6	519.6
0	0	0	0	0	0	0
519.6	470.8	582.5	551.3	648.7	617.5	680.5

Robert Paredes

Dangling Reflections on the Bewitched

[1980....was it?....I was a free-lance musician (read works occasionally)....and I had a day job in a print shop, in an old hotel-cum-flophouse-cum-whorehouse, in upper downtown, San Diego.]

As a clarinetist, I had participated in the first production of Harry Partch's, *The Bewitched*, to be mounted since the nineteen-fifties. This occurred 1975 and I recall the pleasure I felt at finally being able to participate in the music of this composer, with whom I had so long been fascinated—(and who lived until his death in 1974, only a bridge away, in the next neighborhood from my own). Before *The Bewitched*, I had mainly been a chamber and orchestral player diverted, on occasion, by rare and frightened excursions into Jazz and free improvisation—wanting—(but not often able)—to find and engage those musics within which I could explore the more grittily-expressive, dramatically-inflective, timbrally-variegated and blatantly-speech-like attributes of the clarinet: attributes which I would later find embodied in the Klezmer music which I love and have played for years.

[I got up each morning at 5:30, had a walk and some herb tea, and then drove off, arriving at the shop about 7:30 to prepare for the first business of the day]

As I recall, *The Bewitched's* clarinet part is (in a way) a kind of tablature-cum-environment in which the "notes," per se, are perhaps better conceptualized as "fingerings," and these, as "locations." These "notes-as-locations" are stipulated in the familiar (conventional) notation (as if in equal temperament), but written above them—(sometimes occasionally and sometimes on every "note")—are ratios (expressed as fractions) indicating the exact frequencies in Partch's 43-tone system. Even to approximate a stipulated ratio, the clarinetist has to experiment with different combinations of half-hole and half-key fingerings—various degrees of lip pressure and configurations of embouchure. I further recall that in addition to the ratios, Partch provides the clarinetist with variously-colored, horizontally-directional, lines and marks in pencil(s). These track the familiar notation as it unfolds (often, "note" to "note") and is meant to indicate the direction in pitch (flat or sharp) necessary in order to obtain a given ratio or ratios.

[When the machines were fired up, and the back orders done, I went next door to Betty Anderson's Coffee Shop and Korean Restaurant for some bacon and eggs, coffee, and a good (if short) read.]

The clarinetist must coalesce these several instructions into a workable strategy for performing each note of the part as close to the ratio-stipulated pitch as possible, the locus of verisimilitude residing, then, in the degree to which the various "notes" are heard to match their opposite number ratios when played on the Chromelodeon (i.e., Partch's 43-tone reed organ and the obvious practical reference-source in matters of pitch).

[After breakfast, I'd go back to the shop and put out the open sign.]

The clarinetist also has to be able to perform glissandi and other types of coloristic pitch bending—(listen to the "Pabst Blue Ribbon" song in the basketball scene ((Scene Five)) for example). It also helps to be able to sing a bit—whistle—and to stamp one's foot.

[Sometimes, I'd have a customer right away—and, sometimes, no- one would come in for an hour or so, giving me some time to try to write my own music—or, read a novel—or, make xerox art—or, study The Bewitched's clarinet part.]

The Bewitched was among the most significant of my first exposures to a kind of clarinet playing which challenged the minimally-inflected, Western-European, classical-music, "organ-pipe" sound which I had been trained, over a number of years, to produce. But, over and above the specifics of clarinet technique, *The*

Bewitched—as composition—was my introduction to the idea of "corporeality": that essential word in Partch's lexicon, which verbally contextualizes a desired condition in and through which musicians may transcend a traditional and professionally-prescribed function as "disembodied" translator of coded information into sound, to become, for a time, diversely-expressive physical presences (musician-actors/musician-dancers) energizing the space in which they are performing, not only with their sounds, but with their whole bodies. In this condition-cum-state, the body is not thought to be ultimately reducible to that of an "instrumentality," whose principal function it is to reveal and affirm the primacy of something called "music"—(as this may be understood to refer to the absolutist fiction of "disembodied" or "sourceless" sound). Rather, it is something called "music," (as instrumentality)—in interactive conjunction with the mediums of dance, visual art, sculpture, poetry, and carpentry; interconnected in a multi-sensory theater—which makes apparent and unambiguous, the primacy of the body as source and subject; centrality and ur-context. This shift in the order of importance, from single sense to multi-sense—(from the idea of human, as an occasion for the apprehension/appreciation of music—to the idea of music, as an occasion for the apprehension/appreciation of human)—serves to define a powerful wholeistic position, countervailing to those dismembering tendencies—to which we subject ourselves—issuing from a too-deep investiture in the idea of specialization....(tendencies such as the one in which artists who dare to work seriously in more than one medium get dismissed out-of-hand, their competence, sincerity, and credibility annihilated defacto).

[My customers were a varied lot. There was the lawyer Jake, dapper mouthpiece for the rich and shady. He'd been Korean War fighter pilot; a post-war transatlantic captain for El Al, and the owner of an exotic dog store in New York. He had a barkless Basenji (named Irv), a silver Porsche with a leather nose-guard, a withering array of tailored suits and a new (and very young) girl friend every week—or, so it seemed.]

In 1980, a new production of *The Bewitched* was mounted in response to an invitation to appear at the Berlin Festival, and I was once again asked to be the clarinetist. The incentives were of course the obvious and tasty ones of revisiting the work, getting away from my day gig in the fast-copy store, and doing a little European travel into the bargain. And, the "pot" was further to be "sweetened" by the fact that this new "Bewitched" would be directed by Kenneth Gaburo—with choreography by Lou Blankenburg. Kenneth was a significant presence on the U.C.S.D. faculty at that time, notable for his work in the domain of sound-text inter-qualification (i.e., compositional linguistics) and his strong positions in support of the importance of interdisciplinary investigation for composers/musicians (among other things). His reputation as a "virtuostically" elaborative teacher of composition was widely acknowledged among those with a dead-serious interest in (and involvement with) the idea of music experiment (as was the richly diverse formidability of his personality and the gamut of expressive modalities ((sacred and profane)) with which he was known to advance it). Those few works of his which I had heard, by this time, (i.e. *Antiphonies III and IV*, *Fat Millie's Lament*, and, above all, the extraordinary concerto-text/theater-grosso, *Maledetto*.), had made, each in their way, significant (read near-combustible) impressions on me and I was trying in this light to get up nerve enough to ask him for composition lessons....Lou Blankenburg was a dancer/composer whose work was, to my mind, singular for its highly personal and idiosyncratic vocabulary of movement, often articulated within the sound/framework of a "simple" spoken narrative, heard via tape playback—(I can still see—and hear—her dancing (and speaking) her loving recollections of the children on the school bus which she drove)....The uncompromising uniqueness of Partch's musical/theatrical language—coming together with Kenneth's, and Lou's, ideas about music/movement-as-language—in a production to be worked and reworked over a protracted period of time, seemed as challenging and potentially rewarding a performance opportunity as I would likely ever have, and an occasion for learning too packed with possibilities to be missed.

[And, then, there was Mildred, who thought everything in the store, including the xerox machines, belonged to her. She'd wander around, plaintively and inquisitively murmuring—to the cash register, or the binding machine—"aren't you mine?": "didn't I loan you to him?" Many's the time I had to gently round her up as she inched toward the door (a cartoon wolf in search of unsuspecting pigs) some orphan object or other gathered up in her hands, tight and close—to be returned to its rightful home. Mildred also thought that every yellow car was a species of taxi. One day, Phil (another lawyer) resplendent, as always in his immaculately tailored suits and yellow Porsche, came to the shop to get a copy of a deposition. While I did the work (he and I chatting quasi-collegially about our shared interest in Artie Shaw) Mildred came along, saw yellow, and levitated into the backseat of the waiting car (sweet as you please). Transaction concluded, Phil went outside....opened the car door, slid into the drivers seat, glanced, absentmindedly in his rear-view mirror, and there she was....unambiguously escorted....primly

and firmly. "Take me to the bank," Mildred commanded, with the amiable imperiousness of an Agatha Christie dowager, and this he did, but not before she inquired of the car: "Didn't I loan you to him?"

I recall that prior to the first rehearsal, I—(as well as the other members of the ensemble)—was to have a meeting with Kenneth, one-on-one. This, I suspected, would not so much be in the nature of an audition to determine whether I was in or out of the ensemble—I was in—but rather more an opportunity for him to hear me play, provide pertinent critique, and to talk about his ideas for the production. In fact, I thought that the session would mainly be about the familiar issues of note interpretation, phrase-shaping, tempi, and so forth (and I had "woodshedded" the part accordingly, (as if I were to audition for a symphony orchestra))). I arrived at the appointed time, warmed up the horn, and took a seat at the solitary music stand. Kenneth came in, we exchanged greetings, and then instead of asking me to play the clarinet, he requested that I lie down on the floor—and then get up—as slowly as possible. Not, yet, as aware of Kenneth's work with movement as I was with his instrumental and text music, and being then perhaps unduly attached to what little dignity my legit-clarinethood conferred upon me, I did an internal balk—(wondering just what the hell he could be getting at)—but went ahead anyway: uncertain, a little fearful—vaguely resentful. In the first few seconds (one arm, one leg; this way—that—way; an elbow here, an ankle there—stiff, unresponsive, obdurate), I came to a rather pointed awareness that I had not thought very much±—(ever)—about the expressive use of my body, except as such a notion might be understood to apply to the activation of a reed, or the pre-chorded wiggling of fingers. Near-debilitating as this observation felt (and freighted with the resonant feeling of futility which it engendered) I did somehow accomplish the stipulated task—although without, I suspect, much elegance. In this light, I think that if Kenneth did not exactly affirm the gesture which resulted from my brittle fumbling, he at least appeared to respect the attempt.

[And, then, there was—I forget his name—an Englishman who had lived for the last twenty years on the continent. He had been in the RAF, during the Battle of Britain—and after the war had returned to university to train in philology. Finding little to do upon graduation—and having big eyes for the movie business—he went to Italy where his language chops landed him a gig as Federico Fellini's lip-sync man. Fifteen years in that endeavor had left him very near to legally blind and therefore unemployable, now, at his adopted calling. He lived in a small room in the hotel (they were most of them small rooms) writing film scripts and Shakespearean musicals in the half-light, hoping to land a movie deal....something to redeem his sacrifice.]

Next, Kenneth asked that I play selected passages from the score and, while doing so, also to attempt a "tracing," or "description," of the particular musical phrases being played through the movement of my instrument—inscribing arcs, peaks, and troughs of physical gesture, outlining, in space, the pitch contours/trajectories and rhythms of the notation. I did rather better at this, or so I remember and the meeting ended amicably.

[And, then, there was Ronnie, who identified himself as either Jesus or Moses, depending on the day. I never saw him without white robe, hemp sandals, and a dirty great gnarled staff, complete with a tiny and deliciously resonant bell on its end—(the only thing missing being a lamb ((or lambs))). All day long, he wheeled a metal shopping cart around; heaped high (and stuffed) with books, and articles of old clothing—cooking utensils, and various and sundry culinary delights culled from the dumpster behind the McDonald's down the street. These, he informed, were his "effects" and "holy articles," subject at any given moment to signification, designification, or resignification as was his wont of the moment. For a time Ronnie checked into the store once, daily, where he would hold court until some mysterious force called him back to a never-ending hegira up and down Fifth Avenue. He would take a chair and begin a debate with himself on selected passages from what he called the "little book"—a work which I never saw, and whose content, as Ronnie related it, seemed to have little relationship to any other text with which I was familiar (then or now). To enter the debate, all you had to do was to say anything at all, about anything at all, and your words immediately became an occasion for contention and pronunciamento (Ronnie to Ronnie—as if you weren't there).... He had once been a teacher of economics at University—or, so I was told.]

There was to be further work of this type in the form of exercises advanced as a means conducive to the development of a "collective energy" which might then inform our performance. Particularly memorable among these was the practice of beginning each rehearsal by lying in the supine position and articulating vowels through the near-closed throat without activating the vocal chords. This was accomplished by forming

the particular phoneme with the lips, bringing the rear of the tongue up to, but not entirely flat against, the upper palate, and expelling air through the small aperture which remained. Sometimes, only a single phoneme was articulated through both the ingressive and exhalative portions of a full cycle of breathing—but, two or more different ones might as well be employed, thus giving each person a multi-phoneme melody. Kenneth called this procedure "colored breathing," and when performed by the whole ensemble, it resulted in delicate bandwidth-extractions of differently-configured white sound, heard as a foreground antiphony within and against the background ebb-and-flow of the collective surround of our audible-breathing. **{Note to the performer: At this point (or prepared ahead of time) you may teach selected members of the audience to do the colored breathing. They may then assume the supine position and perform the colored breathing as a gentle background to the remainder of the reading---continuing, briefly past its conclusion. This is an option.}**

We were, as well, learning how to walk extremely slowly and with near-imperceptible forward motion—as in the Buddhist meditation. This was to be our primary mode of movement from one location to another (between scenes)—to be executed in complete darkness as we used flashlights to outline the barely visible instruments. As might be imagined, this movement involved lifting one leg very slowly (up, out, and in a curve) while balancing one's whole weight on the other—standing, for some moments, one-legged (like a flamingo). I never could quite accomplish this task without a more-than-occasional "quivering" on the balance point between upright and falling...and, I still remember the mysterious beauty of this slow walking "catching me in the throat" as, during the course of a rehearsal, I saw all of the various directions and qualities of "slow,"—(and ever-so-slight, left-to-right oscillations of upper bodies)—(like prairie-grass perturbed in a gentle wind)—made manifest by the ensemble members as they criss-crossed the dimly-lit space.

[And, then, there was Wilber. He was an ex-convict who rather unsuccessfully hid the fact that he worked for the police as an undercover narcotics informer. He claimed several "cover" occupations, among them deep-sea diver and provisions procurer for an orphanage in Baja California, run by the nuns—and he must have struck one hell of a deal with the powers that be for, although only recently out of San Quentin, he sported all the outward signs of a newly acquired advantage in the form of conspicuously consumable "stuff" and rapid-fire parvenu-patter. He loved to regale you with stories of his prison-mates—how he'd rubbed elbows (or so he said) with Timothy Leary "fucking around in the library," Art Pepper "woodshedding in the yard," and Charles Manson "piddling a cart down some long hall." He even admitted to a "memorable rap" with Merle Haggard. (though he couldn't remember just what they'd talked about)...For Wilber, fish was the comestable of choice, and he expressed an enthusiasm for many kinds, albeit harboring somewhat strange notions about what made them good for you (i.e., "Yeah! Fish is bitchin! It's got everything....It's got your iron...it's got your mercury....it's got your aluminum and heavy metals....it's, like, a complete food.")....One day, about dusk, sitting in the darkest corner of my very dark store and staring straight at me with an expression mixed of clinical curiosity, and mild amusement, Wilber volunteered, rather matter-of-factly that he had gone to prison for murder....the murder of his father....his "dad.""]

I also recall that apart from Partch's collective designation of "lost musicians, each ensemble member was assigned a further and more specific role—or "character"—to play. At rehearsals, Kenneth had been observing each of us closely, making what looked like rather detailed sketches and line drawings of various subjects in a large, black, notebook. From the abundance of our various languages (i.e., verbal, kinesthetic; "first order" and "meta") he had deduced the presence in each (or most) of us of particular and sometimes quite personal issues, whose address in performance might provide an occasion for the possibility of a more-than-metaphorical "unwitching." Initially, not everybody (including me) was happy either with their particular characterization—(mine, to my mortification, being the New Year's Baby)—or, indeed, with the very fact of such a stratagem, unsupported, as it seemed to be, by the "purely" musical facts of a score to be read and instruments to be played. Some of the characterizations seemed, at the very least, oblique—others distressingly "close to the bone."—(and weren't most of us, "veterans" of a previous "Bewitched" which had very largely eschewed a more pronounced theatrical role for the musicians in favor of those distinct and specialized ones ("musician," "dancer," "actor," etc.) which Partch had himself so long inveighed against?)). But, like it or not, this was to be a different sort of production from the one in which we had previously vested our possessive interests and, in consequence, a degree of personal discomfort (presenting occasionally as "interpersonal tension") was to nag the production throughout its term: a querulous, deep-structural, pedal-point beneath which the various foreground levels of our work together were often painfully elaborated .

[And, then, there was Sally. Sally was a copy-machine junkie. Being one too, I know the signs. Given time and the bucks, I'll photocopy anything from philosophical articles to interesting coffee stains. But, for Sally, copy-machine shops were more than merely a way to accumulate mounds of largely useless information on pearly-white squares of ground up tree. They were places of comfort and association: conviviality and discourse—the difference, split, if you will, between a university symposium and a fast-food restaurant. It was not strange to see Sally once a day, copying recipes, old photos, receipts for purchases, bills and articles of special interest—and one day, she wanted (in a manner of speaking) to copy me. It seems mine was not the only copy store which she frequented of a days perambulations, and she had compiled a photo album documenting her various encounters: Polaroid shots of fast copy clerks "in situ." Some stood stoically at the counter, dispensing product with glazed eyes. Some were smiling shy-and-or-silly-shit-eatingly, or posed with amiable stiffness by their signs like garden gnomes. And, one had even assumed a period "action" pose (as if he were Hornblower and his machine the Lydia—gunports open, guns run out—battleflags fluttering at the poop). And, now, not contented with the mereness of these, Sally wanted me—my image was to be added to this rogue's gallery of the infinitely reproductive. "Where, and how, would you like me"—I asked. "Oh, sitting, a little arrogantly, in front of the Xerox 7000, she replied (a little coquettishly)—and so I sat, crossing my legs with studied insouciance, taking care to texture my smile with the vaguest of sneers, and to sculpt my forearm and hand, with its cigarette, in such a way as to suggest the merest hint of something akin to the cruelty of tango. "How is it?—I inquired through teeth, clenched around their imaginary rose. "Oh, fine, but—could you make a copy at the same time?—"I wanna get your paper coming into the little tray.."]

But, as the everyday work of rehearsal progressed, I began to understand that the thrust of Kenneth's direction was no less than to rescue the ideas of "corporeality" and "unwitching" from the category of easily dismissable metaphor by attempting to construct for them a corresponding and palpable "reality." The individual meetings—the ensemble slow-walks and antiphonal phonemes and assignments of the troublesome (and troubling) theatrical personae—all, had been about making us more aware of the fact of our own individual and collective physicality, over and above that defined by the immediate requirements of playing an instrument—(even ((for some)) a very exotic one).

[And, then, there was Earl and Toni. They lived maybe two, long, blocks from the store, in an efficiency apartment choking with newspapers and magazine — heaped, in places, several feet high. I would see them most days around lunch time, when they joined their friend, Mrs. Bolla, for eats and talk at Betty Andersons Coffee Shop and Korean Restaurant. The years had not been particularly kind to either of them. Toni was confined to a wheel chair, barely able to speak, and Earl was encased in junk food fat and tormented by arthritis (his knuckles, red, with rheumatoid). Nevertheless, each day, summer or winter, he bundled her up in double sweaters, placed a jaunty tam-o-shanter on her head and wheeled her down Fifth Avenue for "luncheon," after which, they would sometimes come into the shop for a visit. On these occasions, I learned that in their youths, Toni had been a dancer, and that Earl had been an apprentice magician with the great Houdini (and that both had been Hollywood extras in the thirties and forties)—(even now, when I'm watching a classic movie, I close-read crowd scenes in a wistful hope that I'll see someone who looks like one or the other of them). But, for who-knows-what reasons, their showbusiness careers had failed to blossom with even the tiniest buds of promise, and they perforce had plodded on with second, third, and fourth choices ever since—cursed with the pain of fertile imaginations, unable to transcend the physical fact of continued reduced circumstance, yet resisting spiritual-extinction-by-deepest-disappointment, through a marked refusal to let despondancy have its way with them: to be without delight in whatever could be found to delight in. On one, and only one occasion, I was invited to their house for "edibles" and "potables" (as Earl would have it). It was like the mad-hatter's tea party in an underground cavern—the bowels, if you will, of a great publishing house: stalactites and stalagmites: pendants and mounds; chambers and sub-chambers of printed matter in asphyxiating profusion. I remember that throughout Toni remained hidden behind a tarp which served to demarcate some semblance of a bedroom within the space at large, and I could only hear her—a child's voice as it gently troped our discourse....and Earl had put on his best tie (a shiny, blue-reddish, thing, replete ((if it can be believed)) with palm trees, tropical wildlife, and a lurid sunset). It was a rain-shiny, black and blustering, sort of night (all spit and whoosh) and to celebrate my visit, Earl brought out an ancient, rotting, floor heater, firing it up—disquietingly—in the middle of a pile of Christian Science Monitors. We had Darjeeling tea and Uneeda Biscuits, some aged Velveeta, and half-a-split of Acadama Plum wine, after which Earl delivered a speech on the value of Toastmasters; a demonstration of the

slide-rule; and a petite magic show which went charmingly awry. Performances at their end, I was given the gentlest form of the bum's rush, just in time for Wall Street Week (which was Toni's favorite television show) and I shuffled off, happy to be out in the rain....grateful that I had somewhere to go and someone warm to go to. One day, there would be no more jaunty tam-o-shanter at the midday, and Earl had moved across town to a new apartment where for a last time, I (now also alone) payed him what turned out to be a final visit. We had Darjeeling tea and Uneeda Biscuits on a carpet of Scientific Americans—and Earl extemporized on "the habits of the marsupial.")

I began also to think that, to Kenneth, not only was the word "corporeality" to be rescued from the mereness of descriptive terminology, but that we musicians—"bewitched"-in-actuality by our habitual and largely uninterrogated assumptions about the autonomous nature of our profession—were, as well, to be rescued by virtue of the struggle to come to terms with our own individual corporeality. In addition to promoting ensemble cohesion, the various exercises had been about preparing us to recognize and confront our own self-protection schemes in the face of the unfamiliar—(and the ancillary fears of being "found out," which such stratagems engender).

If, before—I had thought of the word "corporeality," in terms of more or less relevant meta-language employed, after the fact, in address of something which resides more significantly in "sounds themselves"—(whatever these are)—I was understanding it now more as a kind of conceptual "ursatz," or fundamental-basis, underlying and informing all of "Bewitched's" palpable emanations and efflorescences...(or the music of the music).

If, before—had understood the music, primarily, in terms of its expanded pitch gamut (reducing it, if you will, to its 43 tones)—and the expressive possibilities presented by the instruments (reducing them, if you will to the category of "new instrumental resources")—it was beginning to be hearable, now, as propounding another extension/definition of voice—as if Partch was willing wood to sing with the exquisitely fine-point pitch distinctions of the intoning human.

If before—I had understood the anti-equal-temperament polemic to be the linchpin/centerpiece of Partch's global argument, *The Bewitched*—(as an unfolding system of interactive corporealities: a profusion of multi-sensory tactilities)—seemed now to be palpably more expansive than a "call to arms" on behalf of the mereness of alternative systems of tuning. More did it seem to be the case that tuning, "itself," as exemplified by Partch's 43, was the call to arms—n behalf of the more important issue of voice, as the bodies primary sound. My piano (beloved), the ill-tempered nemesis and "basic mutilator" was, through its structural rigidity, the agent of conversion, by which the "slippery," "slidy," organic sinuosities of utterance might "better" be reduced to the desiccated specificity of "notes"—and a wider array of distinctive pitch had been but one of Partch's remedies.

And, then, there were the instruments, so beautiful in themselves: instruments, in which to make them sound, it was also necessary to move beautifully around them—(environments/tablaturs to shape the body)—to cultivate and revel in those "residual" body motions which my clarinet teachers had admonished me to jettison, in their desire to insure that my physicality did not detract from the sounds ("themselves") which that physicality made possible. I now understood Kenneth's tracing exercise, at the preliminary one-on-one, to have been designed precisely to elicit such routinely suppressed body language.

Prologue: The hall is dark. "Lost Musicians" are wandering through the audience, singly or in pairs. Who knows where they've come from or where they are going. None carry instruments, but a few have objects or parcels (whole "worlds," born on their backs, or held in their hands?) and they are dressed in topcoats, caps, scarves, and other apparel suggestive of a bitter cold. All carry flashlights which they sweep-shine slowly, back and forth across the space—the arcs and trajectories of their beams interpenetrating and crossing to form an ephemeral architecture within that which encloses them. Here and there, a nomad light will illuminate the vague outline of a shape or shapes—an object or objects. Exactly what these are—in their aloofness and momentary incomprehensibility—is not clear, but, still, they beckon. A single "Lost Musician," drawn to one of these manifestations, ventures closer and circles it warily, attempting to discern a "nature." Albeit lost, (s)he is still a musician. It is sound which (s)he knows with intimacy and precision, and would therefore invoke as a means to connect with this singular—if though still perceptually inchoate—phenomena. After a few tentative touches of the object, rendering the shape at least partly knowable as palpable substance, (s)he strikes it gently—once and then again—at one location, and then another—drawing out the

long-dormant sound-world resident within. Finding resonance, (s)he begins to articulate a pattern composed of these various revealed sounds—a pattern which serves to summon other Lost Musicians, and they, too, one at a time, enter the space, drawn inexorably towards the objects, alive—now—with voice. Each in turn will be drawn to a particular one of these expressive instrumentalities, to release its distinctive sonic energy to the mix. The sound grows by accretion—spruce and bamboo and pernambuco; wire and metal and glass—one sound-strata upon another, culminating with the voices of woodwinds and bowed string. This now-composite, sounding-entity, simmers and seethes to such a furious peak that it conjures and summons a wholly other and final figure to the space—an apparition(?)—a *bruja*(?)—emerging, as if from the darkest of clouds, moving deliberately—ominously—down—and into—the vacuum, created by the Lost Musician's sonorous cavitation.

It is not clear whether they, in their loneliness and dispossession, have willed her—or she, them—(in her infinite wisdom). But, together they will transform this space from one of mundane certitude, to one of magical possibility.

[And then, there was the guy who threw food at you from an upper-floor window. I never knew his name, nor saw him in the flesh, nor even knew, for sure if he was a he—but, for all that, we were acquainted—(after our fashion). Immediately adjacent the hotel, there was a little sunken lot—foursquare, cramped, and rut-riddled—for the tenants. to park their cars. I didn't use it often, because my Datsun 1200 sedan barely had the shit to get me back up the ramp when it was time to go home—but sometimes, I just couldn't find parking on the street, so here I was. As I was getting out of the car, I felt something whirl past my ear like a Melbourne magpie guarding the nest site. "What the f---," spaked I, reflexively—wheeling around to confront my attacker—but, there was no black and white bird (nor any other avian belligerent) to be seen. Just a Baloney sandwich on enriched white bread, lying flat against my windshield—complete with Jackson Pollockian mayonnaise trail. "What archery," I said to myself, in a goofy and feeble stab at good sportsmanship, attempting to mask my humiliation by copping a line from Whose Afraid of Virginia Woolf in what I will laughingly call my best Richard Burton voice....On another such occasion, I was standing at the doorway, having a smoke between customers—(half in, half out—when I experienced a vague presentiment of impending doom. Something told me that if I didn't move back inside, post-fucking-haste, I'd regret it (just a little). So, yielding to instinct, I stepped out of the way just in time to avoid being hit by a high-velocity jar of Vienna Sausage, which shattered at my feet, spewing miniscule weenies in a delightful floral pattern on the asphalt....On yet another occasion, I had turned my attention to the street in front of Jim's place. Jim was a former helden-tenor turned barber, and he had a store front just like mine, the other side of Betty Anderson's Coffee Shop and Korean Restaurant. When we didn't have anything better to do, he and I were in the habit of checking out one another's customers, and, so, this day's deadtime found me sitting at my window, with cigarette and coffee, sleepily taking in the action. At the curb, just in front of the barber shop, there was this interesting car—a tuna boat with fins, in the fifties style: an ancient, but gussied-up, aquamarine Imperial, in point of fact "Who belongs to that, I inquired (self-to-self), conjecture-on-conjecture lulling me, like soft song, into a state of late-afternoon reverie....to be shattered in a split-second by a circular object (a viscous frizbee?) hurled at great speed in the general direction of the imperial—yellow-brown-crimson, and sloppy-mottled with discs-cum-suction cups. It was a large Pizza, and it slap-landed pepperoni-side-down and (more or less) intact on the Imperial's pristine windshield (one imagines a truly stentorian "splat,"—followed by sepulchral quiet)....Jim's party emerged: a saturnine looking gent in herringbone jacket—sporting a glistening new pachuco cut. He surveyed the damage, calmly, then turned around to face Jim who had moved outside to commiserate and gawk "Last time, it was a chicken—right?" "I think so," Jim replied "He 's adding a little starch now"—the man said. (somewhat ruefully) "So it would appear"—Jim replied (over his shoulder, head slightly inclined).]

I have always suffered from stage fright, fearing that in the heat of it, I will faint, heaping embarrassment on myself and, by association, those who love me— (Throughout the 1975 production of *The Bewitched*, I carried a bottle of smelling salts in every performance ((just in case)) thinking, I guess, that I could grab a quick sniff between notes if the vertigo came. Dizziness or no, I never used it—I was too embarrassed to). I remember the darkness and the terror of moving from off-stage, through the audience and up the steps, to the space occupied by the instruments— thinking all the while that my damned flashlight, if the source of some beauty, wasn't much good as a means of getting me around. Whether by virtue of excessive supination, or persistant inner-ear troubles, my never steady sense of balance had gone completely wonky, and I found

myself wishing that I had some version of training wheels on my ankles. I wavered, waddled, and gasped for air in the throes of a full-blown panic attack, clutching the hated flashlight with both hands drenched in sweat, working furiously to contain and contort my increasingly diminished sense of boundaries into the fixed shape of a lost musician moving slowly and inexorably towards magic. Thank God for the dark, or the audience would certainly have seen me revealed for what I was. Somehow, I made it to the stage—staggering up to my first position. I remember that I circled around the clarinet (upright on its stand)—lamely trying to convey some small sense that its trapped sounds wished me to liberate them—and I further recall that (immediately before my first entrance) I flopped down in the chair, grabbed up the horn and, at the aural cue of a pronounced change in meter, began to play my first licks. I was the clarinet player again and my fear was gone—(For a time).

[And, then, there was Will. Will was about Ninety, and near to the end when I knew him. He claimed to have been a jockey in roaring-twenties Cuba, but he was well—wel—over six feet tall. After lunch, he liked to have his sit-down-sometimes-snooze in the shop window where he'd reminisce and watch the people go by. He had two all purpose verbal ejaculations which the sight of anybody, woman or man, could elicit—out of the blue. "All meat and no potatoes!", he'd shout,—or "hallelujah—and, I never did quite know (nor did he elucidate upon) the criteria informing the particular usage of either description. He liked to talk about horses, and the Caribbean, food and the first world war (in which he had been a captain of infantry). He'd talk and talk, growing increasingly garrulous in his friendly way (his voice a sort of wisp-husky tidewater twang) until my interest itched enough to cause me to break his narrative with a question—whereupon he'd spit acid at me (in the manner of the Queensland cane toad). "What do you know about it, stupid fucker," he'd snarl (voice, suddenly clear with menace)—and, then, he'd go right on talking, as sweetly-pink-soundish as before—(until you asked the next question). One day, Will came into the shop and sat down in his usual place by the window. He did not, then, acknowledge my hello, nor did he say anything at all to me, but sat in silence, staring out at the street for what my grandmother would have called the "longest of times." Then, he rose, and without comment, walked out. I never saw him again.]

I remember that Kenneth could never get Scene Two—(Exercises in Harmony And Counterpoint Are Tried In A Court Of Ancient Ritual)—to be dreary enough. Scene Two is Partch's commentary on the blandishments of a kind of "dry-as-dust" academism and features a commensurately desiccated duet between the Adapted Viola and the Clarinet, cast (unwittingly?) in the role of purveyors of the holy exercises (i.e., those talismans of respectability in the form of sanctified notes in their appropriate ((and sanctified)) arrangements).

Well, we could never get it "dead" enough, "dry" enough—uninteresting enough to suit him. Some sense of energized phrasing, or "singing" quality—some inadvertent "con espressione,"—always perturbed the musical line just enough to save it from the requisite dullness. After not-a-few (too-romantic) reads—Kenneth finally hit on a way to illustrate exactly what he was getting at with an allusion to Jack Benny. "You know," It's like when Jack Benny used to do this"—(and he placed his right hand under the left armpit, and brought his left hand up and over his chin and right cheek—cradling them, in the manner of the blase tightwad from Waukegan). Then, keeping his torso absolutely rigid, Kenneth executed a painfully slow, 180-degree, head turn from left to right—with the deadest of dead-pan expressions (**Note to the performer: You may illustrate here**). That gesture—a particularly beautiful way—it seemed to me—of "doing dull" (stiff, placid, and resigned—yet vaguely haughty in its resignation)—illustrated the desired state much more immediately than had any previous exegesis, and, further, provided an occasion to speculate on the possibility for other and variously expressed corporealities of "dull."—(i.e., how might the dullness of exhaustion be physically embodied?—or over-familiarity?—or protracted and internalized indignation? —or, the dullness occasioned by a complete absence of warmth or involvement?—or that born of smugness or self-satisfaction? ((and what of the liberating, sublime and politically defiant dullness which comes in the repudiation of society's mandate to be "interesting" at all costs?))). Through Kenneth's powers of elaboration, I was beginning to understand something of greater interest than the mere mechanics of how to obtain an uninteresting performance. I was beginning to grasp that "dull," as word (when elevated to the level of a concept, rather than left to reside in the mereness of a single and uninterrogated descriptive term assumed to be inextricably wedded to the particular evidence which elicits it) could, with imagination, be variously evidenced through many and distinct physical embodiments/expressions. We weren't (in other words) limited to a single kind of "dull" (or "musical"—or "human") We could have as many (or as few) kinds as the relative richness (or poverty) of our

descriptive language (i.e., verbal, kinesthetic, etc.) would allow—dullness, and its ancillary and/or sibling states becoming then a commensurately enriched (or impoverished) world thereby. And, so, I was, through my participation as a clarinetist, in a musico-theatrical-sculptural-dance-text of Harry Partch, learning about connotation and denotation; concept and evidence; and the assumptions which inform the construction of a taxonomy—not only as these exist as notions in the head, but through an art of physical (corporeal) expression." Which kind of "dull" was Jack Benny's?—(and which, our "tight-assed" little quartet's?)—(and which, indeed, mine—in my own name). These are, of course, considerations familiar to any actor during the course of a puzzling through and/or "fleshing out" of the ramifications of a character's being-in-the-world-of-the-play—but, as a musician, I was unaccustomed to thinking of myself as a "character,"—(or, indeed, music as a theater (as distinct, say, from "incidental music" in a theater)—and although future readings more nearly achieved the much-sought-after blandness, I don't know that I (qua I) was ever quite drained enough of expression: quite (ever) able to will myself to be a thoroughly convincing embodiment of "dull." Later—and possibly by way of a deep exasperation at our unregenerate musicality—Kenneth would assign us a new gesture to be executed when we had finished playing the music and were getting up to commence our slow-walks to the next stage positions. This was a conscious shaking of the legs and arms, putatively expressive of (our) fear in the light of the witches having just (and with impunity) "blown up our shit"—(as it were). It was to be begun when the mereness of butt had just cleared the mereness of chair, and continued on well into the standing position. In effect, it looked stiff, artificial, insincere, and inept: a perfectly ridiculous gesture and thoroughly appropriate to the subject. No amount of heartfelt expression, nor inadvertent elegance (nor cheeky dionysian tweaking) could survive its impression of mock-sollicitous sychophancy.

[And, then, there was Sam. Sam had been a trumpet player in Los Angeles in the 1930's. For a time, his main gig had been at the Cotton Club West, with Les Hite's orchestra which had opened over the years for Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington among others. Sam had toured a bit with Louis Armstrong, and liked to talk about the time that Louis surprised him by making him solo ("disadvantageously," as Sam would put it)...when he thought that Sam was getting a little too cocky, playing out too much and copping licks....("Of course I fucked it up—What do you think"?). Sam never had much work for me—two, five-cent copies at a time (at the most) but his conversation often made the difference between a day just hanging on....and a day. We'd talk for a solid hour, he and I, the in-and-out flow of my walk-in trade having little appreciable impact on either the intensity or continuity of our conversation. I particularly loved his stories about Duke—how the band would come in, and set up; and everything would be arranged verbally—(chord structures "parsed," instruments distributed, and solos assigned)—with no charts in evidence! "Duke'd just tell Hodges and Harry Carney; Otto Hardwick and Barney Bigard; Sonny Greer and Rex Stewart and Juan Tizol and the rest—(lovingly listed: Sam's red-streaked eyes, lost in the past—what to do; and they'd do it." "Ya see, that band had played together for so long, they could play Duke's pieces before he even thought em up." When I knew Sam, he hadn't played the trumpet for years. His steady gig being now the ownership and management of a chain of fried chicken restaurants in Southeast San Diego (and as well as the good talk, he used to bring me a wing and a leg, now and again, too).]

I remember Kenneth sitting on the floor of the Smith Hall stage, gesticulating wildly in demonstration of the kind of incisive playing he wanted from the harmonic canons in Scene Four (A Soul Tormented By Contemporary Music Finds a Humanizing Alchemy) "Its got to cut right through the texture" he exhorted, flailing away at some imaginary entity/enemy....The rehearsal hall was dark, except for a single light spotting the stage, and you could barely see him for the overlapping skeins of Pall Mall smoke which writhed up and around his head, wrapping it in a kind of diaphanous turban. I further recall, that Kenneth was reading the Shostakovich/Volkov *Testimony* at this time and I often saw a copy on the director's table next to his notebook. I wondered then (and now) what aspects—(if any)—of Shostakovich's memoir could be informing Kenneth's direction of Partch's work (i.e., how were they—both—connecting in and to Kenneth?)....(or was such a resonance spurious, merely of my own fabricating?)....And, what was Kenneth's "itch" such that he could live with such apparent intensity in the work of another—(as if his own—yet so different from his own?)

[And, then, there was Mr. Ree. Mr. Ree was the owner of Betty Anderson's Coffee Shop and Korean Restaurant. He'd bought it from Betty who was sick of fifth avenue and everything connected with the slinging of hash. Mr. Ree retained both Betty's hand painted sign (stenciling in further designations of his own) and, all of the appurtenances of the greasy-spoon dining for which she had been justly famous hereabouts, but added to her infamous mainstays his own welcome spread of Korean delicacies. You could, for instance, get Kim Chee with your Bacon, Eggs, Hash Browns, and long neck Budweiser—and

a truly delectable affair called "Oriental beef and scrambled" (served with pancakes, if desired). Each month, Mr. Ree would as well do a different specialty sandwich, and these could be quite elegant and quirky (my own favorite being the Turkey, Bacon, Cream Cheese, Red Onion, and Capers on Pumpernickel). One of my customers affectionately called them "entropy" sandwiches because after the first ones of the month—always beautiful—they were embarked upon a continuum of steady-state decay, until, at the end, barely a hint of the original masterwork remained—(the onion had disappeared, the capers had evaporated, the pumpernickel bread turned to generic, enriched, white kapok). Then, when all the familiar and reassuring morphology of the original had melted into memory, the cycle would begin again. Mr. Ree had an achingly beautiful daughter who was a budding concert pianist. I went to one of her recitals and can testify that she had a delicious touch and could operate the pedals with more than a little deftness of foot: her Chopin Nocturne being an exemplary taffy-pull of tasteful rubato, and the A-flat Major Polonaise advanced with a sinewy intensity bordering on the febrile. Yet, notwithstanding these very obvious musical attainments resident in his daughter, Mr Ree harbored no very elevated opinion of musicians and was terrified that she might actually begin to take it all dead-seriously-serious. "I don't want her to turn out like you"—he'd say—with a wink, and a specialty sandwich (He had no very elevated opinion of me, either—but, he liked me well enough—I think).]

I remember that all of us were assigned articles of clothing to be worn in layers and covered by a topcoat. It was loosely the plan that, by the end of the Prologue, the topcoats would be discarded and that, with each succeeding scene (for each of us, a different one), a subsequent layer would be removed, until we were down to that particular article (or articles) of clothing signifying our own individual "bewitchment." My personal moment of sartorial purgation-cum-revelation was to occur in Scene Six (Euphoria Descends a Sausalito Stairway) and as my "character" was that of the New Year's Baby, the signs of bewitchment were, predictably, a sort of stylized sash over one shoulder, and a pair of boxer shorts; both to be worn over street clothes—pants on pants. At the end of this scene (a lovers duet), the clarinetist has a substantial solo which serves to gently prod the two principals up the ramp, and out of sight, after the witch's intervention in their problematic little tete-a-tete. My stage position was at the very foot of the ramp, standing bolt upright, with heels together and toes pointed out like Charlie Chaplin and, at some point, just before the end of the scene, the dancers were to emerge from the stage left area to execute a slow promenade—eventually crossing directly in front of me, veering to the right, and proceeding on up the ramp. I was to trace their movement with one of my own: a 180-degree, slow, rotation on my heels, playing the music—(in the sash and boxer shorts)—while holding the clarinet straight up in the air like the angel Moroni. Throughout the solo, I calibrated the speed of my heel-rotation to coincide with the tempo of the music, arriving at my final note at just the point at which I could see the bell of my instrument passing the edge of the ramp (and the two dancers in ascent, a fair distance skyward). The phallic implication of this gesture was, of course, the laughably obvious one (both to me and the audience) but I preferred to imagine myself as a giant pen drawing the lovers paths across the stage—(or fishing pole, reeling them along)—or even as if a species of mechanical toy, hourly popping out of a medieval clock tower. Later, I asked Kenneth what about me had suggested the New Year's baby as a character (some of the others being Abe Lincoln; Joan of Arc; Pinocchio; Tarzan, and Gypsy Rose Lee), and he said. "It was the fact that you can never keep your feet still. Even when you're supposed to be sitting quietly, you're feet are frantic. You're the perfect symbol of chamber of commerce San Diego—(He had not a little of the transplanted east-coasters contempt for what he thought of as Southwestern placidity)—You know, with it's "city in motion" advertising campaign"—(i.e., giving the semblance of motion without definitive movement). He was certainly right about me and probably about San Diego. And, indeed, if the store was any very reliable indicator, my daytime working life, however romantically rationalized, was one of almost debilitating constriction, defined and delineated by long periods of stasis, partitioned by bursts of rapid movement in very small circles, in a very small space—living by dint of myself-bewitching-me-into-being-bewitched-enough-(by the theater of my customers)-to reconcile myself to staying put....when I really needed to be moving.

[And, then, there was Ray. Ray was the manager of the Theosophical Society Library and Book store, on Fifth Avenue. I used to stop by there sometimes on my way in to work, and we'd put on the coffee, smoke too many cigarettes (culled by him, bummed by me, mostly from his ever ample supply of Benson and Hedges) and make never enough talk to suit me. Ray could be a right calming influence in times of craziness and despondency, and sometimes we'd get so deep into it that I'd forget to open my own damn store. He had been a bomber pilot in MacArthur's part of the pacific (had even flown the old boy around some—"What a pain in the ass!") and sometime late in the war was shot down losing, in consequence, his right arm and three fingers of the left hand. (I won't soon forget the elegant way he balanced a

cigarette between the remaining thumb and forefinger as, with equal elegance, he seeded lucidity into the odd cloud darkening our discourse). While recuperating in an army hospital, Ray got to know the actor Lou Ayres then, I suppose, most notable for his youthful performance in the film, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Ayres had invited the patriot's opprobrium by declaring conscientious objector status, choosing to serve at the front, as a medic, but refusing to kill.....And, Ray, trying to make sense of all that had happened to him, would be drawn (perhaps by way of his long talks with Ayers) to pacifism, spiritual search and inevitably to a serious study of Philosophy. To say that he seemed to have read everything, is to be coyly silly with understatement. He was encyclopedic and inter-textually elaborative—exhibiting an expansive erudition which embraced Zen Literature, Gurdjieff-Ouspensky, the Kaballah, the Gnostic Gospels, and western philosophers from Plato and Heraclitus to Merleau-Ponty and Schutz. But, it was the teachings of Krishnamurti which meant, I think, the most to him. He had attended the master's lectures at Ojai many times over the years, arguably delighting as much in the situational querulousness of Krishnamurti's persona-in-response as in the great man's messages. Ray was also a repository of Theosophical anecdote, particularly as this referred to the society's doings in San Diego from the turn of the century on. From him, I learned that the Theosophists had once had a white-robed marching band, and that their Point Loma grounds (in 1980, the campus of California Western University) were situated above a rabbit warren of subterranean and interlocking tunnels and chambers—constructed so that their spiritual leader could move between above-ground rooms completely unobserved (the better, one imagines, to pop out at particularly opportune moments). I also heard stories of candlelight processions, and mysterious theaters ("in the Greek mode")—after dark, up and down the seaward slopes of Point Loma. With respect to the bookshop, Ray took special pride in the diversity of its offerings, in defence of which, he was what James Lee Burke's great character, Dave Robicheaux, would call a "stand-up guy," willing to get pretty far (if always nicely) in your face when his core values were threatened. He made available for example, not a few books of perennial unpopularity with the theosophists themselves, to wit, the works of Krishnamurti whom many of the local members—thinking him at best an ingrate and at worst an unregenerate apostate-cum-false-prophet—sought to banish from the store in perpetuity. (Afterall, hadn't theosophists past—waiting years for Krishnamurti to come of age and assume his preordained place as the next avatar—experienced their own rather profound unwitching when he left them twisting in the wind through a virtual de-signification of himself—admonishing them to live their own lives, to see the world for themselves; to waste no further time with the pronouncements of avatars). Finally, Ray's battle with the purists and censors (blue-stockings, wowsers, and the occasional asshole, ((out-and-out))) consumed just a year too many, and he told the big bosses (with some precision) just exactly where they could put their little store —after which, he and his wife Jane upped-stakes, moving to a tiny town on the Oregon coast (where, last I heard, Ray was the manager an out-of-the-body-experience bookshop....within ear-shot of the sea.)]

I remember that in Scene Ten (The Cognoscenti Are Plunged Into Demonic Descent While at Cocktails) the woodwinds and adapted viola, were positioned off-stage front, in the pit: David Dunn, the violist, and myself at stage left, Dan Maureen, the bass clarinetist, and Donna Caruso, the piccolo player, at stage right. Our stage-left group was placed side by side, with David facing the audience and myself facing the stage, thus suggesting a kind of janus-headed, composite entity. Directly in front of us, on the stage, was the instrument which Partch calls the "Spoils of War," a kind of wooden cruciform on a platform to which are affixed various tuneable found objects such as Cloud Chamber Bowls; artillery shell casings; three metal "Whang Guns" and pernambuco block. The scene begins with a party, a gathering of those "in the know" who find their pretentious ribaldry significantly undone by the witch's corrective gate-crashing, and as this silly affair progresses to the point of unwitching, the music gains in intensity, the stage becoming a welter of sound and movement with the entire cast of musicians and dancers engaged. On the last night in San Diego, somewhere near the climactic point of the scene, I saw Phil Keeney, the "Spoils of War" player, take a swipe at the Spoil's Cloud Chamber Bowl only to have it shatter on impact. We kept playing. Pieces of glass showered the stage, posing an immediate threat to the barefoot dancers. We kept playing. One of the "Harmonic Canon" players (David Savage) got up, produced a broom from somewhere, and began to sweep up the glass (as if this were just another choreographed part of the action), working his way all around the stage, in, out of, and around the dancer's melee until all (or most) of the glass was out of the way—the scene, all the while, moving inexorably toward its big (pre-planned) explosion and final cooldown, with nary a scintilla of lost focus. When the work was concluded, the bows taken, the last of the audience trickled out, and the packing up begun, I recall that David and I looked down and there, between us, was a rather large, and jagged, shard—nomad spawn of the Spoil's-of-War's supernova. A few inches, this way or that, and who

knows? Perhaps, the witch found time in her busy round of eradicating chimera, to play guardian angel—the preserver part of a Trimurti.

Coda

Now....years later....I think that I know that Harry Partch was advancing something perhaps difficult to comprehend, in our particular society.....enamoured as it seems to be with willy-nilly affirmations of, and largely uninterrogated assumptions about the overarching value of objectivity, pragmatism, reductionism, utility, specialization—enamoured as it seems to be with a hypocritical puritanism, at once lubricious and self-loathing—enamoured as it seems to be with the idea of art as a kind of mindless "entertainment," to be slurped on, like salve, at the end of a hard day's wage slavery---(Partch's "music by the yard")—enamoured as it seems to be with the abdication (by most) of personal art making and participation to elites---overtly and self-avowedly "high"; covertly, and disengeniously, "low".....i.e., the shameless reintegration and enlivening of (at least three of) the senses, in and through a theater of multi-sensory expressions—becoming an argument for the return of ritual and magic (as viable contexts for finding one's way in the world)—becoming, further, a critique of—(or broadside leveled at)—the "real" world's reality of platitudinous slogans in advance of a deadly, dismembering, and pre-chosed stultification which it defines (and sells to us) as normal (calling it a "society")—becoming, yet, further, an environment conducive to the possibility of some greater experience of a deeper mystery, or a more palpable sensuality, or, an awe in the fact that through it, we are differently alive.

And, I also know that Kenneth Gaburo was advancing something perhaps equally difficult to comprehend in this selfsame society:—i.e., that music—quite apart from the near-total relegation of most of its types (no matter whether "low" or "high" in the traditional sense) to the domain of entertainment—retains an important and traditional function, of long standing, as an occasion for thought—about what we hear, and how we hear, and who we are, in and through our hearing....An occasion for thought, and its vehicle for exchange in the form of discourse, germane both to music's presumed internal nature—as this is revealed in the diverse unfoldings of sounds and forms which humans have gathered under its rubric—(and by which we recognize its presence in the world)—and the nature of the relationship of that rubric-specific gathering of sounds and forms to some world, putatively extant outside its domain—a world both beckoning and threatening, seductive and repulsive, invasive and elusive.

In Kenneth's own vigorous, vibrant, and oft-times contentious discourse, music became beautifully conceivable as a flowering of complex whole-language articulations, in advance of the idea that (although a perilous undertaking within a social reality, arguably hostile to genuine self-definition) one could, in fact, create one's own reality (that one had to---to survive with identity). Sources for first steps in such a direction might be found to reside in any phenomena, observable by an observer. Whether windblown laundry or a facial tic; low-frequency emanations hovering around a loudspeaker cone, or a high-speed tongue elegantly lapping up an icecream. Whether getting up or falling; fidgeting or eating—any seemingly mundane attribute or occurrence might recast to perception as richly implicative of potential "meaning"—then to become a "scatter,"....subject to "projection," "extraction," "density," "displacement," and "expansion": cogitated and elaborated upon (to say nothing of stared at) until a deeply personal expressive utterance emerged in its light. **{* N.B., these are the names of conceptual excercises given by Kenneth to his students of composition}.**

That Kenneth had invested such intensity in the production of *The Bewitched* surprises me now, not very much. For all his arguments affirming the centrality of self (particularly as this attended to Kenneth qua Kenneth), he had a remarkable capacity for identification with the desires and struggles of others for expression on their own self-recognized, self-defined, and self-stipulated terms (whether fully-formed or newly-emergent—unregenerately and fluidly vocal, or enabled only of murmur). And he was possessed of a profound and truly glorious antipathy to any perceived agent repressive of that expression whether state-blatant or market-soft in strategy. Perhaps, this is where Shostakovich's *Testimony* comes in (oblique as his musical language is to anything which one might associate with Harry Partch) i.e., the story of an embattled composer, becoming for Kenneth, ally with Kenneth—(on behalf of Partch, on behalf of Kenneth himself, indeed, on behalf of anyone struggling to have his or her own say)—in the constant war with censorship, obduracy, dismissal: whether imposed by another, or administered self on self-(as in the scene where you do unto you, someone else's dirty work for them—unable to oppose it, even to speak of it). Finally, Partch's work, although so different in media and morphology from Kenneth's own, shares with him, nonetheless, a

common stance vis-a-vis that society within and against which each made his work. For, rather than choosing to become the mere outputs of a second-hand spectacle of official pronouncement in an echo-chamber of cultural pre-disposition, both composers actively sought an "outside," by various and different means, transmuting the world around them into preferred and particular entities/expressions of their own wanting-then-needing, singular—each—for being both habitat and language....where each lived, and what each said.

And, I also know that I only occasionally had more than a glimpse of this during the course of my work in *The Bewitched*—that I remained a stiff, note-obsessed, clarinetist with my head in the stand—mired in habit and afraid of the dark. But, glimpse it was—and enough to have caused me, ever since, to yearn for alternatives (however meager) to that world which I have inherited and of needs be must inhabit. This was both my "bewitchment"—and my "unwitching"—corporeal and constant.

[And, then, there was me, standing in front of the shop on my last day of business, glad (almost) to be rid of it. Full head of hair, Orphan Annie glasses, and skinny as I ever would be. Behind me, the shop—empty and dark. Next year (but one) in Australia.]

Iowa City
October, 1997
(Revised, November 1999-January 2000)

a journey across this spot
changes everything between us

Dirt and Toothpaste, or, On the Problem of Being A Self in Modern Life (notes on Allan Kaprow)

Tildy Bayar

My friend Ron said in a recent email that "one thing modern life seems to possess is the capacity to nullify something while expending a lot of energy attending to it"². Another way to say this might be that the experiences of modern life build up surfaces while emptying out inner spaces. Allan Kaprow's work may be an antidote; in it he expends a lot of energy attending to surfaces, but instead of emptying them out, his attention causes them to deepen, expand, and fill. Kaprow has called his work "un-art"³. While modern art concerns itself with surfaces in order to transform and transcend them, Kaprow is concerned with surfaces but not with transcendence; his surfaces don't lead anywhere except back to themselves, as deepened experiences of themselves-as-themselves.

Reading Kaprow's book *Essays on The Blurring of Art and Life*, a collection of essays from 1958 to the present, you'd think he'd been on a single track from the days of his earliest works. In the late 1950s he was an up-and-coming young painter filled with Modernist zeitgeist but dissatisfied with the static quality of paintings. He began making large diptychs and triptychs with movable parts for the viewer to arrange according to her taste, thus ensuring that the work would be different when viewed by different people and that the viewer would participate actively in the work. He wanted the experience of an artwork to be total; he wrote in 1958 that Jackson Pollock, "... with the huge canvas placed upon the floor, thus making it difficult for the artist to see the whole or any extended section of 'parts', could truly say that he was 'in' his work"⁴, and about Pollock's methods that "...not only is this not the old craft of painting, but it is perhaps bordering on ritual itself, which happens to use paint as one of its materials"⁵—in other words that the act of creation, not the static result, defined an artwork. And he made a piece in the back garden of a gallery consisting of an enclosure filled with old tires. He saw the visual field, a loosely-piled expanse of tires, as an invitation to the viewer to participate, to act on or build with the tires, but instead gallery visitors confined themselves to picking their way cautiously through the enclosure, careful not to dirty a suit cuff or break a heel. Kaprow already saw the viewer as an integral part of the work: "We ourselves are shapes (though we are not often conscious of this fact). We have differently colored clothing; can move, feel, speak, and observe others variously; and will constantly change the 'meaning' of the work by so doing"⁶.

Kaprow seems not so much to have had his finger on the pulse of the emerging

¹ All quotations in this essay (explicit and implicit) not attributed to any other source were scribbled down frantically at a talk given by Allan Kaprow at Mills College on October 29, 1999. I hope I haven't inadvertently misrepresented anything.

² Ron Weisberg (ronwei@california.com), from an email discussing *The Gutenberg Elegies* by Sven Birkerts (Fawcett Books, 1995)

³ *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1993. Jeff Kelley, ed.), p.97

⁴ Ibid., p.4

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p.11

zeitgeist of the sixties as to have evolved organically in parallel with it, to a large extent helping to create it, but as the decade dawned he was still thinking within a Modernist framework. When he had the radical thought that "... life is much more interesting than art, and that was the most avant-garde thing [he] could do", Kaprow didn't simply begin Making Life Not Art, or even perform a Cage-like guerrilla life-art switch; instead he brought life into art by inventing (perhaps not entirely single-handedly, but undisputedly centrally) "Happenings". During a Happening, "... always a purposive activity, whether it is game-like, ritualistic, or purely contemplative ... Jazz may be played, a couple may make love, food may be cooked, a film may be projected, furniture may be battered to bits"⁷. Happenings elevated ordinary activities to the status of Art by performing them in a ritualistic context, or with the kind of awareness and attention normally associated with ritual. The activities thus performed no longer signified what they would have under normal-life conditions, nor did they attain the status of transformed-transcendent art materials; instead they took on an entirely new meaning having to do with their realtime unfolding, each activity becoming a celebration of itself, of its particulars, and of the time it took to do it. Kaprow mentions in his Pollock essay that Surrealism in painting had "... impressed most American artists as a collection of unconvincing clichés"⁸; the "purposiveness" of Happenings seems in direct contrast to Surrealism's sibling Dada, with its focus on meaningless activities and conjunctions.

Interestingly, Happenings don't seem to have been about "self-expression". One might say instead that they allowed freedom from the obligation to express, while not being explicitly against expression like many of Cage's pieces. The individual participant in a Happening was of interest primarily as a generator of actions that could affect others' actions; it was her actions that were the subject of the event; i.e., it was surfaces. The individual was focused in and on the direction of her awareness, obviating the need for an explicit "self" to be expressed.

◦ Happenings addressed modern people's need for ritual despite their dissatisfaction with outdated traditional forms. Happening participants were inventing something new at each moment, creating a ritual environment out of whatever materials happened to be at hand. Ritual is about surfaces; the surface of a ritual activity is a kind of code, standing for something known and evoking a known relation between participants and known concepts. In a Happening the surface codes stood, simply and radically, for the surfaces themselves; thus by eschewing evocation of known relations, Happenings engendered the invention of new relations between participants and their materials ("... furniture may be battered to bits...").

At a certain point Kaprow felt he had to stop using the term 'Happening' because it had been so widely coopted; he said he surmised that if he changed the name from Happenings to "something boring" the media frenzy that had grown up around the events would stop—so he began labeling his works "activities", and "everyone immediately lost interest"; Kaprow said he had to do this so that he "wouldn't have to do TV commercials". At some point he also seems to have lost interest in large public activities and begun to focus on the small and personal.

Modern life, in which we access a variety of information sources many times in a day, encourages "horizontal attention"⁹, that is, awareness of a great variety of things, most engaged on a rather shallow level for want of sufficient time to dig more deeply. Simpler, more isolated ways of life in which people have little information but much time tend to

⁷ Ibid., p.85

⁸ Ibid., p.4

⁹ I first happened on this concept in *The Gutenberg Elegies*

encourage "vertical attention", or depth of engagement with limited materials. Kaprow's work fosters "vertical attention" by seemingly engaging with whatever materials happen to be lying around, giving them deep attention and thereby imbuing them with significant presence as part of the participants' internal landscape. A long-running piece was described as "... trading dirt. I took a bucket of dirt from my garden and carried it around to trade for other dirt." Reaction of bystanders to the attempted trade: "That's stupid!". Kaprow: "Then what's smart?" One bystander: "Money!". Kaprow traded his dirt for other dirt many times, eventually "losing interest" after multiple exchanges over a nine-year period. In the ritual act of each trade the dirt gained symbolic value, being at first (the fun of the project) something with no, or almost negative, symbolic value.

Kaprow's current work centers on "small behaviors", giving attention to activities that people usually mentally background or perform automatically, "like scratching your head, breathing, tapping your foot". In the 1980s Kaprow began to pay attention to toothbrushing in reaction to a trend in the art world: as the definition of art has continued to expand since the 1960s, unmediated ordinary objects have increasingly ended up on stages and in museums. Kaprow concluded that "[a]nything can be estheticized, given the right art packages to put it into. But", he asked, "why should we want to estheticize 'anything'?"¹⁰. So, rather than create an art piece in which a performer brushes her teeth, Kaprow has focused his own attention on the details of his own brushing. Alone in his bathroom, "[t]here would be no gallery, no critic to judge, no publicity"¹¹--these being not so much troublesome accoutrements of the essential artwork as some of its defining qualities.

One might ask, then, what the distinction might be between this "non-art" and daily life. Kaprow says, "... lifelike art plays somewhere in and between attention to physical process and attention to interpretation"¹². Implied is that "life" equals physical process, that "art" is a product of interpretation; and that lifelike art is a play between events and the angle of attention from which we view them. "What happens when you pay close attention to anything, especially routine behavior, is that it *changes*. Attention alters what is attended."¹³ Haven't many of us had the experience of hearing, say, a distant lawnmower, chainsaw, weed-cutter on a quiet afternoon, and not only listening to it with fascination for twenty minutes, but coming away believing that whoever was making that sound couldn't only have been mowing the lawn; couldn't not have been, in addition, playing a solo. In such a state of awareness, it seems eminently possible

... that the random trancelike movements of shoppers in a supermarket are richer than anything done in modern dance;

*that lint under beds and the debris of industrial dumps are more engaging than the recent rash of exhibitions of scattered waste matter.*¹⁴

As modern people, constantly assaulted by much more information than we can possibly process, we feel we no longer have the time, and we fear we are losing the ability, to connect deeply with our own experience on a primal level. In a 1990 essay entitled *The*

¹⁰ *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, p.219

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p.241

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.236

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.97

Meaning of Life, Kaprow wrote that "'Meaning' ... is not only variable and unfixed but also inventive. It is what we add, by imagination and interpretation, to what we do. ... Lifelike artists ... are conscious inventors of the life that also invents them"¹⁵--a promising metaphor toward a way to deal with the problem of being a disconnected self in the here and now.¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibid., p.239

¹⁶ These aren't "sources", but while I was writing this I was reading "Lost in the Cosmos" by Walker Percy, "The Gutenberg Elegies" by Sven Birkerts, and a section of "Religion and Culture" by Michel Foucault entitled "The Genesis of the Hermeneutics of the Self"; each of these texts deals with the problem of the "lost" self in modern life. My main source was of course Allan Kaprow's "Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life".

Some Notes on Some Pieces by Sara Roberts

Tildy Bayar

“Screens are as common as pavement, the rarity is actual presence”—Sara Roberts¹

Sara Roberts² makes computer-assisted digital-art installations which explore subjects like memory, intimacy, connections or discontinuities between people. Her pieces may be classed as interactive in that the viewer is able to influence, to a greater (the installation is static until a viewer comes along and makes an event happen) or lesser (the piece is self-driven, although the viewer is able to interact with some aspects) degree, but these installations’ quirkiness and personality point in a different direction than does the current standard model of interactivity in computer art, which is based largely on a one-to-one correlation between a simple user action and a simple triggered machine reaction. In Roberts’ works the point is not to interact with the machinic aspects of the installation, but to consider a subject or explore a scenario, with the assisting computer a hidden facilitator rather than, as is so often the case these days, the topic of the piece, or the soloist. Roberts’ work is unapologetically about people-issues.

Roberts’ installations invite the viewer to touch. Interestingly, she says hers have often been the only pieces in digital-art exhibitions to make physical objects available for touching (or even to contain physical objects at all), and that audience members go right for them on entry. Her explanation of why her pieces remain strenuously rooted in the physical, against the possibilities engendered by the disembodiedness of digital media, is that she’s “always liked things”. Members of exhibition audiences obviously like things, too.

In a “double self-portrait” of Roberts and a childhood best friend, physical objects function as shareable memories, literally letting the viewer “get the feel of” another time and place. A large and very ordinary-looking wooden chest of drawers stands in a gallery; when opened the drawers prove to contain miniature three-dimensional renderings of episodes in the women’s double childhood, an intimate and personal history composed of remembered people, things and events: their secret club, people they knew at school, what happened when one went to summer camp and the other didn’t, models of the houses they lived in, toys, letters and photos. Some drawers contain static one-, two- or three-dimensional displays, while others when opened play music, project film or slides, or offer objects to pick up and interact with, like a battered old hand-held slide viewer loaded with vacation snaps. It might be argued that the objects in the drawers are not just occasioners of memory (for Roberts and her friend) and emotion (sympathetic, for the viewer)—external triggers, or mnemonics—but in some sense actually extend them; if so, then the installation is not so much a portrait as a bunch of little parts of its creator, offered not only “for our viewing pleasure”, but for an experience in which our physical interaction engages us personally (engages our persons). Like the fairy tale in which eating parts of a person bestows upon the hero that person’s knowledge, handling little bits of Roberts’ life gives the viewer a special access to one of the most interesting things we can have access to, other people’s pasts.

¹ *The Present Tense*, 1997 (<http://shoko.calarts.edu/~sroberts/articles/Articles.PrsntTns.html>)

² At Mills College on November 1, 1999, Roberts showed and talked about excerpts from several installations.

The fact that in a museum we don't touch makes The Digital Museum immediately subversive in a literal, but not trivial, way. Four clear plexiglass-topped cases contain models of things drawn from four different categories (flora/fauna, body parts, abstract shapes, words—are these Roberts' idea of the elements?), pinned in a box, specimen-like. Poke your finger through an inviting finger-sized hole in the plexiglass and touch an object, thereby causing a text to play. The text is not "information", not the usual dry data-stuff of museum commentary; it is fanciful, an image or concept related to the object perhaps directly, perhaps tangentially or obliquely; and each object is associated with four or five different texts, one of which sounds each time the object is touched. The effect is to distort and disorient the "museum experience" by replacing the typical subject-definition relationship of object and commentary with a subject-perspective relationship, giving the "definitions" a creative-subjective, rather than a typically scientific-objective, (literal) feel.

A (rather unflattering) character study in software (Roberts described it as a portrait), 'Early Programming' (1988) models a computer "mother" which, on keyboard input from the viewer, who chooses from a menu of typically childish preprogrammed input, responds with "motherish" sentences on topics such as "finishing dinner, cleaning your room, practicing the piano"* . A dialogue ensues, in which "mother's" responses are algorithmically weighted to change "mood" in response to viewer's input; what she says and how she says it reflects disappointment, anger, approval, or expansiveness, and a large square on the screen changes color and size with "her" mood. The computer sits on a table in a vaguely kitchen-like environment, at which the viewer sits, choosing her responses with the mouse. Roberts reports* that reactions to 'Early Programming' often consisted primarily of descriptions of some particular emotional struggle between viewer and "mother", rather than of feedback on the piece as a whole. The level of viewer emotional involvement was apparently very high; also the approving/disapproving mother concept seems to be universal, related to even by people whose mothers weren't particularly like that. Although Roberts' computer "mother" speaks with typically machine-like articulation and has no human physical features, viewers had no problem anthropomorphizing "her".

As Sara Roberts says³, these days we do our jobs sitting at screens; we get our entertainment from screens, large and small; we configure our creative output to be the size and shape of the screen. As we increasingly become creatures of screens and of virtual environments; as our physical presences become less crucial to our work, play, and learning; and as all around us the culture rushes to flatten reality in(to) the image of screen experience, "actual presence" becomes crucial to preserving what's essential about our humanity. Roberts' work is oriented sensitively and thoughtfully to the subtleties at stake, offering us-the-audience an experience in which we are invited to interact fully, mingling our own engaged presences with traces of others'.

³ From *The Present Tense*

GARY HILL'S VIDEO INSTALLATION 'CIRCULAR BREATHING'

TILDY BAYAR

Its clarity misleads. It's difficult to be presented with a series of explicit images (two close-up ants cooperate to drag a bit of (?)peach; a child in a flowered dress reads haltingly aloud from a philosophy tome; a cigarette burns, momentarily abandoned, in an ashtray on the arm of an empty chair) and resist the impulse to resolve the sequence into a larger, linear narrative. Especially when the images in question are presented left-to-right, rigidly sequenced and durationed, and seemingly tied together by internal events, an occurrence in one frame the downbeat for the appearance of the next. So, in rapid succession: an old woman reads silently to herself, unblinking. Two ants tussle over old fruit. Frail leaves flail in a strong wind. An ocean liner, majestic and distant, sails across the horizon. An abandoned cigarette smolders in an ashtray, next to an empty chair.

But these images are not still; they slide in, sized life-and-a-half, from the leftmost outer edge of the white screen-filled wall; they sound (more or less inscrutably) singly and together; they pulse with that unmistakable digital on-off flash. They accelerate from black-and-white photographic images to rapidfire stroblings, then over a pulsing edge into white glare and blurred, unrecognizable noise. And then one by one, having supernovaed, they wink out, leaving the last, rightmost image to slide away out of its frame, to fade its tinkly sounds slowly, delicately away.

There's no clarity engendered by the explicitness of these images, and their sequential appearance doesn't indicate topical sequence. They are instead the embodiment of cognitive dissonance: what should be most solid reads as ephemeral, while sense inheres instead in the syntax of the larger, inexplicit non-narrative structure—in the music of entrances and exits, of overlays and blurrings-together, of stillnesses at different speeds, of the speedings-up and slowings-down of largescale time. But a watcher's capricious attention is continually lured by visual stimulus, riveting and explicit (an arm gropes, up-close and shockingly sensual, in a coat pocket. A hand writes lines on a piece of white paper, each pencil-impact a small explosion. Sunlight filters through swaying leaves. A gleaming axe falls with a thwack into a piece of rough uncut wood. The old man in the dinghy, squinting into the foggy distance, where is he sailing to?).

The topic of 'Circular Breathing' is perhaps topiclessness, or at least a paradox involved with it: perhaps it's instinctive to focus at first "take" on the explicit, and when thus focused to expect a narrative; if so, 'Circular Breathing' subverts that instinct, offering what we know as "sense" while simultaneously snatching it away. In our reading (literally, each sequence of images manifests from left to right), the discomfort engendered by the narrative structure's refusal to resolve into narrative sense is only vaguely, naggingly felt, because the meta-narrative (image sequence, sound sequence, image flash, sound pulse, acceleration, strobing, vanishing) speaks (not "speaks of") a deeper sense.

It is an entirely new art form, the embodiment of an idea which by its nature resists clarification. The accompanying catalog text suggests such interpretations as “narrative broken up by language”, “a questioning of the predominance of the image”, and “like half-remembered fragments of a dream”.

Fortunately the sound accompanying this work in its San Francisco instantiation was extremely loud, as the display tactics of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art’s “Seeing Time”¹ curators created a raucous postmodern-industrial complex within which sonic atmospheres commingled to considerable mutual disadvantage.

¹ *Seeing Time: Selections from the Pamela and Richard Kramlich Collection of Media Art*, at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 10/99 to 1/00.

the line
between us
comes alive
by sheer
listening

what you behold
be held by

Wittgenstein, Music and Language-Games

David Crilly

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the foundations of philosophical thought shifted towards a positivistic stance; the basis of which was a rejection of the metaphysical in favour of a more scientific, logically verifiable mode of enquiry. Wittgenstein, developing his "picture theory" of meaning, used language as the focal point of his investigation, and the emphasis on logical structure as the focus for detailed study permeated the field of musicology. Positivistic approaches to analysis viewed musical information as objective data about which precise statements were possible, and the semiological analysis of music was defined as aiming at strict scientific objectivity. This positivistic stance precludes any reference to subjective judgement on the part of the analyst.

Wittgenstein, however, in his later philosophy also noted that his original account of the nature of language was incomplete, in that the picture theory of meaning was only able to describe one particular way in which language is used. Even a casual survey of our everyday linguistic behaviour reveals a whole host of activities that can hardly be captured under the paradigms of naming and describing. In his later philosophy, most notably *Philosophical Investigations*,¹ he amended the picture-theory of meaning in favour of a use or "instrumental" conception of meaning. It is the nature of a picture that it pictures one particular state of affairs; but it is the nature of a tool that it can be used for a number of different tasks and as such need not be (and indeed cannot be) pinned down to any specific function. This encourages the view that words function as tools and that sentences function as instruments. Probably the most important aspect of the later philosophy is that there is constant emphasis upon the multiplicity of ways in which language is used. Language is indefinitely extendible and that there is not any one, single essence which binds all uses of language together. We can see a direct parallel here, since there isn't any single feature that runs through all of music that constitutes the 'essence' of music. Wittgenstein uses the idea of games to illustrate this characteristic, in that they too have no common properties by virtue of which we apply the same word to them all. He observes that what makes the various activities called 'games' into games is a complicated network of similarities rather than any single feature. He suggests that such a concept resembles a long rope, which, whilst appearing to us as a single entity, is actually the result of the twisting together of many short fibres. He states,

...the strength of the thread does not reside in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length but in the overlapping of many fibres.²

If we apply this idea to the analysis of musical style we will see that it rings true, since the essence of any style is not captured in any one compositional feature but rather is determined by...a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: [which shows] sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail.³

Wittgenstein characterised these similarities as "family resemblances". In other words, suggesting that the network of overlapping similarities constituting the nature of music can be viewed in comparison with the various resemblances that hold between members of a family. So, when we speak of the language of nineteenth-century music, or the musical language of the Baroque, or the musical language of Debussy, we are referring to a set of relationships which are common to a body of work and which are system-bound and which function as defining the parameters of that system.

¹Wittgenstein, L (1953) *Philosophical Investigations* trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford: Blackwell.

² *Ibid.*, p.32

³ *ibid.*, p.32

A useful example that Wittgenstein employs, and which I shall adopt, is his discussion of the nature of chess, which, like music is a system of contentless elements which interact according to combinatorial rules. Musical elements are thus akin to chess pieces in that they are merely foci of a set of rules. What then, can we say that music is about? Is it about symbols — that is, ink marks on paper - or something to which those symbols refer, namely sounds? Through using the chess analogy we can see that this is a false dichotomy, in that chess is not about chess pieces in the same way that music is not about musical elements. If the king is carved so as to look more fierce he won't be any more powerful in the game. We could conclude from this that the meaning of a musical element, like the meaning of a chess piece, is the sum of rules that determine its possible movements. Musical elements in themselves have no meaning; only the applications of music give them meaning. The chess analogy here provides a number of important points regarding the similarities and differences between music, chess and also language. The self-imposed rules of musical composition (through cultural determinants or otherwise) like the rules of chess, have no foundations and cannot be justified by reference to reality. Its rules are arbitrary; nothing dictates them in that they can be altered — change the rules and we merely change the game.

Musical meaning does not rely upon the ability to present expressions and terms which have logically verifiable significance. Music possesses the same conceptually undetermined mode of meaning that is evident in games, in that games acquire meaning via a sort of Kantian disinterested contemplation of a structure which has no external referent. This, of course, is not the same as, and cannot be compared to linguistic meaning. The individual elements of music only acquire meaning in mutual co-presence. Their meaning depends upon the historical, cultural and individual characteristics that govern the compositional rules of a particular style. However, we must be circumspect in viewing music as an entirely rule-governed process, since this would seem to endorse Nattiez's view that music possesses an autonomous physical existence whose variables one can analyse and that, with ever more refined techniques of analysis, it is possible to achieve a 'neutral' and immanent description of the object, that is, by exposing a logical syntax and, by implication, providing an unequivocal method to distinguish musical sense from nonsense.

The sort of Hegelian dialectical process which typifies the entire history of the development of Western art music, whilst motivated by a search for order, can be viewed as an attempt to establish rules for the express purpose of departing from them. From the moment of their establishment, the ideas which exemplify, for example, the Classical aesthetic, have served merely as the basis for development and experimentation rather than as a body of rules which are somehow set in stone. The degree to which a piece adheres to predefined rules clearly does not determine its meaningfulness. It is departure from the rules which constitute musical development and it would appear that the deliberate avoidance of musical conventions only acquire meaning because of the order against which they are set.

It is for this reason that musical analysis cannot ultimately be concerned with facts or objective, neutral observations. Relationships between musical elements, whether cell, motif, phrase, subject-group or movement have no truth in the actual world. The relationship of one musical element to another is, by analogy, a statement of fiction, and as such is not an assertion about the actual world, but is rather an assertion about an imaginary world. For this reason, assertions of this sort are neither false nor true of our world; they can be neither proved nor disproved and it is as misguided to believe them as to disbelieve them. If we are to understand these relationships properly we must do so, not by believing or disbelieving but by entertaining these fictional statements in a different way - that is, by making-believe, by imagining or by taking it as if (or to slightly extend Wittgenstein's phrase by *seeing-as-if*).

Musical relationships are illusory in nature and occupy a never-never land of make-believe, the understanding of which is very much like playing a game. The foundation of our ability to understand significant relationships in music lies in training. It is dependent upon the mastery, whether intuitively or otherwise, of a technique. Not insignificantly, the criteria of what constitutes a rule and the means by which we acquire the technique to follow it are inescapably social. Musical elements can only derive their meaning from the contexts (whether immediate or historical) within which they are used, and these in turn depend upon social practices. Because of the need to observe the way in which musical elements interact within a specific

social/historical environment - an observation which will determine our interpretation of the rules which constitute the nature of a particular piece - it seems evident that analytical problems will not be solved by the accumulation of exhaustive detail and objective and logically verifiable statements.

If we regard music as a kind of music-language-game, then we may be able to recognise more fully the nature of our subject - that is, music as an imaginative art rather than music as a science of signs. The primary way of understanding the use of a symbol is to examine its application rather than its origin, and I would maintain that - to the extent that the isolation of a music-language-game is possible - any meaningful account of a composition will be a matter of highlighting or bringing to the fore those features of musical style which are so firmly embedded in our daily practices that we no longer notice them. Thus foregrounded, we can more readily scrutinise the familiar, see its dependence upon the environment from which it has been isolated, and compare it with other music-language-games that are deliberately different in significant ways. It is hoped that through the setting up of a model of analytical enquiry which realises the importance of the role played by both social and contextual restraint upon our experience of a work, and therefore by implication, of our analysis of it, that we can soften our dogmas, expose reductive analytical myths and undermine superficial generalisations. Only in this way will we be able to subdue our craving for some kind of general theory where there is no general theory, overcome the desire for foundations where there are no foundations, and ultimately restrain our longing for essences where there are only family resemblances. Viewed in this way, music acquires a narrative structure which can be determined only by the nature of our imaginative involvement with it.

George Campbell and the Rhetoric of Art: Persuasion through Music

Jon Radwan

Abstract

Contemporary rhetorical theory has broadened its range of applicability. Traditionally concerned with oratory and prose, rhetorical perspectives are now applied to a wide range of cultural artifacts to investigate how they work to manage social meaning. This essay uses vocabulary from George Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776) to investigate how absolute music can persuade. Musical expression is shown to enlighten the understanding, please the imagination, move the passions, and influence the will in ways that are related to yet distinct from oratory and prose.

Historically speaking, questions about the relationship between rhetoric and aesthetics arise when the possibility for truly instrumental public sphere discourse has been limited or eliminated. The Roman Second Sophistic (50 – 400 A.D.) is often cited as a paradigm case. With the shift from a democratic republic to a dictatorial empire, the Senate lost policy-making power to the emperor and a proud tradition of civic oratory lost its purpose. Despite this loss, the Romans continued to educate their upper-class youth for positions that no longer existed. With nothing at stake, oratory and the schools themselves focused upon "decadent" aesthetic concerns and valorized the office of Style to the conspicuous neglect of more substantial processes like Invention.

Limiting questions about the aesthetics of rhetoric to particular historical epochs can encourage scholars to believe that totalitarian power relations indicate the *only* appropriate time to inquire about art and influence. Studies of wartime propaganda film and protest movement symbolism are important, but we should also pay attention to the nonlinguistic, yet influential, dimensions of everyday persuasion. With this essay I argue that, contrary to common understanding (Hart, Hixson), the aesthetic question is profitably posed to rhetoric at all times. I consider the overlap between aesthetics and rhetoric to be so extensive that a failure to account for art and feeling while theorizing persuasion can result in serious weaknesses for rhetorical theory and criticism. To help advance an argument for art's rhetoricity, I will apply George Campbell's definition of rhetoric to absolute music. After a brief introduction to Rhetoric, Campbell's definition, and Music, this paper shows how music performs each of his functions of eloquence: enlightening the Understanding, pleasing the Imagination, moving the Passions, and influencing the Will.

Music presents an ideal case study in the rhetoric of art because it is the mode of expression that exists at the furthest remove from the practical materiality of everyday life. As Edman states, "the world of musical form is thoroughly abstract; it exists nowhere save in itself" (113). If I can establish the rhetoricity of such an immaterial art-form as music, then the case should be demonstrable to a much greater degree with regard to those arts that have a clear relationship with practical public affairs (architecture, due to its utilitarian applications, may be the most connected).

Rhetoric

Defining rhetoric is a 2500 year old tradition that has seen a significant resurgence in recent years. In today's disciplinary climate, rhetorical theorists must negotiate a position with regard to a general extension of the term far beyond its classical origin in oratory and public persuasion. Among the expansionists, Brummett (1991, 1994) considers rhetoric a *dimension*

that can be observed in **all** cultural products; it is "that part of an act object that influences how social meanings are created, maintained, or opposed" (1991 38).

The radical expansions are not universally accepted. For instance, Rod Hart opens *Modern Rhetorical Criticism* with a reprint of Cynthia Macdonald's poem "The Hay Lady" and follows it with these words, "This is not a book about poems. It is a book about rhetoric. . . . Macdonald gives us precisely what a good poet should give us -- old thoughts thought anew, old feelings felt anew -- but she does not give us rhetoric" (4-5). Hart's position firmly opposes the expansionist school of thought. For him, there are several classes of cultural products that are of **no** interest to the rhetorician.

George Campbell

George Campbell was one of the premier rhetoricians of the eighteenth century. As a minister and educator, his work combined years of practice in pulpit oratory with the best of ancient and modern philosophy. In 1776, his *Philosophy of Rhetoric* was published, and today it is recognized as one of "the greatest books on communication theory written in the modern era" (Golden et al 109). In this work, Campbell develops an account of rhetoric that is firmly based in classical scholarship and foregrounds the instrumental agent seeking to persuade a specific audience. To introduce his project, Campbell writes

In speaking there is always some end proposed, or some effect which the speaker intends to produce on the hearer. The word *eloquence* in its greatest latitude denotes, 'That art or talent by which the discourse is adapted to its end.'

All the ends of speaking are reducible to four; every speech being intended to enlighten the understanding, to please the imagination, to move the passions, or to influence the will. (145)

A clear-cut definition like Campbell's has many advantages. Primary among them is the ability to determine, with very little ambiguity, what is rhetoric and what is not. First, there must be an end, or author intention; if something is done without intent, then it is not rhetorical. Thus accidents, fortuitous circumstances, and nature are all excluded. Next, the intention must be directed toward an audience composed of hearers subject to verbal influence. Third, Campbell tells us that rhetoric is a means to the fore-mentioned intention and not an end in itself. Here we can exclude all that is done for its own sake. Means to complex ends do not come ready-made, and the eloquent speaker is one that effectively adapts appeals so that the desired audience reaction is realized. Finally, there are four goals appropriate to rhetoric, each aimed at a human faculty. Good rhetors are trying to enlighten, please, move, and influence. Accordingly, anyone seeking to do anything else (build, gab, grab, etc.) is not engaged in a rhetorical practice.

Music

I have selected Music as the particular example of aesthetic experience for this essay. Although most of us clearly recognize "good" music when we hear it, few have spent time developing specific justifications for our judgments. For instance, a few years ago an acquaintance and I were discussing Rap music. He maintained adamantly that it was certainly not music and probably not art. This is not an uncommon assessment, but there are just as many (if not more) who consider Rap to be a vital form of urban artistic expression.

Why the disagreement? I see the root of the problem as a difference in orientation to the ancient product-process dichotomy. Those that consider music as substance will look for particular attributes that an artifact must possess in order to be called music. Candidates might include harmonic progression, melodic development, and traditional instrumental timbres. While

most Rap certainly does not possess these attributes (at least not to the same degree as the western art music tradition), I would suggest that the process orientation can explain why so many people do consider it music. When art is approached as a dynamic social exchange, questions shift from what *attributes* the work of art *has*, to what *work* the art *does*. What functions does it perform for the people involved? What do they get out of it? Ethnomusicologist A.P. Merriam (1964) suggests that music serves ten functions in most cultures:

1. Emotional Expression
2. Aesthetic Enjoyment
3. Entertainment
4. Communication
5. Symbolic Representation
6. Physical Response
7. Enforcing Conformity to Social Norms
8. Validation of Social Institutions and Religious Rituals
9. Contributions to the Continuity and Stability of Culture
10. Contributions to the Integration of Society

(cited in Radocy and Boyle 11)

These functions apply to most art-forms, and the point is that "pure" aesthetic concerns are only one of the many uses of music. This is precisely where the overlap between art and rhetoric resides. Art is not something that is divorced from the culture that produces it; music is the vital expression of a culture, and it works to perform the essential human function, enabling community.

Before applying Campbell's philosophy of rhetoric to the social functions of music, it is important to officially define music. In *Psychological Foundations of Musical Behavior*, Radocy and Boyle address the problematic relation between music and society in clear terms.

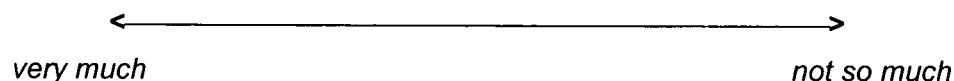
The ultimate answer to the question under consideration must be in terms of the *function* of sounds within a given cultural context. If sounds are (a) created or combined by a human being, (b) recognized as music by some group of people, and (c) serve some function which music has come to serve for [hu]mankind, then those sounds are music.(19)

Rhetorical Music

Although I want to show how music is rhetorical, I do not want to imply that all music possesses equal rhetorical force. I would much rather think in terms of "degrees of rhetoricity," where the critic considers events in terms of a continuum ranging from barely to highly concerned with enlightening, pleasing, moving, and influencing an audience. (See Figure 1) Perhaps several continua would be a better approach, one for each verb outlined by Campbell.

Figure 1 — Degrees of Rhetoricity

To what extent is the rhetor concerned with enlightening, pleasing, moving, and influencing?



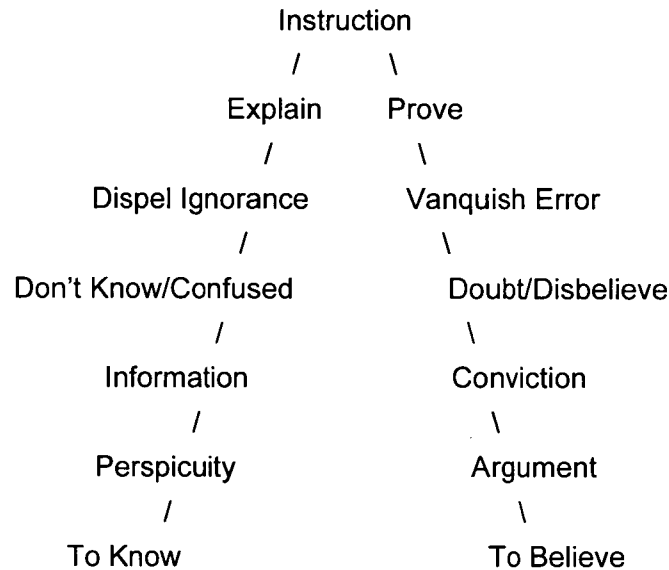
Even though I will address each verb in turn, it is important to note that *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* places the four primary terms and their attendant faculties in a distinct hierarchic relation. While each discourse should have only one end, the other faculties are always present and can provide secondary support. "Knowledge, the object of the intellect, furnisheth materials for the fancy; the fancy culls, compounds, and, by her mimic art, disposes these materials so as to affect the passions; the passions are natural spurs to volition or action, and so need only be right directed" (146).

Faculty psychology, developed out of ideas from Locke and Hume, typically looks this way -- our mental abilities are placed into a hierarchy. For our purposes, it may be most telling merely to consider how much contemporary rhetorical theory implicitly accepts similar divisions of human cognition. The basic Speech course, across the entire country, largely trains students for two types of address -- informative and persuasive. Can one really persuade without informing? Can I truly inform you without convincing you that my information is valid and reliable? The ancients did not have such a division, for it is only with the rise of Enlightenment science and Cartesian metaphysics that we get the idea that we can clearly distinguish between the intellect and the passions. This is what allows scientific discourse its clinical gaze. In translating *On Rhetoric*, Kennedy calls our attention to the (not necessarily hierarchic or distinct) relationship between pathos and logos. "Aristotle's inclusion of emotion as a mode of persuasion, despite his objections to the handbooks, is a recognition that among human beings judgment is not entirely a rational act. There are morally valid emotions in every situation, and it is part of the orator's duty to clarify these in the minds of the audience" (39). Again, while I treat each end (enlightening, pleasing, moving, influencing) separately, recall that they are always functioning together.

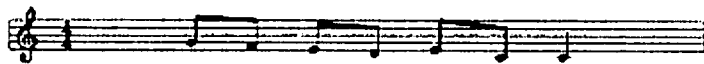
to Enlighten the Understanding

The Understanding would appear to be the most difficult characteristic to demonstrate for music, because as adults we rarely encounter music intended to instruct. Music as used in nursery rhymes and pre-school education indicates that small children do not need syllogistic form to be persuaded. Indeed, children are well known for not needing *any* logical proof on which to base beliefs -- but this cannot mean that they do not learn or have no intellect, because even pre-verbal children begin to understand and communicate. For many of us, music was the very instrument through which we *became* verbal, or at least literate, through the familiar tones of "The Alphabet Song" or, more recently, Hooked on Phonics.

Even ignoring the child in all of us, music can still serve to enlighten the understanding. Campbell divides instruction into two types; Explaining in order to "dispel ignorance" and Proving to "vanquish error." The distinction is based on audience knowledge. With audiences who simply do not know or are confused, the speaker aims at their Information, and through giving her discourse the quality of Perspicuity the audience is made to Know. Similarly, with those who disbelieve or doubt, we aim at their Conviction, endowing our presentation with the quality of Argument through which they are made to Believe (146). While I prefer "came to" Know or Believe over the causality of Campbell's "made to," one can begin to think of musical examples that aim to explain or prove. (See Figure 2)

Figure 2 — to Enlighten the Understanding: Music and Moral Education

Advertising jingles immediately present themselves as candidates for consideration. "Nestlé makes the very best" is a direct truth claim, purportedly informing us about the quality of their product. Can you recall the tune? (See Figure 3) I can, and what this indicates to me is that, whether or not this claim has ever been proven to me, there is a strong sense in which I "know" that Nestle makes the very best, because the sentence is available for instant recall. Much of this phenomenon may be due to simple repetition, but more depends upon the fact that this "truth" is also a motive, an easily learned and recallable tune that outlines the most fundamental harmonic structure within western music, the major triad, with a regular rhythmic pulse and strong closure.

Figure 3 – Nestlé Jingle

Nest - lé makes the ve - ry best.

Even though I *know* that Nestlé makes the very best, do I *believe* it? Has my conviction been gained through quality argument? Probably not, and it is at this point (if not before) that we must distinguish between verbal appeal, the traditional domain of rhetoric, and absolute musical appeal, the zone of intersection between rhetoric and aesthetics. Accordingly, we should develop an account of how instrumental music can Prove, or seem to prove, a point.

Initially we can discount particulars from music's ability to generate belief. Because most musical symbols lack the signatory aspects of linguistic symbols, specific referentiality is usually not a possibility. Argument in the dialectical sense is probably out as well. Even though the question and answer of antecedent and consequent phrasing may approach discursivity, there is a univocality to musical performance, a group unity that denies potential opposition and only acknowledges those in tune and on beat. But this monologue is quite similar to rhetorical argument. Here the aim is a sort of demonstration based on popular belief, a showing that begins

with what an audience already believes and, through artful combination and juxtaposition, develops their attitudes into some new and further belief (Aristotle, 36-45, I.2).

Instrumental music, insofar as it serves to demonstrate generalities, is more philosophical than rhetorical because it cannot recommend specific (particular) courses of action. We must rely on the linguistic for narrow commands like "Vote for Ross." What generalities can music show? There are probably several, but the one that has been consistently noted throughout the history of philosophy is the ability of music to teach about and demonstrate the relative desirability of various character types. This notion can be gleaned from Aristotle's *Poetics*, where he numbers instrumental music among the imitative arts. Although his paradigm is tragedy, all imitation of action (the human mode of learning) provides a sort of case study where we can observe different moral types (ways of acting) trans-acting with one another and thus come to understand how and why we may want to incorporate similar manners into our own lives. (1954, 223-233, I.1-6).

A stronger case can be made with testimony from Aristotle's *Problems*. He writes "Why do rhythms and tunes, which after all are only voice, resemble characters, whereas savours do not, nor yet colours and odours? Is it because they are movements, as actions also are? Now activity possesses and instills character, but savours and colours have no similar effect" (1434 XIX.29). Because of music's temporal nature, it must move, and this movement can be described in terms of quality. Humans also live in time, and the qualities we hear in music can suggest ways in which we may want to consider moving, or, in a larger sense, being. Plato clearly recognized this, and it is his understanding of the demonstrative properties of music that are at the root of his attack on art in the *Republic*. He justifies censorship not to suppress lies, but to protect the citizenry from mythico-historical truths that will lead to anti-social behavior.

If our future Guardians are to think it a disgrace to quarrel lightly with one another, we shall not let them embroider robes with the Battle of the Giants or tell them of all the other feuds of gods and heroes with their kith and kin. If by any means we can make them believe that no one has ever had a quarrel with a fellow citizen and it is a sin to have one, that is the sort of thing our old men and women should tell children from the first. (1978, 70, II. 377)

The forbidden truths are expressed in words, but music as a mimetic art shares this ability to lead people to undesirable actions and characters. The Mixed Lydian, Hyperlydian, Ionian, and Lydian modes are not banned because they are untruthful, but because they will familiarize the Guardians with qualities such as sorrow, softness, indolence, and effeminacy. Likewise, rhythms that express meanness, insolence, fury, and other unworthiness are not to be allowed (86-88, III. 398-400). Plato sees a direct causality between representation and behavior that is a bit strong (c.f. *Ion*), but he does supply authoritative testimony for the argument that music, even without words, can demonstrate action and thereby enlighten us on possible ways of being human.

Those who would deny music access to the understanding proceed with a conception of belief that requires formal argumentation to generate conviction -- all other appeal is considered secondary and relegated to the sensory and pathetic (read aesthetic). While this myopia is understandable given the rhetorical tradition, we must recall that the mind is a holistic entity that is not persuaded by words alone, for "music, like all of the arts, is a thing of the intellect, not of the nerve endings" (Kivy 161). Knowledge is not coterminous with the discursively sayable. Plato's combination of ethics and aesthetics works to establish a rhetorical function for the arts. Human existence, as a temporal phenomenon, "goes" in much the same sense that music does and so constantly requires that we ask and answer HOW questions if we are to give our lives that structure which is called character. Plato was certain about music's role in enlightening the understanding. "By this means [music education] they become more civilized, more balanced, and better adjusted in themselves and so more capable in whatever they say or do, for *rhythm*

and harmonious adjustment are essential to the whole of human life" (Protagoras, 1961, 322, 326 b, my emphasis).

to Please the Imagination

For Campbell, the Imagination is addressed by "exhibiting to it a lively and beautiful representation of a suitable object" (146). This necessarily involves the orator in painterly imitation, with relative quality dependent upon both Dignity (of subject and manner) and Resemblance. Such a description clearly places Imagination within the realm of the aesthetic, and Campbell even goes so far as to declare poetry a mode of oratory. However, not all poetry belongs to this faculty; the dramatist (tragedian) appeals to the Passions and thus must be distinguished from the acts of narration and description that concern both orators and epic poets. At its greatest, an address to the Imagination goes far beyond mere liveliness and beauty to attain "the summit and perfection of *the sublime*, or those great and noble images, which, when in suitable colouring presented to the mind, do, as it were, distend the imagination with some vast conception, and quite ravish the soul" (146-147).

The end here is pleasure, and few will deny that music has the capacity to charm the fancy. If we accept that the materials furnished by musical understanding involve qualities of action (character), then it is the musical orator's task to engage our creative faculty with a complete and brilliant image of how that sort of person participates in and contribute to social exchanges. How do they trans-act? The pleasure we gain through the imagination is not one based on gratification, because that would involve the passions and desire. Rather, it is closer to an Aristotelian delight in learning that includes but goes beyond bland knowledge to satisfy our internal taste for "the wonderful, the fair, the good; for elegance, for novelty, or for grandeur" (147).

I will describe the four basic materials musicians use in "painting" possible activities and their moral implications: Rhythm, Melody, Harmony, and Tone Color. These are built up in various relations through/over/in time to generate a significant Form. While the Imagination engages ideas colored with the basic materials, it is the Passions that respond to Form.

Rhythm is one of the most powerful of music's attributes because it explicitly states how one can (or should) move. To be more exact, Rhythm has two primary factors, meter and rhythm. Meter indicates a basic pulse, and rhythm consists in events relative to that pulse.

Think of all the character types that can be expressed with Rhythm alone. You *know* that the iconoclast hates the downbeat, and will never be heard anywhere near it. Conversely, the patriot and the believer march in step, almost to the degree that they are sadly predictable. If you would inquire after the "national tendencies" characteristic of various cultures (Wölfflin), a wonderful place to start would be to learn the basic metrical pulses of a people. Dance may be a formalized crystallization of tradition, but one significant way that the Other manifests foreignness is his simple rhythm of life. Tempo is the obvious variable, but how many smaller units in each cycle? How many events before we return to the One? Many Western music lovers are surprised to learn that there are traditional metrical systems whose complexity makes our simple twos and threes begin to appear incapable of sophisticated expression. With music in India, its *talas*, its rhythmic sequences -- incomprehensible for Western listeners -- can be as long as 108 beats, yet the Indian ear is constantly aware of where the *sam* falls (jazz musicians would call it the "one") as easily as if it were simple 4/4 or 6/8 time" (Berendt 202).

The next material, Melodies, are strands of pitches strung in time. Of course there is a necessary relation with rhythm, but a pitch series adds an additional dimension. "[I]f the idea of rhythm is connected in our imagination with physical motion, the idea of melody is associated with mental emotion" (Copland 40). Emotion may denote the Passions, but the "mental" qualification

pushes toward "habits of thought," the basic organizational strategies that embody a historico-cultural perspective (Panofsky). Here the key term is flow. In what manner are they proceeding? Is the line full of leaps or is it smooth and regular? Is it balanced? Is there closure? Range is another important variable; high, low, or in between? Are there changes in dynamics? Each in their own time? Do we slide from note to note, or are there distinct boundaries? Last, an essential element is always silence, rest. Although it is interwoven with his argument against technology, Tanizaki's account of Japanese music helps point out the connection between one's basic world-view and that which pleases the Imagination. "Japanese music is above all a music of reticence, of atmosphere. When recorded or amplified by a loud-speaker, the greater part of its charm is lost. In conversation too, we prefer the soft voice, the understatement. Most important of all are the pauses" (9).

Harmony is the most highly developed material of western art music. While other genres operate within the general tonal idiom provided by the orchestral tradition, most use only specific selections from the harmonic palette and thus establish for themselves a characteristic quality. Why are the blues blue? There are many reasons, but harmonically speaking there are some ready indicators. The tradition is based on the 5-pitch blues scale (in the key of C, it reads C E flat F G B flat), a set of tones that resembles the minor mode (the sad one) in flattening the third and seventh, but is at the same time more simple, direct, and basic due to the fact that it must express using five tones rather than the usual seven pitch scale. Further, when the other seven pitches available to the western ear are introduced, they are that much more expressive in virtue of being deviations from the norm.

Thus, harmony imparts quality to an image by defining the conditions for simultaneous tones, thereby setting basic expectations about consonance and dissonance. What are the acceptable proportions? The move from harmony to metaphysics is a long one by today's standards, but the Middle Ages placed the governing quality of harmonic proportion as a divine order based upon the perfect consonances.

The principles of good musical modulation that Augustine established in *De Musica* are mathematical principles and therefore apply. . . to the visual arts as they do to music. On the monochord, the musical intervals are marked off by divisions on a string; the arithmetical ratios of the perfect consonances thus appear as the proportion between different parts of a line. And since Augustine deduces the musical value of the perfect consonances from the metaphysical dignity of the ratios on which they are based, it was natural for him to conclude that the beauty of certain visual proportions derives from their being based on the simple ratios of the first *tetractys*. (von Simson 22)

Through contemplation of music, or art, or architecture, the medieval pilgrim could come to know the perfection that is God. Anagoge as the mode of imaginative interpretation has a strong affinity with Campbell's assertion that the beautiful and the sublime belong to the imagination, for what could be greater or more pleasing than experiencing perfect and divine order?

Tone Color, or timbre, is the final basic material of musical representation. Where harmony was a quality of relation, timbre is a more individual quality experienced due to the overtone signature of a particular type of instrument. That is, musical tones are complex entities made up of several vibration patterns. The dominant one is called the fundamental and it is responsible for the pitch of the note. Above the fundamental are other sound-waves that are generated along with it, and they are called partials. Different methods of instrument construction cause different partials to be either pronounced or suppressed, and this is what makes brasses sound different than strings. Sounded together, they produce a new and different color not strictly reducible to the sum of its parts.

The "color" tie-in immediately suggests a connection with Campbell's painting metaphor. However, the rhetorical significance of timbre includes but extends beyond the possibilities of visual chroma. Hospital walls may be painted green to soothe patients (the Passions), but when we are addressing the Imagination our concern is with "bestow[ing] brilliancy on our ideas" (210). What sounds make a thought shine? Traditionally, brass is associated with brilliance, and cultural training should play a large part in all theories of both rhetoric and music, but there is also an ontological side to timbre.

If we could somehow freeze time, would there be sound? It is easy to say no, probably because this (non)event is a commonplace of science fiction film, and it is always deathly quiet when they do it. I propose that, rather than a cessation of sound, stopping time could result in a continuous unchanging tone, the infinite continuation of every sound present at the moment of freezing. If such a case might occur, tone color would be the only characteristic of music that would remain. To halt time is to disallow the possibility for change, and it is this tension between timeless essence and timely becoming that characterizes so much of western metaphysics. Music without time resembles painting without color, and though this may sound odd to Westerners, this is the exact condition that Chinese and Japanese painting aspire to and conceptualize in the notion of *li*.

The *li* of a thing is, in short, the deepest metaphysical ground of the thing, which makes the thing what it really is -- the 'is-ness' or 'such-ness' of the thing as the Buddhists would call it. . . the *li* exists in the interior of every individual man, but the same *li* exists also in each one of all physical objects under Heaven so that in the most profound dimension of existence man and Nature are one single reality, although in the physical dimension each thing is an independent entity separated from all the rest. Because of this structure of reality, man is able -- at least theoretically -- to return to the original unity of the internal *li* and the external *li*. (Izutsu 247-248)

By eschewing color for black and white ink painting, the Zen Buddhist aesthetic attempts to depict the eternal unity. It is just this unity that timbre suggests to me. It is the only characteristic of music that is empirically "there," and, as such, becomes a link to the fundamental identity of man and man as well as man and nature that the linguistic order, with its "invention of the negative," denies. The sheer sonority of sound appeals to the imagination through proposing that, at base, we are all of the same substance, or more precisely, vibrating at the same frequency. Identification is a familiar rhetorical concept, but it is always based on the ability of language to join *in opposition to* the Other. Tone color suggests identification without division.

For my part, I would like to emphasize that the sound of a word, even when associated with the idea the word designates (the sound of the word *night*, for example, associated with our idea of "the night"), is, nevertheless, also a fragment of sensory reality, untouched by the meaning that makes use of it, or any other for that matter, and thus inseparable from the great body of the world as it is perceived, in its still undivided unity, beyond words. There -- and this is the important as well as the too often neglected fact -- the sound that assists in the capture of a sign that has meaning at the heart of language is also *what signals* that raw, undivided, unvanquished reality lying beyond language. (Bonney xiv)

Bonney uses the sonorous order to "shatter" the linguistic in his poetry, but the possibility is present for an entire range of support between sound and thought, from a breaking to a reinforcement. The beautiful and the sublime endow our ideas with brilliance and depth, and often they depend on the vast unity that is pre-verbal for their appeal to the Imagination.

In their combination, these four elements form the basic material that the imagination works with (culls, compounds, disposes) in order to arouse the emotions. Of course, there are at

least two imaginations at work here, the creator's and the engager's. Together they determine the Form that a work will take.

to Move the Passions

Form involves putting all of the materials together. The Imagination does this, and the result of its work is, if all has gone well, affect. For Campbell, the orator's job with regard to this faculty is to select "only some vivid strokes, some expressive features, not decorated as for show [as may occur with the imagination](all ostentation being both despicable and hurtful here), but such as appear the *natural exposition* of those bright and deep impressions, made by the subject upon the speaker's mind; for here the end is not pleasure, but emotion" (149, my emphasis). Natural exposition is essential for form to function because, as natural creatures, we interpret in terms of the basic movements of nature. As Burke puts it,

There are formal patterns which distinguish our experience. They apply in art, since they apply outside of art. The accelerated motion of a falling body, the cycle of a storm, the gradations of a sunrise, the stages of a cholera epidemic, the ripening of crops -- in all such instances we find the material of progressive form. (1968 141)

Progression is not the only formal modality, but it is essential to account for *how* the passions are "awakened" before we look into the different types of patterning. In *Philosophy in a New Key*, Susanne Langer proposes that symbolizing is the basic human need -- we do not merely choose to use symbols, for we have no choice in the matter. Humans must symbolize, and this need gives rise to the three foci of her book; reason, rite, and art. Basically, we *will* transform experience into symbols, and, since experience tends to terminate in action, the typically human form of action is sheer expression of ideas (43). For Langer, the practical (rhetorical) is only one explanation of human behavior. She would have us see action as not just a strategy but also a language, for "every move is at the same time a gesture" (51).

Langer's contribution is the observation that all linguistic symbols have discursive and presentational form. That is, they denote and express simultaneously. With absolute music, denotation is lost and we encounter the realm of knowledge that comprises the ineffable -- "music articulates forms which language cannot set forth" (233). To call this area knowledge is not paradoxical, it is merely a recognition that we *know* anger, sorrow, etc. even if their description defies a precise denotative account. Thus, the relation between musical form and the passions is readily apparent.

The upshot of all these speculations and researches is, that there are certain aspects of the so-called "inner life" -- physical or mental -- which have formal properties similar to those of music -- patterns of motion and rest, of tension and release, of agreement and disagreement, preparation, fulfillment, excitation, sudden change, etc. . . . Not communication but insight is the gift of music; in very naive phrase, a knowledge of 'how feelings go.' (228-244)

We must return to Burke for a theory of the different ways that form "agitates the soul." In *Counter-Statement*, he is concerned with "literature as art, that is, literature designed for the express purpose of arousing the emotions" (123). At base, affective experience can be reduced to two principles -- stimulation and sedation. We either get worked up or calmed down. If we accept Campbell's definition of eloquence as the art of adapting discourse to its end, then we can begin to see the essential role of the passions in generating energy. Burke is quite explicit about making "three terms synonymous: form, psychology, and eloquence. And eloquence, thereby

becomes the essence of art, while pity, tragedy, sweetness, humor, in short all the emotions which we experience in life proper, as non-artists, are simply the material on which eloquence may feed" (40).

Briefly, the artist becomes conscious of a "pattern of experience" characterized by a particular confluence of emotion. In a creatively transformative act, she condenses this pattern into a Symbol and develops it into a work that exhibits form. Thus, there is appeal based both upon the particular Symbol (emotional material) and the pattern in which it is played out (Form). Symbols appeal to the degree that artist and auditor concur regarding what patterns of experience are relevant in a given situation (153). Significantly, the Symbol by itself cannot go anywhere, but it *needs* to because of its nature as a crystallization of emotional energy. Thus, "Form, having to do with the creation and gratification of needs, is 'correct' in so far as it gratifies the needs which it creates. The appeal of form in this sense is obvious: form *is* the appeal" (138).

To finish with the Passions, Campbell identifies three types of emotion based on the level of energy involved in each. Hope, patriotism, ambition, emulation, and anger are stimulative and are thus highly conducive to disposing an audience toward action. Sorrow, fear, shame, and humility are most appropriate to dissuasion, and emotions like joy, love, esteem, and compassion are considered intermediate because they can work as both stimulants and sedatives (148-149). It is the task of the Will to decide what to do with this energy.

to Influence the Will

Discourse aimed at persuading to action or conduct is the most complex because it presupposes all of the previous faculties, most especially judgment and passion. Since we have already explored the rhetorical abilities of music in each of the previous sections, all that remains is to discuss their interaction.

To paraphrase Frank Zappa, "Some music makes people tap their feet, and other music makes people want to dance. And then there is music that makes you throw a brick through a window. That is the type of music that I am after." The emotional energy here is clear, people that throw bricks are highly stimulated and usually angry. Assume that Zappa's ideal song makes no recourse to linguistic argument, and we are left with the impression that it demonstrated a general mode of being and acting, a character sketch of the type of person that throws rocks at windows. A gifted composer, Zappa condensed the emotional matrix or experiential pattern characteristic of such a moral type into a musical Symbol, probably a phrase or theme, and worked at developing it into a formal whole with appropriate degrees of desire and satisfaction. With music designed to inspire action, there must be more emphasis on desire side than on satisfaction. If the listener were able to resolve all tension within the song, then there would be little need for the release effected through throwing the brick. Thus, catharsis is not a part of music that would be instrumental.

To cause someone to take action without physically forcing or verbally persuading sounds magical, and this is the label that Collingwood gives to art that performs social functions. Once we move beyond the mystification surrounding magic and realize that, probably, "spells" have nothing to do with actually procuring the desire of the mage but rather focus on building up social conditions favorable to the realization of said goal, then we have the basis for a sociological explanation of music's influence on the will.

Magic is a representation where the emotion evoked is an emotion valued on account of its function in practical life, evoked in order that it may discharge that function, and fed by the generative or focusing magical activity into the practical life that needs it. Magical activity is a kind of dynamo supplying the mechanism of practical life with the emotional

current that drives it. Hence, magic is a necessity for every sort and condition of man, and is actually found in every healthy society. (Collingwood 68-69)

Magical art is simply art that serves to create or concentrate the emotional energy needed to keep a community running. Examples readily spring to mind, and Collingwood cites folk-art, religion, sport, ceremonies, and dance as some of the most obvious cases of socially instrumental art.

Returning to Zappa, what community was he concerned with? It is really difficult to say; he had a very long career that saw numerous permutations in his audience base over the years. Roughly, we might say that people listening to Zappa's music and attending performances included musicians, non-conformists, electric jazz fans, guitar enthusiasts, the merely curious, and random others. My point is that as an avant-garde musician, Zappa had no clearly identifiable community to channel energy for and was thus doomed never to realize his brick-launching goal (as far as I know). But we can certainly recall a variety of musics designed for particular communities that do have a clear relationship between emotional energy and audience action. Religious music may be the paradigm case, with music an essential part of ceremony across culture and well known to contribute to divine revelation. Motley Crue, and '80s metal as a whole, is a notorious pop culture example. Did they consciously set out to create music that would inspire exhibitionism and flashing? Perhaps, but it is more plausible that they are (were) involved with focusing youthful sexual energy and "whipping it up to fever pitch," a practice that can result in a variety of acts, including but not limited to flashing.

Thus, audience analysis is an essential part of music's rhetorical instrumentality. The artist usually works with material already present and develops and directs it rather than creating something out of nothing. In addition, it is essential to account for context. Just as it is typically mistaken to attribute collective action solely to an oration, so is it an overstatement to say that a particular aesthetic event caused a specific behavior. For example, the "wild youth" of the '50s that responded so strongly to "Rock Around the Clock" played over the opening credits of Katzman's film had a lot more behind their legendary "riots" than one song. Combine the sexual energy noted above with a repressive social order, a darkened room, absence of authority figures, and a host of other variables and we can begin to understand their apparently anti-social behavior.

To conclude the Will, it is clear that music, at least music without words, does not assist an audience in choosing between clearly specifiable policy options (Hart 4). What it does do is present us with stylized representations of human action and its qualities. Without denotation, music can never say *what*, but it will always provide a compelling demonstration of *how*.

Conclusion

This essay has presented an argument in favor of exploring the intersection of rhetoric and aesthetics. With my account of the rhetoricity of music, I have indicated that non-linguistic appeal can operate on several levels but is especially powerful regarding emotion and character. If alogical appeal works with music, ephemeral and evanescent, how much more influence resides in the more permanent and tangible domains that rhetoric and the plastic arts share?

The four distinct rhetorical characteristics of Campbell's definition that we began with -- author intent, respons-able audience, craft, and faculty oriented goals -- are definitely not all that there is to art. Many, like Collingwood, explicitly argue against allowing these characteristics within "art proper," but we know that all art is not pure disinterested play. Often, even art proper can be harnessed to promote such "lowly" practices as propagandizing (Perris) or merchandising (Berger) in order to augment the mass of aesthetic products explicitly designed for these purposes.

Similarly, the non-linguistic appeal outlined here is obviously not the only factor one should consider when exploring rhetoric. However, to the extent that one agrees that the sensory is necessarily involved in all social experience, failure to account for the aesthetic represents a serious weakness. To return to our opening story, oratory during Rome's second sophistic probably was decadent due to a totalitarian regime. Perhaps they did focus upon Style because that was all they had left. But this should demonstrate the sheer fundamentality of the aesthetic in rhetorical discourse -- even mighty Caesar cannot take it away. As long as we remain natural creatures, animals however rational, the basic sensation of experience and its interpretation will form the ground of rhetoric, not the ornament.

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Musical Constructions of Public and Private Space: The "Tender Force" of Soft Soul

Charles Kronengold

[I realize that this version of the paper does not discuss the phrase "tender force". It comes from Smokey Robinson's song "Quiet Storm". The phrase, like the song's title, does not work as paradox or oxymoron, but rather suggests something unexpected, or unexpectedly potent.]

Does "the public" depend upon "the private" for definition? Is public space established in part by contrast with private space? What is at stake when people move from one to the other? Recorded popular music can suggest interesting approaches to these questions, partly because on records, musical spaces are imaginary spaces: the sense of space—physical, social or historical—must be constructed. These constructions require the concerted use of musical techniques and production practices, and will always be susceptible to varied interpretations and rapid change. In this paper, I will focus upon the ways that soft soul depicts public and private space, and upon the role of contrast between the two. What I will be moving towards, in this paper, is the suggestion of a kind of politics that emphasizes, or really dramatizes the movement into political space, the process of "going public".

Soft soul is associated primarily with Philadelphia producer/songwriters Kenneth Gamble, Leon Huff and Thom Bell (and the artists they produced, like The O'Jays and The Spinners). For this reason, it is also called the "Philly Sound", but it does include many other producers and artists of the early 1970s—the Los Angeles-based Barry White constitutes one famous example. This music presents a radical reconstruction of musical space, a dynamic mixture of public and private themes and modes, and a complex response to the African American urban condition in the age of deindustrialization. Most crucially, soft soul seems able, not only to depict a range of public and private spaces, but to show the movement of human subjects within and among these spaces. The genre's distinctiveness lies not in any subjectively "soft" quality, nor in the music's inclusion of instruments like strings and horns, but in its approach to its materials. In particular, these songs explore possibilities beyond the traditional scheme which places a lead voice at a song's conceptual center. As a result, soft soul songs can give the sense that any voice or instrument (or combination thereof), any musical parameter or formal part, can come to the fore or perform a surprising function.

Although listeners continue to enjoy soft soul, the critical literature has perpetuated a one-sided view of the style's defining characteristics. Soft soul's use of earlier styles has been heard as simply nostalgic, its fascination with new forms, sounds and technologies as merely faddish, its broad mixture of musical genres (both African American and other) as a dilution of the blues. Moreover, the soft soul songs that explicitly address public issues have been taken as anomalous. As one scholar has recently put it, the producers of soft soul "infused the market with romantic ballads and stylish dance music more than they rejuvenated the Civil Rights movement with a message of black liberation". As I have suggested, however, soft soul embodies a distinct political practice, concerned more with dramatizing the *work behind, approach to and possibility of* political action than with describing the action itself. While it might not deliver a *new* message, it does attempt to sort through and make sense of some of the older ones. I will return to this theme of the 70s as coming after the 60s at the end of this paper. Because it

comes when it does and explores these metapolitical themes within the confines of particular genres, soft soul can be placed in an orbit with other cultural productions of black Americans of this period: the novels of Chester Himes, Ishmael Reed and John Wideman, black action films like *Gordon's war* and *The Spook who sat by the door*, as well as other musical works.

I will discuss songs that use musical space as a means of representing public and private space and that work to depict the movement of people within and among various social spaces. In doing so, I will point to the songs' arrangement and production, their mixtures of genre, and their creative handling of conventional forms. All of the songs are *political* in that they attempt to suggest what some community should do in such a way as to question the constitution of that community. Marvin Gaye's "What's going on" (1971) provides an unusually clear representation of a community in the context of an explicitly political song. The album of the same name, while produced outside of the Philly nexus a year before Gamble and Huff began to produce their best-known records, demonstrates a flexible use of voices and instruments, a variety of production practices and a mix of genres that make it an originary soft soul text. The song "What's going on", which opens the album, is famous for beginning with the sounds of a house-party. The use of audience or party noises, as Gaye inherited it, was simply a way of creating an atmosphere, giving a sense of space or place. Here, however, the music that follows the house-party effect does not seem at all to belong to the same musical realm; you expect something "funky" in the 60s sense, "down home", say, "Mercy, mercy, mercy" by Cannonball Adderley, and what fades in instead is something amazingly spacious and broad, something that cannot be heard as contained within a club or any other physical space. [This is a Motown album, too: think of how different it is from the taut constructions of earlier Motown -- "ABC", "The Love you save". Those songs articulate the distinctions among musical sections—verse, chorus, bridge—with admirable clarity; "What's going on" smooths over these distinctions in order to help create the sense of breadth.]

This song raises questions of audience, listenership, and community through the distance between this opening sound-effect and the music proper which follows it. Who are the people? Are they already a community for this music or does the song reinvent them as such? We can hear this opening hook as telling a story about the genre: that the address to or creation of an audience or community must be *built in to the song itself*, properly a part of it. Having hit the listener with the "house-party" scheme and failed to follow it up with the appropriate sort of music, Marvin Gaye makes himself *responsible* for this discrepancy, and uses it in a way that makes an issue of genre and audience. His symbolic investment in the house-party effect is very much like his investment in the title "What's going on". Gaye takes a stock phrase, one which is normally asked without the desire for an answer—a phrase, in fact, that you might hear spoken in the house-party introduction—and tries to make it mean something. One hears his troping on this phrase as a test-case for the survival of "conversation" or of the human.

If we listen carefully to the house-party sounds, we'll notice that the party contains no sounds other than those of the voices. This almost suggests that the party represents the pure space of conversation, except that the voices also perform rhythmic interjections and vocal percussion. Further, they fade in and out over the course of the song. Thus both spaces, that of the house-party and that of the song proper, are imaginary spaces and require interpretation. This album was the first over which Gaye had artistic control, and we should not be surprised that one of Gaye's aims was to construct himself as a musical subject separable from the Motown machine. It remains interesting that he elects to employ a multiplicity of voices to achieve this aim. He treats even his own voice as multiple through overdubbing and questions its preeminence in the texture through arrangement and production, again helping to establish practices that become crucial to soft soul. The vocal overdubbing here is not meant to be seamless. It is heterophonic, which constitutes an African-derived practice, but, more importantly here, it embodies contrasting performance styles. From the point of Gaye's entrance, there are two voices, both his, one singing fairly "straight" and one more "ad-lib". The effect is somewhat like having the first and last verses sung simultaneously, and it creates a contrast between exposition or declamation and commentary or improvisation. It helps also to

establish a parallel between the construction of self and the creation of community, a parallel that becomes more apparent as additional Marvin Gayes enter the mix along with continued interjections from the party people. [The introduction of finger snaps later in the song is both thematic (because it appears just as the lyrics discuss participatory politics) and naturalized as "audience participation" (by the presence of the house-party sounds throughout the song). At the same time, the finger snaps come as an inspired orchestrational move that might remind us of Gaye's background as drummer and percussionist.]

"What's going on" works quickly to create a relation between a striking introduction and the body of the song. Many soft soul songs contain longer introductions whose own form, constitution and internal contrasts explore a song's themes and dramatize the process of approaching the song. "For the love of money", written and produced by Gamble and Huff and performed by the O'Jays, provides one such example. Like "What's going on", it complicates its representations of acoustical space and contains a multiplicity of voices, some of which exist on the threshold between presence and absence. [Like a number of soft soul vocal groups, The O'Jays began as an a capella R&B group in the 50s and stuck it out until coming to prominence in the 70s. At the opening of the song, the bass plays what is clearly a melodic hook, both because of the strength of the line itself, and because the bass is alone. Beyond the line itself, there is the fact that it stands alone, and particularly, that it is not a standard bass sound; rather, it is played with a pick, giving a sharper attack, and it is phase-shifted, giving it unexpected nuance and sheen. There is a reverb effect, in this opening section, that is crucial: the bass enters alone, as mentioned, and so the only thing that gives it a sense of *place* is the suggestion of the physical space it inhabits. Without warning, however, the reverberation is turned off; the effect is of the bass's having the rug pulled out from under it. More precisely, the precarious sense of place is shown to have been nothing more than the result of a technological trick. Like Marvin Gaye's use of the house-party scheme, this effect takes something which is commonly used to create a backdrop—which in order to do that must not call attention to itself—and problematizes it. Following Marvin Gaye, I can suggest that musical space becomes a way of imagining and creating an audience, that is, musical space becomes a way of representing social space.

How do we start to hear the treatment of musical space as having social implications? The melodic aspect of the hook gets your attention, but the strangeness and the energy of the *sound*, and the problematization of musical *space* seem to call for the song's expansive introduction. This introduction, given the political nature of the text, shows that the song desires not simply to "make a statement", but also to perform the perhaps more important social function of asking how we come to talk about these things, what it is like when we do talk about them, how much of a change from our routine ways of thinking such talk requires. The rhythm arrangement helps us to recognize this departure from routine with the very bold move of putting the snare drum on beats one and three of every other measure rather than the usual two and four of each measure. This move would be surprising enough for an introduction, but understandable as an attempt to gain the listener's attention. Carrying this scheme into the body of the song, however, forces a listener to live with it. One can feel the absence of a strong articulation on two and four, perhaps sensing the drummer's tension and seriousness, along with the release that comes with the introduction of a traditional drum groove in the song's bluesy bridge.

These soft soul songs depict political space by *inhabiting* it, showing us how to inhabit it. One of the things it shows us is that, in a meaningful sense, we do not *always* inhabit it; we have to approach it, even if we do not realize that that's what we are doing. "Soul searching time" (1975), by The Trammps, works on the border between soft soul and disco, which makes its political ambitions less expected and more precarious. The danceable character of the song, the song's ability to perform that function, almost demands that the presence of political content be argued for within the body of the song. Here, the matter of the song, implicit in its title, is mapped onto the song's formal scheme, specifically onto the contrast between verse and chorus. The increased clarity of the division between verse and chorus is grounded in some typical

means for making this distinction: the verse is more sparsely arranged, it is sung by a soloist, its melodic profile is not so strong, its lyrics provide the details. This distinction is enhanced by putting the verse in a bluesy, ambiguous minor (with hints of the major) and the chorus in an unequivocal major, and, especially, by allowing the chorus to take over the last third of the song. Songs whose forms work this way—I might also point to Harold Melvin and the Bluenotes' "Wake up everybody", from the same year—create the sense of the verse as private space and the chorus as public space. The effect of "leaving the verse behind" is thus one of moving from, say, adolescence to adulthood, a move that Kant's "What is enlightenment" describes as the movement into the sphere of politics. The songs as wholes would embody what Stanley Cavell has called "the fact of adolescence", that is, "the task of wanting and choosing adulthood, along with the impossibility of the task" (*The Claim of Reason*, p. 464). Musical conventions which can go unnoticed become noticeable when connected with explicit public themes: public matters lend concreteness to musical techniques, which thereby accrue social meanings they can subsequently retain even in songs that do not address political questions. Thus, when The Trammps use the same scheme two years later, in the better-known "Disco inferno", the sense of the verse as the realm of private deliberation and the chorus as that of public action can still be felt, despite there being no particular justification for it in the lyrics.

The idea of musical space and social space as overlapping suggests that a listener's sense of depictive aims will be as much a matter of "ear"—familiarity, taste, attention—as of overt thematics. I just mentioned Harold Melvin and the Bluenotes' "Wake up everybody", which also uses a strong contrast between major and minor and leaves its verse behind. This Gamble and Huff production presents a clear political message in its lyrics, to be sure, but gains much of its power through its formal scheme and its play of genre. Its opening suggests a kind of modal jazz that used harmonic drones and unmetered rhythm for their cultural associations, their sonic properties and their temporal possibilities. A central example like John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* created a templar space that from its initial release was understood to have political implications. The Harold Melvin song's association with music like *A Love Supreme* is strengthened by the entrance of a pentatonic bass line (played on the electric piano) as metered time is established. When Teddy Pendergrass' voice appears, the intimacy of the arrangement and production seems to compress the templar space created by the song's introduction. Does this mean that the modal introduction simply constitutes an ornament that serves no function in the song's architecture? No, because by devoting the second half of the song (a full three and a half minutes) to vocal ad-libs over a strong one-bar bass line, the song re-establishes the sense of templar space in its native idiom, gospel-inflected soul. The song's structure as a whole is strangely reminiscent of The Beatles' "Hey Jude", perhaps more radical in its formal clarity. "Hey Jude"'s form and sheer length attracted attention at the time of its release, and its second half establishes the sense of a participatory public space even in the absence of an explicitly political text. "Wake up everybody" recreates this sense of public space, but as only one of its political elements. Its political activity consists as much in its willingness to sort through and interpret the political music of the 60s—represented by gospel-soul fusion associated with The Impressions, the modal jazz of Coltrane and his followers, and the universalizing pop of the Beatles—as in its attempt to make a statement.

Songs like "Wake up everybody" suggest that soft soul inhabits political space only when nothing else, including a pre-existent "message", can be said to do so; it thereby makes itself indispensable [-- hence the social role of the "apolitical" Barry White, for instance, and of his epic musical landscapes: his music is precisely designed to inhabit the empty spaces of a deindustrialized society, to fill them with a vision of earthly paradise which, because it undermines its own status as ground, a listener can either accept or reject]. At the same time, soft soul develops a practice of depicting political space in such a way as to be characterized by a reticence which has given many listeners the sense of *so many opportunities not taken*. Does this reticence really imply that the musical "means" are truly the focus, their "purposes" or "uses" merely secondary? Here a musical parallel may be helpful. Al Green is considered the greatest "pure" soul singer of the 70s. His work remains distinct both from soft-soul, through its

focus on the work of *singing* (rather than on that of songwriting, arrangement or production), and from its 60s precursors, through the particular characteristics of Green's vocal style. [I take Green as a paradigmatic instance of the ways that conceptions of virtuosity are expanded in the 70s.] Where the soul singers of the 60s operated within the traditionally virtuosic mode of *power* and *persuasion*, Green develops a virtuosity of *patience* or *restraint*. His style strikes one as a virtuosic mode partly because its restrained character does not compromise its ability to persuade, but more because the precise nature of this restraint is such that one always senses this restraint as a constantly changing index of *what he is doing* versus *what he can do*. Every so often, he will give you a sense of his "real power", but, as the result of his restructuring of vocal virtuosity, there is a greater emphasis on the work *behind* such a display of power, on the approach *to* it, and, finally, on the sense that the possibility of such a display is always *there*. I would claim that the political practice of soft soul is similarly constructed, emphasizing "work behind", "approach to" and "possibility of".

Soft soul shows the difficulty of inheriting the 60s *musically*. The political dimension of 60s soul was predicated on its unselfconsciousness, directness and freedom from constraint, questionable attributions in the 60s, and untenable in the 70s. When you reject idealizations about unselfconsciousness and directness, however, you must face questions about sincerity. Similarly, the power of allegorical or elliptical messages in songs of the 60s cannot simply be duplicated: you can't say "Wake up everybody" in '75 in the same way that you said "People get ready" in '66—a song must work to acknowledge and make meaningful this vast distance. Nor can the vocabulary of jazz musicians like Coltrane, Pharaoh Sanders or Albert Ayler provide enough raw material for soft soul, even as these figures provide inspiration and instruction.

It is, in fact, this distinctness from the 60s that makes the political aspect of soft soul both indispensable and hard to recognize as properly political. This is an attribute shared by other genres of this period, like funk, Salsa and Southern rock. Each of these genres, in different ways, depicts the overtly political mode as *difficult* and *rare*. These qualities serve to make the overtly political statement, really *any* "statement", more precious and more precarious: perhaps itself a useful role, if properly acknowledged. The "statement", in popular music of the 70s, is precious and precarious because it serves as much to *make an example of itself* as to make things happen. The emphasis, again, is on the process of acting politically and on the creation of the selves and communities that do the acting. One could say about politics and community in this music what Emerson said of the self: it is not defined by assertions; it "become

SAD SONGS AND SUDDEN DANGER OR MARCIA'S BALLS

LESLIE KEARNEY

She appears to be the secret love child of Miss Manners and Little Richard, sitting demurely at the keyboard... while blowing the joint apart.¹

I must say, the "demure" part of this characterization eludes me. I can only assume it comes from Marcia Ball's typical posture at the piano, playing with her legs crossed. In 1998, Ball won the W. C. Handy Award for Contemporary Blues Female Artist of the Year; this year she is again nominated for this award, as well as the W. C. Handy Award for Best Blues Instrumentalist, Keyboards. She performs live throughout Texas and Louisiana, on what is often referred to as the "crawfish circuit," with occasional excursions to Chicago and California. Her recording career has pursued a pattern of increasing autonomy, as she seems to exert ever more control over the production and content of her albums, including more songs of her own composition, both words and music. While the personnel of her band changes occasionally, the instrumentation usually includes guitar, bass and drums, always played by men. She also employs additional sidemen for individual songs, also usually men. Although capable of vocal virtuosity, she generally limits this to elegant and expressive embellishments of phrase endings, relying for greatest effect rather on a certain smoky quality of voice, even slightly unfocused, that creates an intimate, often confiding, sometimes seductive atmosphere. Her style of singing also functions to enhance clarity of the words. Marcia Ball has five solo CDs and has also joined with other like-minded women to create two other CDs, *Dreams Come True* (Discovery 74213, produced by Mac "Dr. John" Rebennak) with Angela Strehli and Lou Ann Barton (who also sang back-up on her CD *Gatorhythms*, Rounder 3101), in 1990; and *Sing It!* (Rounder 3719) with Irma Thomas and Tracy Nelson, in 1998. Both these CDs have prominent involvement of bassist Sarah Brown, including her songs "If I Know You," composed with Ball, "Turn the Lock on Love," composed with Strehli, and the spectacular "Bad Thing." Ball's performance schedule and other information may be found at <http://www.marciaball.com>.

...the blues have made me blue²

Voodoo occurs as a theme throughout a great deal of Marcia Ball's music, either overtly or by allusion. Throughout the progress of Ball's recordings, highlighted by both the personnel and subjects of her collaborative projects, an unmistakable woman's agenda emerges. The content of this agenda, while not susceptible to easy or concise summary, exudes self-confidence, autonomy, and a no-nonsense progressive attitude. At first this presumed feminism would seem incompatible with the phenomenon of voodoo, associated with primitivism, superstition, the very opposite of any kind of rationality, and of course seduction by magic. While references to voodoo are common in Louisiana music, if anything Ball might have some incentive not to employ this imagery, as the characteristics I have mentioned could easily function to undercut a feminist message. In Ball's repertoire, however, it does not have this effect at all. In fact, in her fourth solo album, *Blue House* (1994, Rounder CD 3131), arguably the most artfully and intellectually constructed, she makes the importance of voodoo both central and graphic, depicting herself as the focus of a voodoo altar, in the position of the recipient of the spell.

¹ Dave Tianen, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 5 July 1996. The title of the article comes from Marcia Ball's song "Why Women Cry," on the album *Let Me Play With Your Poodle*, discussed below.

² "Gonna Make It," Lavelle White, Louise Music, *Dreams Come True*, Discovery 74213 (1990).

Throughout Jim Haskins' *Voodoo and Hoodoo*, an interesting aspect of this art emerges. Haskins first points out that one of the most distinctive features of the society where black magic originates is its "world-view, its relationship to the universe.... There is no such thing as alienation in primitive cultures, no word in their language to describe a sense of separation or differentiation from surrounding forces.... Indeed, his very identity—another word for which there is rarely a translation in primitive languages—or, rather, his being, is defined in terms of the people and the world around him."³ This idea of lack of differentiation is, I believe, a critical one. Voodoo is not only rooted in a world-view of connection or unification, but it functions likewise to unify disparate, even contradictory elements in the modern societies in which it surfaces. Voodoo emerged out of the blurring of two once radically different professions, the priest and the medicine man/sorcerer, imported from Africa to the New World as slaves. "Wisely, in Latin-held areas [sorcerers] couched their activities in the guise of the religious traditions that the slaves were able to adapt to Catholicism. They and the priests, who knew the techniques of sorcery and used them to gain greater acceptability among the other slaves themselves, gradually blended into one."⁴ In other words, not only did the practice of voodoo conflate two different functions from the original society, it also provided a way of adapting to the status quo, in this case Catholicism.

To this day, Marie Leveau, herself a devout Catholic and credited with the subsuming of a great deal of Catholic paraphernalia into voodoo, including statues of Catholic saints, prayers, incense, candles, and holy water, is recognized as the voodoo queen non plus ultra. Zora Neale Hurston's report of hoodoo doctor Luke Turner's description of Leveau indicates her significance and her power: "Time went around pointing out what God had already made. Moses had seen the Burning Bush. Solomon by magic knowed all wisdom. And Marie Leveau was a woman in New Orleans."⁵ Turner points out that "She hold the feast of St. John's partly because she is a Catholic and partly because of hoodoo."⁶ Marie was attributed with biblical powers, to walk on water, "open the waters," make men behave like animals (bark like dogs), control thunder and lightning; her very house could sit on the water without sinking. She derived her powers from "the rattlesnake that had come to her a little one when she was also young," that stayed with her all her life; Turner, reputed to be her nephew, still wore its dried skin around his shoulders for power. When she went to work, "She go to her great Altar and seek until she become the same as the spirit, then she come out into the room where she listens to them that come to ask. When they finish she answer them as a god."⁷ Her tomb in St. Louis Cemetery, No. 1 remains a shrine and the presumed home of her daughter, also named Marie Leveau, is now the site of the Voodoo Museum in New Orleans, 739 Bourbon Street. The picture on the cover of *Blue House* constitutes a good example of this coalescence of voodoo and catholicism. Marcia's face, framed in the center, resembles an orthodox icon. The mardi gras beads draped over the altar evoke a rosary. The altar is surmounted by a cross to which a half-moon is affixed, suggesting a blending of Christianity and celestial worship. Beneath Marcia's face is what at first appears to be a picture of a saint, but which might be a tarot card. Christian symbols coexist with a shrunk skull, two voodoo dolls, charms representing a chili pepper, a guitar, and a hand, a lucky symbol in voodoo (as well as two others I can't identify). The mouth of an object resembling a hippopotamus or some kind of primitive reptile gapes wide open. The important symbol of the snake crawls up the left side. A heart hangs right below the moon-cross and right above Marcia's head, perhaps suggesting a dual identity as the mother of God and the goddess of love. Roses decorate both sides of this display, the addition of flowers a common feature of the voodoo altar.

Another feature of voodoo that surfaces repeatedly is the perception of good and evil, and for that matter, many seemingly contradictory phenomena, as two sides of the same coin. Not only can the materials and symbols used in African magical practice work either for good or evil, but this mentality also simply renders value judgment irrelevant.⁸ Hurston points out an interesting aspect of the perception of God in this type of community, certainly atypical of the Judeo-Christian deity, noting that "It is singular that God never finds fault, never censures the Negro. He sees faults but expects nothing different. He is lacking in bitterness as is the Negro story-teller himself in circumstances that ordinarily would call for pity."⁹ This refusal to differentiate between good and evil, right and

³Jim Haskins, *Voodoo and Hoodoo* (Lanham, MD: Scarborough House, 1990), 27-28.

⁴Haskins, 53.

⁵Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1935), 201. Haskins spells her name Laveau and gives her dates as 1794-1881; Luke Turner specifies her birthday as 2 February 1827.

⁶Hurston, *Mules and Men*, 202.

⁷*ibid.*, 203-07. The serpent-god (arpe-reposoir) expresses, through voodoo priests or priestesses, its approval of the admission of new cult members. Haskins, 101.

⁸Haskins, 84-85.

⁹Hurston, *Mules and Men*, 254.

wrong, eliminates the we/they distinction required to sit in judgment. Thus through these several aspects of and perceptions about voodoo, there emerges a sense of connection, a way for a minority (and an oppressed, even enslaved minority, at that) to use idiosyncratic ritualistic practice to mitigate barriers, to create a place to "be," and to fit into the surrounding environment. It is not surprising, that these same qualities are identified in women's literature, in feminist studies, and women's contributions to a wide variety of disciplines.¹⁰ In fact, Zora Neale Hurston's worrepresents a convergence of these ideas.¹¹ Literary theorist Barbara Johnson finds the metonymic voice in Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* to offer an antidote to the "fantasy of domination" she identifies in the western literary canon, while Henry Louis Gates, Jr. notes that she "embodie[s] a more or less harmonious but nevertheless problematic unity of opposites."¹² While voodoo of course has many male practitioners, the art does seem particularly associated with women. It is more powerful if handed down a matriarchial line: "If the person is the seventh daughter of a seventh sister, she has extra special powers."¹³ In addition, much of the material that recurs over and over for use in spells is associated with women—homespun fabric, traditionally made by women; eggs, at least metaphorically produced by women; and most blatant, menstrual blood.¹⁴

Voodoo has a number of connections with music, including color symbolism (blues, white/red hot); it is certainly no accident that the album on which Ball features voodoo imagery most prominently is called *Blue House*. Music plays a crucial role in spiritual possession in this tradition, the subject being "moved, by the rhythm of clapping or drum-beating or by singing, to allow his identity to be subsumed by the deity."¹⁵ Thus we have come full circle, back to the idea of the merging of individual identity with some other entity, in this case the worshipped deity, brought about through music. This in fact suggests something about Marcia Ball's music that is noteworthy, the fact that she manages to address significant women's issues without constantly bemoaning a sense of "Otherness." It is not exactly news that the "unmarked" voice in most cultures is masculine, making it difficult to speak as a "person, not only as a woman."¹⁶ This, however, is precisely what I would suggest Ball manages to achieve. In the process, she defies most of the common wisdom in the feminist manifesto, from Christine Battersby's assessment that what distinguishes a woman "is not her biology, but the way society categorises her and treats her because of her biology,"¹⁷ to the finding that sexual difference is "constitutive of one's sense [of the] possibilities of existence."¹⁸ One of Madonna's accomplishments, according to Susan McClary, is supposed to be the subverting of standard tonal procedures, normatively "male-voiced," to "tell another story," something McClary considers all the more significant for a woman, who "finds [her]self always cast by society in the position of the Other rather than that of the 'universal' (i.e., masculine) Self."¹⁹ Marcia Ball simply refuses any gender-based categorization or limitation whatsoever. She either does not allow herself to be cast in the position of Other, or does not seem to notice if she has been, and goes about universalizing herself quite effectively. How she communicates this non-recognition of Otherness while retaining an

¹⁰for example, Evelyn Fox Keller, *A Feeling for the Organism: The Life and Work of Barbara McClintock* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1983); Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982) et al. For a good overview see Martha Minow, *Making All the Difference* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 193-214.

¹¹Zora Neale Hurston, "Hoodoo in America," *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. 44 (1931), 317-417; *Mules and Men*; *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1937).

¹²Barbara Johnson, *A World of Difference* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 162-71; Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Afterword," Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica* (New York: Perennial Library, 1990), 290.

¹³Haskins, 89. It is also interesting to note that women may found secret societies of Voodoo, at least in the Haitian culture, Michel S. Laguerre, *Voodoo and Politics in Haiti* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 131, fn. 1.

¹⁴Mother K. in the Louisville area advises: "To keep a man crazy about her and uninterested in wandering, a woman simply has to mix some of her menstrual blood into his food and drink." Haskins, 196. For a hilarious scene involving the obtaining of menstrual blood for a spell, see Robertson Davies, *The Rebel Angels* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), 230-31.

¹⁵Haskins, 35.

¹⁶Sibelan Forrester, "Wooing the Other Woman: Gender in Women's Love Poetry in the Silver Age," in *Engendering Slavic Literatures*, Pamela Chester and Sibelan Forrester, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 107-34, at 111.

¹⁷Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 154.

¹⁸The Milan Women's Bookstore Collective, *Sexual Difference: A Theory of Social-Symbolic Practice*, trans. Teresa de Lauretis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 6.

¹⁹Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 158.

unmistakably feminine voice is subtle and sometimes hard to pinpoint, but I would like to suggest some things that contribute to it.

Many of these features occur in *Blue House*, an album that seems constructed as an integrated whole. *Blue House* can be seen to describe the life of an incredibly self-sufficient, self-directed, extraordinarily complete woman, or a kind of panorama of women's experience, or for that matter, human experience. One aspect of this particular album is the defining of a consistent geographical location; interestingly, however, the effect of this is not to delimit the message but to create a vivid environment of which the speaker can be a part, a sense of belonging and continuity with one's surroundings, rather than a disembodied voice. This location, Louisiana, emerges immediately in the first song, "Red Beans," one of Louisiana's great dishes. So does the voodoo symbolism, red beans presenting one of the common "spell" ingredients. Red beans are lucky and can be used to help insure a good result in the courtroom.²⁰ "Red Beans" is composed by McKinley Morganfield (Muddy Waters); the next five songs are by Marcia Ball.

In "The Facts of Life" the speaker clearly embarks on the passage to maturity, then continues "Down the Road," the frustrated but determined girl who asks "When will my real life start?" Although she's dying to leave home, even here "on a dead end street in a ten-block town," she has acquired an impressive degree of rueful self-knowledge and realism: "every day I say I'm gone and then/every night I'm in the joints again." This song also reinforces the sense of environment, in fact limiting it to those claustrophobic ten blocks. By "Blue House," the environment has shrunk to four walls, she's living alone and "Nobody comes to visit me, it's like the blues is a fatal disease." Interestingly, however, even as the speaker's environment becomes physically more restricted, she maintains connection with her surroundings. Unlike most depressed people who have lost their lover, she neither shuts herself away, nor perceives the world as alien: "I keep the shades pulled up, the windows open and the doors unlocked/In case my man just happens by that little blue house of mine." In "Big Shot," she's on the dance floor again. Now she has become the educator, "I'm the one who taught you what you know," and the one in command, "You might have a line women can't resist/ I might be the only one you missed."

The centerpiece of *Blue House* is the magnificent "St. Gabriel." Set in Louisiana's prison for women, the environment has now reached the utmost restriction. But even behind these locked doors the speaker maintains connection to the natural world. "The sunsets in St. Gabriel are fiery red, The fields all around are brown and dead.... You can feel the river through the walls, It shakes the levee, it shakes us all." In clinical terms, "St. Gabriel" is the story of homicide justified by battered women's syndrome. "They say I killed a man that threatened my life/But I went to prison because I was his wife.... Now they say I'm right and I'm free to go/So I'm standing out here by the side of the road." These distanced, anonymous statements that "they say" stand in stark contrast to the searing, poetic realization: "All the sad songs about leaving/None about coming home/I been down in St. Gabriel/Nowhere to go." "Their" assessments of her guilt or, for that matter, her innocence have no relevance to her life. The speaker is connected not to the society that judges her, but to her natural environment and, interestingly, still to the man who abused her, without whom she has nowhere to go. This is the tragedy that never stops; when she destroys her abuser she destroys the most intimate connection of her life, leaving the victim with nothing, no home, no partner, no hope of anything better.

Positioned in the center, this song seems to act as a turning point. After the pattern of progressively circumscribed physical boundaries, reaching maximum constriction in "St. Gabriel," there will be no more physical restrictions. From now on, her environment is defined by degrees of emotional and personal connection that will continue to expand, the mirror image of the process that took place in the first half of the album. In "St. Gabriel," she still has but a small range of ways to understand problems, much less solve them; but afterwards there follow a number of increasingly complex responses to love and loss, ranging from nonchalant dismissal ("Fingernails") to self-sacrifice ("Why Do I"), coming close to regaining enough confidence to be demanding ("If This is Love"). The first song after "St. Gabriel," "That's what I get for falling in love," is a case of *res ipse loquitur*. Although "Fingernails" is one of the few songs on this album Ball didn't compose, its content has clear autobiographical implications. The speaker used to chew her fingernails off "cause I was nervous over you," but now keeps them long "so they click when I play the piano." The title has obvious metonymic significance, the discrete body part literally acting as a measure of the whole person, her peace of mind and *joie de vivre* growing in direct proportion to the length of her fingernails. The rather bizarre title, however, again suggests the focus on disconnected body parts often used in voodoo, where they work the same way. The body part—and fingernails are one of the most popular in voodoo—is representative of and ultimately

²⁰"Not only must you chew the guinea seed, but you must spit liberally as well, getting bits of the seed all around the courtroom. The pot of red kidney beans being cooked in the meantime must contain a piece of paper on which has been written the judge's name three times and your name nine times. There must be no other seasoning, for the presence of the paper keeps the judge's mind on you and your case." Haskins, 176-77.

used to control the whole person. An interesting reversal of that idea here, her fingernails act as a barometer of the fact that she won't let her feelings be controlled by outsiders any more. In fact, she's going to keep her fingernails long "till the swallows come back from Louisiana," another connection to environment and natural forces.

The singer of "Why Do I" is one of those endlessly forgiving women, asking "Why do I never give up hope, never reach the end of my rope, never quit trying.... I could let it go so far and then draw the line but that wouldn't be my way." Has she learned a different lesson by the end, in "One of a Kind," the ability to know when she's had enough? It is interesting that "Why Do I," that comes as close as Ball ever gets to being a doormat, is followed by what might be recognized as the female manifesto, the unequivocal "If This is Love (you got to give me more)," another self-explanatory text. In the next to last song, balancing "Down the Road," she has found herself in "Sparkle Paradise." Anyone would recognize the dance halls of New Orleans with the revolving glittering ball in the ceiling, that seemed "like heaven" to her when she saw them for the first time at seventeen, where "the beautiful smiling people of the night offered all the evening delights you like." "Sparkle Paradise" seems retrospective, a momentary retreat into make-believe that the singer associates with a time of innocence, when she was barely an adult. One can almost see Tennessee Williams' Blanche in this text, but the speaker here makes an unequivocal choice to live in the real world, instead of retreating into self-delusion. The recollection of her seventeen-year-old impressions serve as a barometer to measure her new maturity, the scope of her development.

In the final analysis (and the last song, "One of a Kind"), she has learned what is most "precious," and it involves walking out on someone she loves, maybe "for all the wrong reasons," but because she knows it can never be right. She begins with the realization "There's nothing so precious, nothing so fine, As an unselfish lover and a made up mind," the complete synthesis, the unselfish person who can integrate with others and who has achieved internal integration, the "made up mind." There are few statements as raw about the demise of a relationship as this song:

He still thinks about her,
She never thought of herself.
And it hurts to be without her
But there's no one he can tell
who'd understand it, what he had and let go
It's almost like he planned it
But he misses her so.

Two people witness the demolition of what could have been, seeing the senselessness of it, utterly unable to stop or divert the path, continuing down the road to estrangement "almost like they planned it." The devastating irony is indeed that no one understands it—even though it happens every day—an exercise in human futility seemingly destined to act itself out infinitely.

These songs are perfectly coherent without being construed to tell a single continuous "story." One can see the set of songs as a portrait of how many women love, or as how a single woman learns, the hardest conceivable way, to love. The venue of Louisiana seems to be a constant in the set, as it is not in all of Ball's albums; and the portrait of adolescence asking "when will my real life start," balanced by the explicit reminiscence of an adolescent fantasy-world in "Sparkle Paradise" seems suggestive. If perceived as an integrated whole, these songs form a kind of *Frauenliebe und -leben* for our time. Significantly, this one is not the projection of a male poet, interpreted by a male composer, assessed by male critics, who conclude that it is all indeed just exactly "how women are." Moreover, there seems to be something special about the presentation of this album that distinguishes it from Ball's earlier work. It is the first of her solo albums to include the texts of all the songs. It includes a reproduction of an oil painting by Gordon Fowler, a person of obvious significance to Marcia Ball, that the credits refer to as the "inspirational Blue House painting." Perhaps most important, the notes for the album contain an interesting statement. In her 1986 album, *Hot Tamale Baby*, for example, Ball is described as a "low-key female Jerry Lee Lewis," and is quoted as calling her own work "good old rocking music," concluding, "It makes you want to get up and dance and that's what it's all about, isn't it?" In contrast, by *Blue House*, she thanks "the people who make it possible," including "public radio and the daring few commercial stations, independent record labels like Rounder and our wonderful, discerning friends and fans." By this point, dancing is not all it's about any more, nor could she by any stretch of the imagination be perceived as low-key. Her remarks express a clear acknowledgment of the fact that she is presenting challenging material not accessible to everyone, and shaking up the status quo. She creates a persona who speaks non-judgmentally with the voice of the voodoo queen, bridging the gap between the most appalling realities of women's existence and seduction by magic, manipulating anything that crosses her path to find a way into society. She is

equally at home with rationality and superstition, the transcendence of reason. Her power derives from natural forces, not from ingratiating herself with a hostile establishment. Her identity cannot be taken from her because it is connected to everything around her

Let me play with your poodle²¹

Blue House talks about love. *Let Me Play with Your Poodle* talks a lot about sex. Of course the two are not always separable, but when Ball chooses to talk about sex for itself, the results are interesting. The subtitle of *Let Me Play with Your Poodle* could be summed up in Monique Wittig's observation, "If desire could liberate itself, it would have nothing to do with the preliminary marking by sexes."²² One could add, it would not require a human object. Two songs in particular maintain utter sensuality while at the same time blurring boundaries in several ways. While Ball did not write the title song, her remarks in the notes make it quite clear that the ideas of the song resonate very deeply with her. "I'll admit it. Not everybody likes poodles, but once you have loved a poodle it becomes apparent that you live in a big old poodle world. Cuddlier than alligators, warmer than flamingos, extremely decorative, French; poodles will smuggle your lace across the river, find your truffles. Chocolate won't kill a poodle. I've tried." These comments themselves are sexually suggestive. The text of the song is much more so:

You got a cute little poodle, got a long shaggy tail,
I want to buy that poodle but he wasn't for sale....
Well, he's the nicest little poodle that I've ever seen
And what I like about him is you keep him clean....
Now listen here honey what I want to do,
I want to love your poodle, want to love you too....
Two old maids, laying up in the bed
One turned over and this is what she said,
I want to play with your poodle....

This song is intriguing because it is impossible to tell who is attracted to whom. The last verse comes closest to being explicit, with a lesbian orientation. But the previous verses are at the very least ambiguous, the image of a poodle suggesting something feminine yet coupled with the repeated masculine pronoun and the image of a tail. The total effect is not exactly that of bisexuality, but rather a non-gender-specific undifferentiated sex-enthusiasm, for want of a better term. In fact, the song does not even merely convey the sense that the speaker is attracted to both sexes, but rather would be attracted to any sex, were there more than two, indeed attracted to sex itself. Perhaps the fact that the symbol is an animal contributes to this impression.

If anything, Ball pursues this phenomenon even further in her own song "The Right Tool for the Job."

When I go to eat my dinner,
I reach for my spoon and fork
And when it's time to cut my steak,
I make sure my knife is sharp.
And if I need to hang a picture,
I reach for a hammer and nails
And when I've got to clean the floor,
I get out the mop and pail
I don't like to waste my time,
so I make sure I've got
the right tool for the job. [...]

²¹ "Let Me Play with Your Poodle," H. Whitaker, *Let Me Play with Your Poodle*, Rounder CD 3151 (1997).

²² Monique Wittig, "Paradigm," in *Homosexualities and French Literature: Cultural Contexts/Critical Texts*, eds. Elaine Marks and George Stambolian (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 114.

If I'm fixing my man supper,
I cook his favorite dish
Because I know what bait to use
to catch the biggest fish.
A sailboat needs the wind to blow
to sail the seven seas
And a woman needs a man to know
how to do all the things that please.
I want a rope that won't let go
when I tie it in a knot
The right tool for the job....

I want a dog that barks, glue that sticks
A razor blade that never nicks
A fan that keeps me cool at night
A man that always loves me right.

Equating human sexuality with objects is certainly not new; only a few examples include the frequently encountered "jelly roll," Chenier's "Hot Tamale Baby," G. Martin's "Make It Hot" ("Don't put your hands on that, you're gonna make it hot... you can mess with your tutu, that's where it's at..."). Ball takes this convention and pushes it to its logical extreme, pulling in object after object, as well as both masculine and feminine sexuality. The song expresses complete equanimity, not only levelling the needs of both sexes, but placing it all on a par with concerns like having "glue that sticks." The rhyme scheme and shortened line/phrase length of the coda, coupled with a spare accompaniment that focuses even more attention on the words, creates an extremely direct equation of the objects mentioned (note, by the way, the opening reference to the dog, harking back to "Let Me Play with Your Poodle"). In fact, in the last verse the speaker even objectifies herself; even though she talks about using bait "to catch the biggest fish," in essence she herself is the bait. Rather than the possibly offensive imagery in which one sex equates the other with an object or food, something to be used or consumed, this song presents an exuberant objectification of everything, including even natural forces like wind, also providing a continuity with nature. This is in direct contradiction to Forrester's assertion of the need for "Otherness," "the crucial sense of alterity necessary for constituting any sexed subject, any subject as sexual," an idea echoed by MacKinnon and Sontag, among others.²³ Here it is precisely the continuity, equivalence and mutuality between the speaker and everything around her that creates this song's playful sexual energy. In this context, the music of the song is also interesting. The tempo is a constant moderate walking pace, the texture is fairly consistent even during solo sections, the main motif features several repetitions of a single pitch; in other words, the music reflects the essence of the text in creating a homogeneous, symbiotic whole, with no conspicuous climax or individual voice. A rather lengthy instrumental section extends beyond the text, creating a kind of projection into the future, a temporal continuum.

²³Forrester, 119; "A woman is a being who identifies and is identified as one whose sexuality exists for someone else, who is socially male." MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory" in *The Signs Reader: Women, Gender and Scholarship*, Elizabeth Abel and Emily K. Abel, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 245; "The question is: what sexuality are women to be liberated to enjoy? Merely to remove the onus placed upon the sexual expressiveness of women is a hollow victory if the sexuality they become freer to enjoy remains the old one that converts women into objects.... This already 'freer' sexuality mostly reflects a spurious idea of freedom: the right of each person, briefly, to exploit and dehumanize someone else." Susan Sontag, "The Third World of Women," *Partisan Review* 40, no. 2 (1973), 180-206, at 188.

Never woulda hit you if I'd known you'd act like that²⁴

A thread of violence runs through many of Marcia Ball's songs, including those of her own composition. Violence in a certain repertory of women's songs is again not unusual; blues and torch songs routinely observe women slapping men around, often a case of art imitating life. A particularly interesting example of this recounts Bessie Smith's reaction to the discovery of her husband Jack Gee's infidelity in 1929: "Adding insult to injury, he took some of Bessie's production money and used it for a show starring the new object of his affection, Gertrude Saunders. Bessie quickly and dramatically severed her relationship with Jack Gee, leaving in shambles a Columbus, Ohio hotel room which he had occupied with Ms. Saunders. 'That was the only time I ever saw Bessie beat up Jack,' [his niece] Ruby recalled. 'By the time she came out of the room, there were pieces of furniture and feathers everywhere.'"²⁵ There is a certain excitement in this description, an energy, and, one notes, nothing remotely suggestive of condemnation or even judgment of any kind. Rather, the tone taken by Jack's niece almost suggests that Bessie deserves some special credit for not having beaten him up earlier. A woman who, in the interest of protecting what's hers, can take apart a man and a hotel room in a manner that not only shatters the furniture but does it with style, leaving remnants of Bessie's signature boa flying around, deserves a certain admiration. This is the nature of and the attitude toward violence when it occurs in Ball's repertoire.

Soulful Dress (1989, Rounder CD 3078) contains a statement on violence that, like *Blue House* although to a lesser extent, depends for some of its impact on the sequence of songs to create an attitude and certain associations. From the beginning Ball presents a very forceful portrayal of a confident woman, opening with uncompromised seduction and self-assertion in the title song, the smart-alecky victory dance of "Made your Move too Soon," and then a gentler but extremely intense declaration of love in "I'd Rather Go Blind." At the center of the album, like both *Blue House* and *Let Me Play with Your Poodle*, is the ideological and musical high point, a song of Ball's composition, "Eugene." Certain aspects of "Eugene" receive more emphasis than they otherwise might because it follows a more frivolous but related song by David Bartholomew called "Jailbird," about the tribulations of a woman sentenced to 90 days in jail for hitting "her man." One striking thing about the way Ball presents "Jailbird" is her use of different voices for the hapless defendant and the judge, who orders her to "shut up" when she tries to tell her story. The clear message is that this is an environment in which women are not handled with kid gloves, and receive no special sympathy. There is a certain irony in that the speaker in this song finds the equality women often wish for, but it means being treated like any man before the law, including the presumption of equal physical ability, responsibility and punishment—no self-defense, no battered women's syndrome, no Lorena Bobbitt. Even the end result of her incarceration is interesting. She concludes that she will "never hit another man," not because violence is wrong, barbaric, immoral, etc., but because jail was so unpleasant.

"Eugene" echoes this sentiment, reflecting a certain nonchalance about the whole situation, both Eugene's disappearance and her own violence.

We had a fight the other night, a little love spat.
 You packed your bag and left me, you took my Cadillac.
 Never woulda hit you if I'd known you'd act like that.
 You know I love you, baby, come on back!
 Eugene, baby, come on home, I'm so tired of being all alone.
 I been good as I can be ever since you been gone....
 I cooked your favorite dinner, I left it nice and hot,
 I went out looking for you, I checked your favorite spot.
 I asked the bartender did he see you or not,
 I said 'tell Eugene to call me' but I guess he forgot....

The speaker here is the usual renaissance woman we find in Ball's repertoire. The formulation "never woulda hit you if I'd known you'd act like that" is particularly interesting because it implies that, while the speaker's range includes violence, she is rational enough to take it or leave it, use it only as appropriate, like any other behavior. Notice she

²⁴ "Eugene," Marcia Ball, *Soulful Dress*, Rounder CD 3078 (1989).

²⁵ from notes by Chris Albertson, author of *Bessie* (Stein & Day), from *Bessie Smith: The Collection*, Columbia Jazz Masterpieces Series (CK, CJ, CJT: 44441).

doesn't apologize for hitting him but, like the speaker in "Jailbird," simply decides she doesn't like the repercussions. She brings even violence under her control.

Admitting to the capability of violence, not to mention availing oneself of violence, eliminates the possibility of adopting a self-righteous attitude toward it. This step removes violence from the arena of things men do to women, they do to us, and precludes casting oneself as a member of a victimized class. Eric Gans remarks, "... the fact is that human violence has always been predominantly male, as a count of our jail population will easily confirm."²⁶ Actually what this confirms is not necessarily who commits violence but who the legal system usually punishes for violence. Martha Minow points out:

[L]egal rules treat certain special relationships differently: parents bear obligations to children, trustees to wards, and professionals to clients. These exceptional relationships also mark the people who are often labeled legally incompetent or abnormal. When law recognizes relationships of assigned rather than chosen obligation, it also classifies some people as marginal. The traditional rules that made husbands responsible for their wives also removed married women from the world of individual rights.... Women of any background may be neglected by legal rules, given their traditional exclusion from the public processes for defining the rules of marriage and divorce, the workplace, and violence, domestic or otherwise. Law has treated as marginal, inferior, and different any person who does not fit the normal model of the autonomous competent individual. Law has tended to deny the mutual dependence of all people while accepting and accentuating the dependency of people who are 'different.'²⁷

Minow notes the cost of this "vocabulary that neatly defines persons and their roles and obligations"; often the "law ends up contributing to rather than challenging assigned categories of difference that manifest social prejudice and misunderstanding. Especially troubling is the meaning of equality for individuals identified as different from the norm.... Does equality mean treating everyone the same, even if this similar treatment affects people differently? Members of minorities may find that a neutral rule, applied equally to all, burdens them disproportionately."²⁸ Indeed, this is precisely what the ever-provocative Catharine MacKinnon calls the "stupid theory of equality," wherein inequality is "defined as distinction, as differentiation, indifferent to whether dominant or subordinated groups are hurt or helped."²⁹ Minow, on the one hand, focuses on the paternalistic aspects of a social structure that defines certain classes of people as incapable and assumes certain responsibilities for them, "for their own good," a decision that often errs on the side of overinclusivity, stripping people of autonomy. On the other hand, both she and MacKinnon caution that treating these protected classes "the same" might be hard on them. Indeed this represents a balancing act with which the law constantly must struggle. But this can come perilously close to wanting to have it both ways.

In her essay against pornography, *Only Words*, MacKinnon sees an inextricable link between reifying speech, equating speech with an act, and the need to base rights in a sense of differentiation and discrimination. She cautions, "You learn that speech is not what you say but what your abusers do to you," that pornography as "an act against women is seen as metaphorical or magical, rhetorical or unreal, a literary hyperbole or propaganda device. On the assumption that words have only a referential relation to reality, pornography is defended as only words...."³⁰ And all too often the only protection offered from this is the "stupid theory of equality," impotent neutrality or empty legalisms. The lyrics of "Eugene" are amusing but remarkably straightforward, completely devoid of the poetry of many of Ball's songs. It is not the rhetoric of "Eugene," but its musical features—Ball's piano playing, as well as a degree of vocal virtuosity and range that she seldom displays—that make "Eugene" noteworthy, in fact, makes it stand out from the surrounding music. She does not try to lure him back with reason, sense, or even sex, but seemingly with musical virtuosity, in short, not with words but with action. The fact that this action occurs in a context linked with violence is significant.

²⁶Eric Gans, "Remarks on Originary Feminism," *Perspectives of New Music* 32, No. 1 (1994), 86-88. Gans also draws the conclusion, clearly meant to be both insulting and trivializing, "But perhaps the resentful aggression that informs so many feminist texts and that peeks through in Ms. Killam's essay is a sign that it is really women after all who are the more conflictive sex, and that language emerged as a means of deferring not male but female violence. I bet Calamity Jane would have gone along with that." Well, why not?

²⁷Martha Minow, *Making All the Difference*, 9-10.

²⁸*ibid.*, 9.

²⁹Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Only Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 98. MacKinnon distinguishes this from the Canadian equality rule that focuses on actively "changing unequal social relations rather than monitoring their equal positioning before the law."

³⁰MacKinnon, *Only Words*, 6, 11.

Is there a situation in which violence is the right, the sensible, the only thing to do? Of course these are not really actions, they are song lyrics, they are indeed only words. But they constitute a very intentional turning of one's back on the inadequacy of words. In Ball's songs, the acts of violence occur in response to unbearable aspects of relationships, as in "St. Gabriel," or, perhaps less extreme, simply life situations that are beyond the scope of reason. Where rationality can have no effect, where words remain powerless, discussion futile, any attempts at calm equitable intervention become "stupid." Even more impressive is the ability of the woman represented in these songs not merely to be physically violent but to withstand the punishment. Her implicit decision that the established "protective structure" is ineffective, not worth a loss of autonomy, and she would rather be held accountable for her actions is—well, ballsy. At the same time, she also recognizes an extended range of behavior open to women. Gans accuses some feminist scholarship of trying to avail itself of Nietzsche's "slave morality," which "depends on the argument that losers are always in the right and winners in the wrong, that the greatest triumph is the sign of the greatest evil—but that somehow the forces of light can win now by revealing the hidden iniquity of the social order, victimizing the former victimizers without compromising their own victimary status."³¹ Even if one repudiates violence under ordinary circumstances, the absolute unwillingness expressed in these songs to cower in "victimary status" possesses a kind of vitality. In response to Gans' criticism, women do not always have to take the high road; sometimes they can just be bad. This is a reversal of the social code. Usually physical violence is a regressive step down, but Ball makes it something energetic, empowering, a kind of non-malicious healthy poetic justice.

Men Smart, Women Smarter—C. J. Chenier

In "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory," MacKinnon makes the powerful analogy: "Sexuality is to feminism what work is to Marxism: that which is most one's own, yet most taken away.... As the organized expropriation of the work of some for the benefit of others defines a class—workers—the organized expropriation of the sexuality of some for the use of others defines the sex, woman. Heterosexuality is its structure, gender and family its congealed forms, sex roles its qualities generalized to social persona, reproduction a consequence, and control its issue."³² Marcia Ball's work simply seems to reject all this. She refuses to be limited to heterosexuality, gender roles or sometimes even gender or human identity; issues of family or reproduction remain conspicuously absent.³³ In the face of women's sometime identity as beings "whose sexuality exists for someone else, who is socially male" or as merely "walking embodiments of men's projected needs,"³⁴ it would be difficult to imagine a voice more self-determined and self-defined than the one in her songs. MacKinnon asks, is there "a feminist method without sex?"³⁵ There seems to be one expressed in these songs—not precisely without sex, but what amounts to the same thing, by allowing sex to be an issue only when she wants to make it one, only for herself. She does not allow that, or anything else, it seems, to be taken away. I do not necessarily agree with MacKinnon's positions, much less her conclusions. What I find both interesting and important about her work, however, is the incendiary nature of the choices she presents, the insistence on following hypocrisy to its logical conclusion. She makes all too clear how high the stakes are, the magnitude of what would need to be sacrificed—like the First Amendment to the Constitution—to start all over. Marcia Ball's songs seem to respond to many of the issues she and other feminists raise, presenting similarly dramatic choices—questioning the definition of the feminine, the tendency to repudiate physical violence, even to live within the law.

At the present moment, the extremism found in MacKinnon's work remains more viable in art than in her own area of legal reform, a phenomenon of which Marcia Ball takes full advantage. We return to her use of voodoo imagery, and its capacity to liberate, to investigate areas that had remained hidden or taboo. *Dreams Come True* contains a song by Ball, "Snake Dance," that invites the listener to "slip into a trance,... it's a voodoo way of moving... Don't ever look in a snake's eyes, looks like original sin." *Spirits*

³¹Gans, "Remarks on Originary Feminism," 88.

³²MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State," 227-28.

³³The one dimension of human experience Ball does not touch upon is parenthood (the closest she comes is her song "Daddy Said," in which the speaker's sister is the parent; in fact the whole tone of the song is that motherhood is the right choice for someone else, not for the speaker). Even this is an interesting, and rather honest, choice, never venturing into the area that utterly precludes men, childbearing, the reliance on which has occasioned the disdain of male critics. See Pieter van den Toorn, *Music, Politics, and the Academy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

³⁴MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism," 245, 246.

³⁵*ibid*, 239.

enter or possess privileged voodoo practitioners in the act of dancing. "In kinetic-emotive mysticism, a god reveals himself to man through a brutal breaking up of the self. A split takes place in the personality that brings about an overwhelming psychic disruption. Ideas, will, memory, and external actions are attributed to a second personality."³⁶ The possessed person transcends her limitations, her own knowledge. She may speak with a different voice, in a new language previously unknown, an "adroit counterfeit of a language" that reveals feelings that had before remained "inexpressible and strange."³⁷ While possession is often described, as here, as a split or division of the personality, the other side of the coin is a fusion of personalities, as Marie Leveau would "become the same as the spirit" she sought. Modern psychiatry understands this enlarging of the personality precisely as a way to look at "original sin." It emancipates problematic parts of the individual, stretches the limits of social norms, and indulges in behavior that challenges the prevailing ethic.³⁸

³⁶Louis Mars, *The Crisis of Possession in Voodoo* (Reed, Cannon & Johnson Co., 1977), 18-20.

³⁷Henri Delacroix, *La Religion et la Foi* (1932).

³⁸Joan Acocella, *Creating Hysteria: Women and Multiple Personality Disorder* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999). It is interesting to note the role that voodoo plays in the social reform of cultures where it is prominent; Laguerre notes that "French chroniclers of the eighteenth century are unanimous in recognising Voodoo's role in the [Haitian] slaves' liberation struggles Boukman knew that [revolutionary] action would lose its meaning and its efficacy if it were not put under the protection of Voodoo loas [the spirits of possession],... [which] were called upon to make known their will...." Michel S. Laguerre, *Voodoo and Politics in Haiti* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1960; 60-61)

Georgina Born: Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-Garde.

University of California Press, 1995

A travelling through
by Warren Burt

In Christa Wolf's marvellous novel, "Cassandra", (Noonday Press, New York, 1984) at one point Cassandra is recovering from a mental collapse. The following exchange occurs. Cassandra recounts herself recovering consciousness:

"I raised myself a tiny bit closer to the surface, to observe the pain. Groaning, I endured it. I clawed the blankets, I clung to it so that the pain would not wash me away. Hecuba. Priam. Panthous. So many names for deception. For neglect. For lack of appreciation. How I hated them. How I wanted to show them I hated them.

"Fine," said Arisbe, who was sitting there again. "And what about your part in it?"

"What do you mean, what about my part in it? Who have I hurt? I, the weak one? What harm have I done all these people who are stronger than I am?"

"Why did you make them strong?" (p. 62)

Why did you make them strong, indeed? In all power relations, people not only take power, but people give power over themselves to other persons, ideas, institutions. The ways of power in the cultural sphere is a major theme of Georgina Born's absorbing and, I think, wonderful book about IRCAM and its place in the politics of contemporary culture.

A personal anecdote is relevant here. I was in London in 1973, and made the acquaintance of a young mathematician. I was spending the summer in London on holiday from my work as a grad student at UCSD, where I was also working at the Center for Music Experiment (CME), directing its analog and video synthesis studios. The mathematician was interested in electronic music, and we had some lively conversations. At one point, he said that he felt that electronic music was really not all that central to new music at the moment, but that once Boulez got his centre in Paris established, then things would really start to happen. I laughed at this, and told him the story of Boulez, Vinko Globokar, and I think it was Jean-Claude Risset visiting CME at UCSD the previous year to have a look around. Already, I said, we in California were making jokes about "Stanford on the Seine." I still remember the almost reverence in his voice with which he said "Boulez." Emphatically, as if Pierre's name were a talisman of real cultural power. Years later, and after reading Georgina Born's book, I have more understanding of my friend's attitude. I was concerned, at the time, with the means for making music in real time, in a cheap and accessible manner. At that point, to me, that meant analog, and that meant homebrew electronics. I had worked on a few pieces involving a computer, mostly to control analog synths, but my main interest was in making music in a practical, hands-on way. His interest, by contrast, was, I now see, with legitimization, and a sense of cultural power and authority. For him, it wasn't enough that electronic music was being made, and being listened to, it had to be respected as well. And Boulez setting up his centre was a way for electronic music to get that respect and legitimacy.

Ten years later, in 1983, I was in Paris, performing at the Centre Georges Pompidou with my single board AIM-65 micro-computer controlling a group of Serge analog modules. I was part of a group of Australians performing in the Paris Autumn Festival. (Australia was flavour of the month that year...) A group of us went over to IRCAM for a visit. I broke away from the main group and went for a wander myself among the workshops. After all, I had helped build one of the places that was the prototype for this place. And I

liked what I saw. Circuit boards strewn around the place. Cabling all over the floor. Half written programs spilling off of desks. It looked like a typical university research environment, messy, chaotic, disorganized, and with the faint aroma of too many all-nighters pulled with just a cup of coffee and a cheese sandwich for company. (Although, after reading Born's book, I now realize that the proper scenario, at least in the next year, 1984, would be a cup of coffee, a cheese baguette and an anthropologist for company.) Since my path at this point was already outside the institutions, I was happy to see IRCAM bumbling along in the way of so many institutions, and was quite content to let it, and me, have a relationship of happy irrelevance to each other.

Since then, we (IRCAM and I) have consistently worshipped at different churches. They pursued high-tech, I pursued low tech. When small computers became powerful, they worshipped Mac, and I, for reasons of poverty as much as anything else, worshipped IBM. Only recently, has there been any sort of confluence of our interests. I was pretty excited when the Composers' Desktop Project in England began to port a lot of the IRCAM software, and ideas based on it, over to small computer systems, but the prices and the computers were still out of my reach. And the development of MAX, which partially took place at IRCAM, was exciting, but again, not on a platform I could afford. (I should mention that I've mostly been a freelance artist since 1979. Since 1981, I've had less than 14 months employment in academia, and all of that at part-time rates.) Finally, in the past couple of years, with IRCAM sharing its software with users around the world (albeit for fees that I'm still unable to afford), I feel that my interests and their interests have at least some similarity. But still, there remain significant class differences. I still prefer the dirty underbelly of the shareware world, where dozens of small programmers make quirky applications to fit their needs, and then share them around with people, as opposed to big, all-in-one programs which are made to do everything but the kitchen sink, and to do it elegantly. In this, I might be at the "Protestant" end of Umberto Eco's classic joke in which he saw Macintosh culture as Catholic, IBM culture as Protestant, and of course, the assembly language that underlies both of them as Kabbalistic and Jewish. In fact, one of my favourite spectator sports is to go to Sunday computer swap meets and observe the people and the culture there. Geekdom supreme. Nerddom triumphant. I guess I have to acknowledge a real social and cultural difference between me and IRCAM. They're still, even in their new friendlier guise, concerned with prestige and cultural power. Me, I'm just sort of the cybernetic artist version of trailer trash. (Reading a book about cultural power is bound to make me deal with my own ideas about it, and assess my own position. Like, how did I get to be such an outsider in Australia, which is itself an "outsider" scene as far as the Eurocentric and Gothamocentric (love that neologism) cultural worlds are concerned? Short of moving to Macquarie Island (between Tasmania and Antarctica), is there any way I can get MORE "outside"? (And, if for no other reason than it might make some people in the computer music area ask some questions about their own attitudes toward, and uses of, cultural power, I think this book is incredibly valuable. I mean, I DO know some computer music people who combine classical music snobbery, modern music snobbery and high-tech snobbery into a pretty lethal brew. I would hope that reading this book would at least make them aware of SOME of the issues involved in their worldview.)

When Ben Boretz asked me if I'd like to read the Born book and respond to it for "Open Space," I said sure. I'd heard that there was a book where an anthropologist had analyzed IRCAM, and I thought that it would be fun to read. When I got the book, something seemed suspicious to me. Something about the name "Georgina Born" was familiar, but I couldn't place it. I opened the book at random. She was describing playing cello, testing out a pitch detection system. Her criticisms of the system were, I felt, absolutely to the point. "Ah," I thought, "she knows what she's talking about - she's a musician as well as an anthropologist. This could be really nice." And then I remembered - Georgie Born. The cellist with the Feminist Improvising Group, and who had worked at the London Musician's Collective (LMC). The same? A read of the introduction confirmed it, she was the same. This was even more intriguing. Given the choice of hanging out for an evening at IRCAM or the LMC, unless I knew that what was going on at the LMC that evening would be REALLY substandard, and unless I knew that what was going on at IRCAM would be REALLY amazing, I'd choose the LMC almost every time. The sense of collective effort, the sense of camaraderie, and the

exploration that goes on at LMC (at least on my visits there) engages me far more than the attitudes I encounter in the establishment worlds of computer music, of which IRCAM is a fairly good example. Still, I'm no inverted snob, and if they were doing something that grabbed me at IRCAM, I'd be there. I then realized that this book was going to be really interesting, because Born was coming from a scene which, in some senses, and by some at IRCAM, could be considered "the enemy." Later, after reading the book, when my colleague Ernie Althoff played me a bunch of LPs (which, I'm ashamed to admit, I had missed when they were first released in 1978) where Born had played cello (Henry Cow: *Western Culture*; Art Bears: *Hopes and Fears*; Peter Blegvad: *The Naked Shakespeare*; National Health: *Of Queues and Cures*), I realized that the depth of her musical experience was even more profound. She had been involved in the very heart of that scene in England that had tried to merge art music, pop music, and free improvisation ideas together, within a very well grounded Leftist cultural critique. (Perhaps they didn't think of it that way, but that's the way it looked to me then, and the way it still seems now.) As far as I was concerned, Born, with her interests in art, pop, politics, and cultural theory was aesthetically far ahead of most of the people she would encounter at IRCAM, who were still clinging to the notion of a pure high-art modernism in some form. This made me vaguely apprehensive that she might, in fact, just do a hatchet job, which I wouldn't be so interested in.

I needn't have worried. Because Georgie Born, cellist, leaped into a nearby phone booth and emerged as Georgina Born, academic anthropologist, who did a superb job with an ethnography of a major contemporary cultural institution. There is a contradiction here, but one which I'm happy to live with. That is, on one level, Born is critical of the formalism of the music and cultural politics of IRCAM, especially as they concern efforts at cultural legitimation. On the other hand, to be taken seriously as an anthropologist, she has to conform to the norms of academic discourse and research, thus becoming as much entrapped in efforts for legitimation as her IRCAM subjects/colleagues. If she had shown the freedom in writing that she might have wanted them to show in their music, she would probably not have been taken seriously by the anthropological community, and we wouldn't have this book. However, I'm willing to accept this. Especially when I considered the depth of Born's pre-IRCAM musical experience, and realized how while she was there, for most of the people there, this experience would have been dismissed out of hand, I was amazed that she had the ability to put on the hat of academic objectivity and produce the relatively unbiased study she did.

This was a book that thoroughly absorbed me. I read it slowly, savouring it, and letting the arguments it raised in my head develop. It's more than just a study of one institution. It's actually a book that deals, in a penetrating way, with many of the key issues contemporary musics face. In fact, if I were teaching contemporary music in a university context, I would make Born's second chapter "Prehistory: Modernism, Postmodernism and Music" required reading for all composition and contemporary music history students, (and not just the people involved in music and technology) simply because the way she sums up a lot of (what I regard as) the main issues of the past quarter-century.

Born's main focus in the book is cultural power. How does one get cultural power, how is it used, and what are the ways in which it can be perpetuated? She's out to "interrogate power in relation to cultural forms and their social and institutional bases," (p.10) to "analyze the interrelations between dominant forms of knowledge and their institutional and socio-historical contexts." (p. 7) This interest in power as a main theme was somewhat foreign to me. I was speaking with a young composer the other night who had mostly played in pop bands, and was just now beginning to make "wilder" stuff with his home computer. He said that he felt that now there was a much greater sense of freedom around, whereas a few years ago, in the pop scene, there was a much greater need for conformity. I replied to him that I knew what he meant, but that actually, personal liberation from power structures had ALWAYS been possible. It was always possible to "walk outside," if one was willing to pay the price of marginalization that such eschewing of power entailed. (Having chosen to be an outsider, to be marginalized for the last twenty years, I believe I have a fair understanding of its mechanisms...) I had been happy to let IRCAM do their thing, while I did mine. I had a sense of parallelism, not of confrontation, and certainly not one of dialectical engagement, with them. However, this was Georgina's party, so I would gladly defer my notions of parallelism to deal with her ideas about the dialectics of

cultural power in a European high-art context.

The book is basically divided into two parts. In the first part, she discusses the cultural theory she's going to use, gives a background of contemporary music history, and French cultural politics, and how IRCAM came to be. In the second part, she deals with IRCAM itself, how it worked (or didn't work) in 1984, one of its most difficult years as an organization, who the principal people were, and how they interacted with each other, and with the outside world. A final chapter brings us up to 1992, when work on the book finished. In the manner of many academic publications, it then took three years to see print, and five years for me to get around to reading it. As such, the book is a bit of a snapshot of one moment in history. Things have changed significantly since then. The laptop computer that I'm writing this essay on, which I can afford, has significantly more power than the VAX that was IRCAM's main machine in 1984. When she was writing, there was a scarcity of tools. Now there's a glut. (For the IBM platform alone, I know of 4 first-class algorithmic composing toolkits, 3 granular synthesis programs, 2 physical modelling programs, and 2 fast-fourier transform programs, one of which claims to work in real time. And all these programs are available either free or cheaply. (Those wanting more information can email me.)) But I was there then, ("Ah yes," he says, nostalgically, "I remember doing direct sound synthesis with my AIM-65 in 1984. And when I upgraded the RAM to 28K, then I knew I had real power under my control....") and I participated in the debates; though the technological specifics may have changed, the issues still remain the same.

For example, Born tells of a composer who brings a very cheap Casio VL-Tone that he had rewired into IRCAM. He is met with disdain by the engineers on the 4X project, the IRCAM flagship synthesizer project. Both the VL-Tone and the 4X are now obsolete. The life of both machines was about 4-6 years before they were superseded. But the issue of low-tech arrogance versus high-tech snobbery is still very much with us. (People, especially academic computer music type people, are still amazed when I tell them I'm working on the despised (and proletarian (??? can one use this word for a product of Bill Gates???)) Windows platform....)

Her first chapter deals with cultural theory. Here she lays out her points of reference. This is a very good quick look at a number of contemporary theories of culture. It's both explanatory and critical, as she shows how a particular idea, from, for example, Pierre Bourdieu is relevant to her work, but how it doesn't quite deal with the realities of the situation as she came to deal with them. I get the very clear sense in this chapter that she is a practitioner as well as a theorist. Unlike many of her academic colleagues, I feel that she has grounded her theory in the gigging she's done, both as a musician and as an anthropologist. She's also very clear (and I was very grateful for this) to emphasize that her work is not to "be read as a masked critique of all forms of subsidized culture; nor finally, does it have a hidden agenda of vindicating postmodernism or the neoliberal promotion of market forces in culture." Too often, in the cultural theory I read, I have the suspicion that it is just such hidden agendas that are being advanced, sometimes even without the theorist being aware that they might be advancing them.

I've already mentioned that I really like her second chapter, a quick tour of the issues of modernism and postmodernism in music and music-technology as she sees them. I'm also very happy that she puts computer music into this debate. Too many people I know working with music technology have felt that their work wasn't a part of these debates, so it's good to see someone trying to place high-end computer music within this continuum. I like very much her description (the best crystallization of it into words that I've seen) of the different approaches to technology: "Experimental composers used technology artisanally and pragmatically, in contrast with the scientific and analytical serialist applications. Experimentalists rejected both the implicit elitism of the serialist adherence to inaccessible and expensive high technologies found only in large and official institutions and the universalizing high rationalism and scientism with which those technologies were deployed. They countered determinism and formalism with technological empiricism and with live, social, improvised, and performance-based use. Above all they countered "high-tech domination" with a practice centered on the celebration of the small and low-tech." (p. 59) (Mind you, I LOVE Babbitt's electronic pieces, it's just that I was happy to wait until I could own my own cheap equipment that could do that sort of thing.

Then again, the RCA synthesizer was such a one-of-a-kind kluge that it might even qualify, by today's standards, as a very weird kind of low-tech!

My one quibble with this chapter is that in her attempts to set up a dichotomy between "pop music" on the one hand, and "art music" on the other, I don't think she quite portrays the complex interrelationship between the jazz of the 50s and the serialism of the 50s on the one hand; and the AACM of the 60s, and groups like MEV, on the other, with enough subtlety. Jazz has always aspired to be an art music. For some of us, indeed, it always was. I remember Kenneth Gaburo, for example, who in the 50s was as impure a serialist as you could want, expressing rapturous enthusiasm for Bill Evans to me. Similarly, Sal Martirano never even tried to purge himself of his jazz roots. And for me, Muhal Richard Abrams has always embodied both the very essence of an experimental attitude AND the very essence of swing. This is significant for a point Born raises later, in which she notes that at IRCAM, such "impure" approaches to musical style were only a mark of a younger generation. The composers born in the 1920s that she encountered at IRCAM were all purists. It's interesting to note that there are a lot of composers of Boulez's generation who were serialists in some sense, but who weren't purists, at all. I guess most of them never made it to IRCAM. And certainly, none of them were (or wanted to be) astute enough cultural players to get themselves appointed as head of a major cultural institution.

This ambiguous and subtle relationship between black American and white American art musics is a keen one. For example, it would be easy to assume that the worlds of IRCAM (say) and Stevie Wonder (say) were about as relevant to each other as the worlds of a Laotian khene player and a Zimbabwean mbira player would be to each other. (Separate but equal, right? Wasn't that the way the crackers used to express it in the 50's?) (And of course, these days, I'm sure I'll soon see (on a French world music label, of course) an album of khene and mbira duets. I'll probably even buy it. And then read David Toop's review of it in "The Wire.") The story of Stevie Wonder's after-hours visit to IRCAM was especially poignant, and revealing, to me in this light. However, though I may quibble with her over a point of emphasis here, I think her analysis in this chapter is solid, very relevant and useful.

Her third chapter, on French cultural politics, is just plain fantastic. As an outsider, I've been appalled for years by the incredible waste of human resources the arrogant and bureaucratic French cultural scene has produced. The way it allows certain individuals to accumulate power, and for others to be absolutely marginalized has been something I've found both fascinating and repulsive. I know a young French composer who has just finished his compositional studies in Australia, and who is soon returning to France. He was saying to me that he felt so much more cultural freedom in Australia - in a scene with no real centres of power (he just hadn't looked hard enough to see them - they're there, I assured him), he felt he could do so many things that he couldn't do back in France, where he felt that you had to become part of an institution, or perish. When Born explains the historical background to how this scene evolved out of both the Monarchy and the Revolution, and how, more recently, from a series of reactions to May '68, a lot of what I see in France becomes clear.

Her writing about America's post-war cultural domination of the arts and the resulting "mutual cultural fascination and rivalry, with shifting dominance and dependence, that has characterized modern cultural relations between America and France" made me reflect on the scene in Australia, especially in the visual arts over the past 25 years. In the late 70s, there was a real feeling about that Australia was about to have a cultural "declaration of independence"; that a scene was evolving that would draw on European, American, Asian and Indigenous roots, but that would not be dominated by any of them. This soon changed. By the early 80s, it was almost impossible to see any writing about the visual arts in Australia without at least a quote from Barthes, almost as an article of faith, at the head of it. A whole generation had chosen to be culturally imperialized, to be reduced to being, yet again, a cultural suburb - the same generation, that only a few years previously, had been so strident in opposing cultural imperialism in all its forms. I was not alone in my observation of this. Jean Baudrillard was, I was informed by a mutual friend, similarly bemused by this phenomenon on a visit here a few years ago.

(It has to be admitted, though, that some of the best Australian art comes about through doing French ideas badly. For example, the impressionist paintings of the Heidelberg school (from the 1880s), misinterpreted, rather magnificently, French ideas of plein-air painting, producing some wonderful art in the process. Similarly, some of the best semiotic and collage radio art work I know from the 1980s from Australia comes about through the intentionally inept application of second-hand French ideas. And given that the alternative seems to be capitulation to a totally American dominated commercial media (to “go outside” and develop a real sense of conceptual Australian-ness seems to be too difficult an option for most), who can blame folks here for thinking that living in the intellectual suburbs of Paris is a preferable option?)

I had always wondered why the 4X, IRCAM's flagship synthesizer project, had flopped. I remember interviewing a most charming Pierre Boulez in the mid-1980s for an Australian magazine. At the time, he was quite optimistic about the deal that had just been made with Sogitec for production of the 4X, and he was even more hopeful about the commercialization of some of IRCAM's work by Bontempi, the Italian musical instrument manufacturer. (I should make it clear here that I have great respect for Boulez. As long as he ain't dissin' my friends, he's cool.) All becomes clear in the fourth chapter, the history of IRCAM. A combination of bad business decisions (brilliant musicians, but absolute naifs in the world of commercial culture), and a culture which almost mandated commercial failure resulted in the first generation of IRCAM products, all hardware, not becoming available. It's in this chapter that some of the meatiest issues about culture and politics are raised. For example, in examining conditions of employment and pay at IRCAM, she notes that a whole class of workers, the “tutors,” had low pay, and were on temporary contracts, but enjoyed a high cultural status. This is a phenomenon I've seen again and again, especially in the academic sector, where people are paid badly for excessive amounts of work, but the supposed “prestige” that comes with the job is supposed to make up for it. She also examines why each group of employees at IRCAM was not unionized, the only exception being the cleaning staff, who were. She interviews the secretaries as well as the musical and technical staff, but she doesn't seem to have interviewed the cleaners. At least, she doesn't include many details of her interaction with them. I would have been interested to find out more about them, and to have heard about IRCAM from their perspective. One of the reasons that unionization never occurred was Boulez's adroit personal approach to management. She gives several examples of Boulez intervening personally to both help people and to simultaneously deflect workers feelings of unity against management. For example, he transferred a valued secretary who was having trouble with her department head to another department, where she continued to be an asset, but was in a much happier position. Similarly, when two junior tutors threatened to try to publicly expose workers' pay levels, Boulez promoted them both - one at a time, and to different levels. As she says, “Boulez's interventions helped to fragment attempts to coordinate the negotiation of pay and promotions among higher-status workers.” Looked at in one way (in the case of the secretary), Boulez's approach to “benevolent dictatorship” shows a real compassion for his employees. Looked at in another (in the case of the tutors), it appears extremely cunning and crafty. In reality, it probably had elements of both.

Born gives several charts which show the sexual division of labour at IRCAM, the correlation of musical style and technological ideology, and comparisons of pay and levels of security among the staff. These are especially valuable for understanding how IRCAM really worked at the time, who was in, who wasn't, and how one advanced through the hierarchy. The figures given in these charts seem not so different from the situations one finds in most academic institutions. In fact, IRCAM seems most like a university research department, just without having a university attached to it. And so many of the structural flaws that beset universities also afflict IRCAM. For example, I can remember, in the early 1970s, at CME, the long discussions about whether CME should pursue work with large computers exclusively, or else promote many different kinds of musical experimentation. CME's eventual metamorphosis into CARL (Computer Audio Research Laboratory) shows that in that case, the large systems people eventually won. And then, in 1984, Born found the same debate going on at IRCAM. Other structural problems revealed themselves. Among these is the relation of computer technology to the military. While most of the staff chose to ignore this, or just to be silently uncomfortable with it, Born includes a long excerpt from “ID”, one of the programmers, where he

deals with these issues in an honest and open way, showing how the contradictions affected him greatly. For the most part though, “the culture as lived preferred to forget its implicit official hierarchy.” I remember the icy silence that greeted my questions about how Australian academics had gotten the social status they had (when certainly, their pay and working conditions didn’t warrant that respect, in my opinion) when I first arrived in Australia. Sometimes, people just don’t want to be reminded that those metaphorical new clothes they’re wearing once belonged to the Emperor.

A note about the initials. In keeping with the anthropological tradition of anonymity of the informants, Born chooses to use initials to represent some of her subjects. Some of these, like AV for Alejandro Vinao, are obvious. Others are more obscure. “PL” is one of the main focuses of her book. A black American composer/ trombonist who works with small computer systems in an interactive way, who previously managed a New York performance space, and who played regular improvisation gigs as well as his computer work. (I can’t imagine WHO she might be talking about! Why there are simply hundreds of people that might match that description. Isn’t that right, George?) In fact, a student of “PL’s” told me that in his computer music class at UCSD, he assigned a chapter of the Born book as reading (smart move!), and then joked with the students about giving them a quiz where they might have to identify the people represented by the initials. And another friend of mine, who worked in the European computer music scene for a number of years, also gave me another set of identifications of people with initials. It seems as if “identify the researcher” has become a bit of a game among the fans of this book. Seriously, for those of us who are part of the scene, the initials at first seem ridiculous. But considering that the study has wider ramifications than simply the history of one particular institution, I can appreciate the story of George Lewis’s problems at IRCAM as both the personal story of George’s relationship with this particular institution, and also as a larger, more generalized narrative - in similar circumstances, almost anyone who diverges from the established ideology as “PL” did is bound to have very similar problems. And then, for a wider audience, it’s not really necessary to know the names of people. A set of initials will serve just as well as a proper name. They do, however, produce a distancing effect, and it is just such distancing effects that Born is at pains to criticise in music, but which, according to the rules of the anthropological game, she has to use here.

The most valuable thing for me about Born’s look at the musical values of IRCAM was her introduction of the term “organicist” to describe the many varieties of what I might term “making an internally coherent composition from articulating the implications of a tiny musical seed.” This can include serialist composition of many sorts, but it can also include Baroque fugue writing, and working with self-similarity ideas of chaos theory as well. In all these cases, it’s the desire to make a work that in some sense, mimics the self-similarity of some natural phenomena. While it’s an idea that I’ve occasionally found attractive, I’m really grateful for her in articulating the suspicions I’ve had about forms such as this, and their actual relationship to real or metaphorical structures. Also extremely valuable is her discussion of the behaviours of snobbery that were rife in this scene, such as extended discussions as to “who was defined as a composer and who was not.” (p. 168) It’s behaviours such as this that gave the practitioners of musical modernism a bad name. Snobbery is never a good public relations move. (Although Boulez’s polemical sense certainly didn’t harm his career in its early days.) And it was interesting to note that a term of criticism of concerts at IRCAM was that they showed “heterogeneity.” Every time I’ve tried to organize a concert series, I’ve tried to make it a heterogeneous as possible! It seems that IRCAM culture and I really do worship at different churches.

Her chapter on the difficulties Alejandro Vinao experienced in his 1984 visit to IRCAM is very revealing. Not only for the specific problems Alejandro’s unwittingly overambitious project caused, but also for the way it reveals things about the larger IRCAM culture. For example, the difficulty of even making a good tape recording of computer output. I’ve known of a number of other friends who’ve worked at IRCAM in this period, and who experienced precisely the same problem. It all made me think that my decision not to have anything to do with “computer music” until “computers” became individually ownable was a wise one. At least in my own studio, I can be responsible for my own technological lapses!

She also makes a very valuable point about the pedagogy of computer music being unnecessarily

opaque. Her critique of “the curious oscillation between extreme precision and imprecision in defining higher functions” (p.229) in computer music manuals is something everyone involved in the field of music and technology education should ponder. And her critique of the ideology of classical music recording and equalization is spot on. In fact, I would go even farther than she does, and posit that a key marker of musical “style” and “class-origin” these days is equalization. This was brought home to me recently at the “What Is Music?” festival in Melbourne. Some improvisation groups who play at the London Musicians’ Collective appeared. The festival this year took place in a nightclub normally used for techno events. The audience for the festival consisted, in part, of the regulars of the club. All the music was played through the house PA, which had an equalization consisting of one low frequency (the kick), and one high frequency (the high-hat) and nothing else. Any mid-range frequencies were heard solely through the stage monitors. It occurred to me that if these groups were to play the Queen Elizabeth II Hall in London, though the “flat” equalization of classical music reproduction, they would be heard as part of the radical wing of the classical music scene. On the other hand, if they played through their own amps at the LMC, they would be heard as part of the “free improv” scene. Played through techno equalization in the nightclub, they were read as being part of that scene. And yet, in each case, the “music” - the pitches, gestures, timbres - they were playing would be almost the same. What would be changing would be the “scene” the music existed in, and the “sound” the music had through the different equalizations.

Her last two chapters, where she brings her research up to 1992, and her conclusions are packed with valuable insights. It is here, in her conclusions, that I have my only real points of disagreement with her. Sometimes I feel in her conclusions that she’s trying a bit hard to get that absolutely apt turn of phrase to summarize her arguments, and that the effort fails a bit. One example of this is, for example, her statement that “In adopting only sublimated solutions to its musical problems, the antidiscourse that is musical modernism acts as a brutal machinery not only for the denial of utopian moments of popular music and culture, but also for the suppression of its own real transformation - a stasis that is no doubt encouraged by the desire to hold on to the hegemony that it has enjoyed in past decades.” While I agree with the substance of her argument here, I feel, especially after her careful writing earlier throughout the book, that the point could have been made in a better way.

I feel at this point I should invoke Milan Kundera, who in “Testaments Betrayed” (Faber and Faber, London, 1995) presents a different take on musical modernism. Born discusses modernism from two aspects - one is as a means of exercising and maintaining cultural power, the other from the practitioner’s viewpoint. Kundera discusses musical modernism from yet a different viewpoint: that of the fan. A fan who actually **LIKES** the music, and likes it for the very reasons that so many have criticised it.

He writes: “I say, indeed: “consolation in the nonsentience of nature.” For nonsentience is consoling; the world of nonsentience is the world outside human life; it is eternity; “it is the sea gone off with the sun” (Rimbaud). I remember the gloomy years I spent in Bohemia early in the Russian occupation [of 1968]. I fell in love then with Varese and Xenakis: those pictures of sound-worlds that were objective but nonexistent spoke to me of a life freed from human subjectivity, aggressive and burdensome; they spoke of the sweetly nonhuman beauty of the world before or after mankind moved through it.” (“Testaments Betrayed”, p. 71) Here, those very aspects of modernism that many critics decry are those very things that Kundera finds consoling and rewarding. How can one argue with that?

And while I certainly understand her use of that catch-all term “popular music” as an “other” which the various inhabitants of IRCAM have a variety of relationships and non-relationships to, I do begin to wonder if “popular music” is the only “other” that we can have discourse with. That is, not only may “popular music” be considered too broadly here, but by limiting the idea of the “other” to that, we might be inadvertently eliminating a whole host of different dialectics which might also prove enriching and enlightening.

I very much like many of her phrases, however. For example in describing Boulez’s position in the mid-90s, she says “On the other [hand], for postmodernists, Leftist populists and Rightist neoliberals alike, he

has come to symbolize the worst excesses of the modernist and statist cultural project and he has become an obvious whipping boy.” (p. 328) It occurred to me that the linking of “modernist” and “statist” here was very neat. But it also occurred to me that certainly, from my perspective in Melbourne, this was a very curious linkage. For, except maybe for the construction of the Sydney Opera House, modernist architectural (choose one) masterpiece / curiosity that it is, in would be very hard to link “modernist” and “statist” in this corner of the South Pacific. The linkage made sense in the French, and probably even in the greater European context, but on a global scale, I could think of very many places where that linkage was either irrelevant, or else was the opposite of the situation that existed. (For example, Indonesia, where the “modernist” artists are some of the most stridently “anti-statist” artists I know of.)

So all in all, thumbs up. Five stars to Georgina, with a tick, and an elephant stamp as well. It’s a book that informed me, and kept a real sense of debate going in my head, but which never became nagging or overtly preachy like many books on cultural theory I’ve read. But having had this weeks long internal dialogue with the authorial Georgina Born, I’m now curious to extend the dialogue to the musical, as well as the verbal / cultural theoretical realm. That is, in line with Chris Mann’s “Blue Moon Project” (where Chris had a number of “modernist” and “postmodernist” musicians with a background in jazz record their renditions of “Blue Moon” on the theory that you could learn a lot about their history and ideology by the way they treated that old standard), I wonder if she still plays cello. Well, Georgina, how about it? Do you? And next time I’m in London with my laptop computer music system, would you like to jam?

A Conversation with George Lewis

Peter Monaghan

Trombonist, composer, and music-electronics pioneer George Lewis, an influential stalwart of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), is most associated with the avant-garde, but his playing and composing recognizes all jazz history. Now a professor of music in the University of California at San Diego's Critical Studies/Experimental Practices program, he also has been a thoughtful and provocative commentator on music. Born in Chicago in 1952, he studied philosophy at Yale University, where he also played in the ensembles of pianist Anthony Davis. There, he built on his own studies of bebop and swing, and witnessed the effects of the 1960s "New Thing" in jazz. Those were kept in motion by Lewis's fellow Chicagoans—specifically the members of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, which Lewis joined in 1971. In 1973, he moved back to Chicago to study theory with the organization's co-founder, the pianist Muhal Richard Abrams. But he also toured with Count Basie and played often in Anthony Braxton's bands, so his musical influences and activities were unusually broad. He soon came to work interactive software into his composition and improvisation. His recordings in that vein have included *Voyager* (Avant, 1993), a series of duets with saxophonist Roscoe Mitchell using Lewis's *Voyager* computer program; works from his "Shadowgraph" series, including *Shadowgraph* (Black Saint, 1978); and the chamber music recording *Changing with the Times* (New World Records). Also among his more than 90 recordings is a vaunted *Homage to Charles Parker* (Black Saint, 1979), his meditative duets with Douglas Ewart, *Jila/Save! Mon ≠ The Imaginary Suite* (Black Saint, 1978), and many recordings in collaborative or supportive roles. Lewis's computer-based multimedia installations and text-sound improvisation works have been presented around the world, at such venues as the IRCAM Summer Academy (France), the CentroMultimedia/Centro Nacional de las Artes (Mexico City), the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Warsaw Autumn International Festival of Contemporary Music, Alice Tully Hall (New York), the Beijing International Jazz Festival, the Institute of Contemporary Arts (London), and the Velvet Lounge (Chicago). He has received several fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, and was the 1999 recipient of the Cal Arts/Alpert Award in the Arts. His academic essays have borne such evocative titles as "Singing the Alternative Interactivity Blues" and "Improvised Music Since 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives."

Q. You're an unusual artist in that your work is so stylistically expansive, yet so distinctively personal. What are some of your thoughts on how that has come about?

A. I think that my upbringing in the AACM nurtured the development of personal ways of thinking, composing, and performing. In particular, my major AACM mentors—Muhal Richard Abrams, Roscoe Mitchell, Anthony Braxton, Fred Anderson, and Douglas Ewart, as well as other members too numerous to mention—were quite militant about avoiding prescriptive aesthetic pronouncements; they encouraged people to listen to everyone and everything,

Q. I know you studied philosophy at Yale, and I've heard you talk about musical subjects, and again it's clear that you're unusual in the degree of analytical skill you've brought to musical performance and the cultural analysis of music. How do you view the relationship between your musical practice and your scholarly studies and your teaching at UCSD in the Critical Studies/Experimental Practices program?

A. Again, the relationship between critical studies and composition was one that members of the AACM have very highly valued. I write and teach in the spirit and tradition of those practicing improvisors who have sought to explore the relationship between music and culture—in particular, the published writings of Wadada Leo Smith and Anthony Braxton, Arthur Taylor's "Notes and Tones," and the writings of Derek Bailey and Eddie Prevost. Ultimately, I feel that my theoretical work has allowed me to be more aware of the multiplicity of contexts within which musical utterance takes place. Ultimately, I believe that this awareness helps me to become a better musician. One aspect of the Critical Studies/Experimental Practices program at UCSD involves taking advantage of the resources that academia provides, not to advance any radically individualist agenda, but to create an atmosphere where so that more dialogue and collective exploration can take place. From our recent symposium on improvisation held at UCSD and organized by some of my graduate students (notably the Canadian pianist and composer Dana Reason) we were able to confirm the existence of a strong and growing body of scholarship on improvised music. As the boundaries between artistic and scholarly practice become blurred, much of this work is created largely though not exclusively by artists themselves.

Q. Among the varieties of your work, you've created many pieces over two decades for computers and acoustic instruments. What are some of your thoughts about putting together those two different kinds of sound sources?

A. Since 1979 I've been involved in the area of music technology. I've worked at major computer music centers, like IRCAM in Paris, the Center for New Music and Audio Technologies in Berkeley, and here at our own UCSD Center for Research in Computing and the Arts. I taught computer programming for musical applications for eight summers at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, and have written several articles on both technical and cultural aspects of creating computer music pieces. A musician was once quoted in a book as saying that I was not interested in the sounds my interactive pieces create. At first I didn't know what he meant, but I realized that "sound" can have different meanings according to the musical tradition in which the sounds are contextualized. For instance, in some more Eurological traditions the idea seems to be that morphologies of sound—timbre, loudness, pitch, etc.—may be analyzed separately from the source of the sound. Out of this comes the idea of sonic autonomy, as with Cage's notion of sounds "being themselves." I think that this Eurologically oriented notion of sound lay behind this musician's comment. In African-American musical tradition, however, we tend to look at an improvisor's "sound", not primarily as a question of morphology, but as part of history, memory and personality—or as Bird said, "If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn." It's clear that what we do live does come out of our horns—or our computers. I tend toward an animistic, Afrological conception of working with musical computers, so I'm definitely more interested in the possibilities for constructing sound-creating personalities and interactive contexts with human beings than I am in the timbral possibilities of machines. So I suppose that from the Eurological point of view I stand guilty as charged.

Q. You also create installation art. Can you describe some of the last or next couple of works?

A. Well, only one of the pieces you ask about is an installation—Sound installation for the Point Loma Water Treatment Plant, San Diego—and we're still designing it, so it's best not to talk about it. I try not to succumb to the techno-tendency to describe computer-mediated behaviors that don't yet exist as being already done, on the often dubious basis that the behaviors will be "easy to make", or the favorite buzzword of computer hubris—"trivially simple."

Q. Given the variety and expanse of your work, I wonder who you now consider your greatest influences, musically, whether musicians or other kinds of artists or thinkers?

A. I once tried to make a list of everyone that had influenced me in every field, but that's a very long list and I don't like name-dropping. So it's best to say that I try to remain as open as I can, like any literate artist would be. I would have to say that for me, John Coltrane was one of the greatest artists of this century. Besides the AACM, his work in every period has had an extremely strong effect on me. In fact, I would recommend to the scientific community an investigation of the "Coltrane Effect" as a complement to their studies of the Mozart Effect. You may know that no one has been able to replicate the experiments performed to document the Mozart Effect, so I bet that, at least for me, the "Coltrane Effect" has been considerably less ephemeral.

Q. You've long been a member of the AACM (since 1971). Its legacy is secure and vast; how do you view its likely future, from here?

A. Right now, I'm completing my book on the AACM, and based on my research so far, the legacy is indeed vast and incredibly diverse. I have examined tens of thousands of pages of books, reviews, articles in several languages, listened to hundreds of recordings, both published and unpublished, and written hundreds of pages of preparatory notes. At this point I can say that I have probably read most of what has been written about the AACM, at least in French, German, Dutch, English, and Italian. I expect publication sometime early in the new century, and I hope that the book will both add to and focus the legacy of the organization, which I believe is one of the most consistently innovative and productive musical organizations of the 20th Century. On the other hand, given recent "music history" materials that erase the AACM's contribution (such as the Herbie Hancock CD-ROM), one is right to question the security of any historical framework. Thus, the aims of the book are to document the history and activity of the AACM, to place the AACM in the context of contemporary culture, and to try to account for the artistic success of the AACM idea. I'm no futurologist, but from my investigation of the dynamics of the AACM a safe bet would be to expect further growth and change, but also a certain coming together of its various strains into an even more unified conception.

Q. Among the many people you've recorded with is Ray Anderson, and I understand you were at the same school (high school?) Do you have any recollections of him there?

A. I believe that everyone has heard by now that Ray and I started together in grade school, and played together in the various bands and orchestras from third through twelfth grade. Other than that I think I'm a little too young for people to find my childhood reminiscences very interesting, so in the interests of modesty I'll stop there.

Q. Could you expand on your own history with the AACM movement?

A. Well, that's a long and involved subject (30 years) and the question is a bit hard to focus on. I joined the AACM in 1971, when I was nineteen, at a time when some of the members who had been the most active were in transition. People had built this organization from absolute zero in 1965 and within five years they were getting front-page articles in *Le Monde*. Now it was time for this first group to decide what their next move would be. A week after I met the AACM musicians in 1971, Steve McCall invited me to play with his group, with Joseph Jarman, Roscoe Mitchell, Douglas Ewart, and Malachi Favors. So right from the start I was able to learn from the best. I didn't meet Leroy Jenkins, Anthony Braxton, John Stubblefield, Leo Smith, Leonard Jones, or even Thurman Barker in Chicago, but that didn't matter because their spirit was always around in the people that were there. The people you might know who were around were people like Pete Cosey, Vandy Harris, Famoudou Moya, Frank Gordon, Lester Lashley, Fred Hopkins, Kalaparusha, Lester Bowie, Malachi Favors, Amina Claudine Myers, Henry Threadgill, John Jackson, and Ajaramu. I played regularly with Fred Anderson, who had Hamid Drake, Bill Brimfield, and Douglas Ewart in the group. Muhal Richard Abrams taught the Saturday theory sessions at the AACM School with Wallace McMillan, and conducted the big band that played every Monday at Transitions East, a kind of Afrocentric juice bar in the heart of the South Side black community, not far at all from where I lived. Muhal let me write pieces for this group and once I got to conduct the band while he was on tour. That was amazing for me, but I'm sure that everybody else was relieved when he got back. It makes me dizzy just thinking about how all those creative people were around at the same time. These were very giving, generous people who were very nurturing. I owe them my creative life. When I think about I'm still very moved that all these people took time out to teach me. Closer to my own generation and level of experience, Edward Wilkerson, Douglas Ewart, Chico Freeman, Adegoke Steve Colson, Iqua Colson, Kahil El-Zabar, Wes Cochran, Mwata Bowden, Rasul Siddik, and James Johnson were around. So it was an extremely productive time. We gave our concerts, experimented with notation systems, homemade instruments and, community performances. We were learning and growing, pretty rapidly. Around 1975 there was this big push for people to move to New York. There seemed to be this vogue in progress, centered at first around those infamous lofts. The historical record shows that almost all the more experienced people were playing in New York at this time, but the crowning achievement for the AACM in New York in that period happened in 1978 at the Columbia University AACM Festival, which was an amazing demonstration of grass-roots community creative power. The whole Chicago AACM got on this rented bus and came to New York, and doing all kinds of things that went well beyond the paradigm of what black creative artists were being channeled into doing. But that was because since we had never paid attention to the channelers in Chicago, there was no reason to do so anywhere else. People challenged notions of limited infrastructure, reified formations, and hackneyed creative concepts. Everybody presented their compositions, since the AACM was always about a composer-centered ideology. People didn't talk about improvisation, but there were always scores around. I was living in New York with a dual identity, performing and composing, but also being music curator at the Kitchen, and doing my first computer music concerts in New York. Then I went off to Paris and did this extended IRCAM residency, and the rest is history, or rather, that's all we should talk about for now. That takes us up to 1984.

Q. Do you see a continuity from your early experiences with AACM members to your later projects involving computer music and the musical installations?

A. Well, my computer music and installation projects still involve AACM people, so there isn't any kind of split there. The history seems to be contiguous. As for my computer music, there is a multiplicity of timbres, microtonal pitchsets, rhythms, transposition levels, and other elements, and these are all reflective of my inheritance from the AACM notion of "multi-instrumentalism." People moved to develop multiple voices on a wide variety of instruments. You got this extreme multiplicity of voices, embedded within an already highly collective ensemble orientation, so that you could have a wider palette of potential orchestrations to explore. I wrote about this "iconography of multi-instrumentalism" in an article for *Lenox Avenue*, actually, and the piece I participated in that exemplifies this is Roscoe Mitchell's *L-R-G*, with Leo Smith. You would have eight instruments there (Roscoe would have a lot more) and the score would tell you to play one

note apiece on each of them in turn. It was very meditative, but had nothing to do with minimalism, at least not in the sense of how that movement ended up as a kind of easily imitated fixture. In a deeper way, these multi-instrumental musics seem to exhibit what a critic, Robert Douglas, called "multidominance," where you have lots of colors in intense degrees, or the multiple use of textures, design patterns, or shapes, all going on at the same time. Douglas says that these elements are found quite routinely in musical and visual works of Africa and its diaspora, and I find those elements in my computer music as well. The Voyager program, for example, is conceived as a set of sixty-four asynchronously operating single-voice MIDI-controlled "players," all generating music in real time. Sometimes you have several different things going on at the same time, with no real arithmetic correlation between the layers of multirhythm. In art school, black students were always being told stuff like "tone down your colors, too many colors" or "your composition is too crowded." It took them a while to realize that this was just Eurocentricity talking. They had to come together in groups like OBAC, which was formed in Chicago at the same time as the AACM, to figure that out. About Voyager, people would tell me stuff like, "why are so many things happening at the same time"—like the King in the movie *Amadeus*, "There are too many notes."

Q. Your own work is so expansive, but the common reception of jazz and other related forms of music is so pinched, as is much of its institutionalization. Do you see hopeful signs, or is innovation and progression in music, however active and vital in and of itself, inevitably marginalized and beleaguered in the larger American culture?

A. Most music, whether or not it styles itself as "innovative," fails in the mass marketplace, but there are a lot of other marketplaces out there. We have seen for many years now a fragmentation of audiences; when people ask you where your music is "available," the answer usually is "right here, from me," instead of, "just nip over to Tower," or whatever the current one-stop record shop is. While there does seem to be a bit of cultural commissarism about, I'm actually pretty hopeful, mainly because I am part of several musical and scholarly communities. When you establish community, hope is always nearby. Groups like the AACM really try to understand the issues and help each other overcome difficulties. I guess that since my work is pretty diverse, the jazz area is just one small part of it, so that the part of my activity that interfaces with any one area isn't as large, compared to the others as it otherwise would be if I was only active in one creative area. It happens that for some of the projects I do, like this new sewage plant installation, people don't know or care about jazz. So no one area of potential support dominates to the point where somebody can cut me off, so I don't have to spend a lot of time listening to harangues about the blues aesthetic, or trying to make myself look like somebody that could get on PBS. Basically, as long as we remain true to our conception of self-determination, if we are shut down in one area, we pop out in another—just like a strong current of flowing water. You have a hard time damming us up.

Q. It strikes me when you talk about, for example, "an animistic, Afrological conception" of music-making, that you broach fascinating political and racial questions that most of America simply isn't willing to, or equipped to, face. There's a weird vacuum of serious consideration of most of the issues implied by the phrase "animistic, Afrological conception." What's going on, do you think?

A. Actually, there's a lot of new, serious writing about race, as well as class, gender, and sexuality, in connection with music. Anthony Braxton and Leo Smith wrote extensively on these subjects in the *Tri-Axium Writings* and Leo's "M1: American Music." There are people like George Lipsitz, Tricia Rose, Eric Porter, Georgina Born, Jon Cruz, Ajay Heble, Samuel Floyd and the Center for Black Music Research people, Robert O'Meally, Robin Kelley, Russell Potter, David Ake, Ingrid Monson, Krin Gabbard, Burton Peretti, Kathy Ogren, Jon Panish, Heinz Steinert, Robert Walser, Nathaniel Mackey, Ronald Radano, Quincy Troupe—but then, I'm supposed to be keeping up with all that. You also have a lot of the old disembodied universalisms and scientisms out there, but my graduate students don't buy into that much anymore. Our Critical Studies/Experimental Practices program at UCSD was called one of the most innovative programs in the nation by a peer review panel recently, so maybe we are managing to keep up, but we have to maintain the pressure on ourselves to do better. So whenever these CSEP students have the chance, they look critically at stuff that people put out about "the future of music" and ask why there aren't any African-Americans, Latinos, or women on these concerts and conferences. They ask how one small group can know anything about the future of anything if they only talk to each other. They ask why accounts of "American experimentalism" never talk about Ornette Coleman, but have lots of space for people no one has ever heard of. Generally those confrontations produce a lot of sputtering, platitudes and general BS, which they

are ready for. But at the same time, these students aren't real excited about a do-nothing post-structuralism that doesn't admit that people can actually change their situation. Nowadays, our artmaking—writing, composing, improvising and performing, whatever—embodies a critical attitude. That's just what people need, to help them fight the power. I view performance as part of a process of teaching people how to find order in improvised music, without necessarily transforming the performance space into a classroom. Bringing cultural issues into the concert hall as part of the compositional and performance process is similar to what Robert Farris Thompson (1983) identifies as "songs and dances of social allusion" in African music.

Q. Again with respect to "Afrological conceptions," it's striking that, while you have developed that concept, your own musical collaborations have been with musicians from all kinds of cultural backgrounds. When have those meetings of musical/cultural backgrounds worked best, and in what kinds of situations have they not, and why?

A. In the course of my research on the AACM, I would periodically run into an article that would be critical of the idea of "Great Black Music." The emphasis would always be on "black", when as Roscoe told me, they created the name because "Nobody was calling the music great." People would say stuff like, well, what about "Great Jewish Music"—like that was supposed to be an absurd idea. Well, that's exactly what you have now with Zorn's Radical Jewish Culture series, which is a great development. The explicit particularity of culture, the emphasis on difference that's being recognized now, actually allows greater mobility for people who like to learn and grow. Everyone is encouraged to find out more about everyone else, rather than resting on an idea of what "the great tradition" is and who its carriers are. Also, people have a base from which they are encouraged to grow, while people who used to be able to claim universality and transcendence for their particular ethnic music, for whatever reason—it had a lot of notes, it was supposedly rigorously structured, or whatever—are encouraged to drop some of those preconceptions. So those tendencies get reined in somewhat, or at least people are watching out for the okey-doke there. The idea of "Afrological," which Sam Floyd encouraged me to explore, was a means of locating myself without Othering anyone else. You deal with history, not with this phony biology of race business. But you can't make any generalizations about musical compatibility on the basis of culture. Most collaborations work if people go into them with a certain selflessness, or at least an awareness of the need to harmonize with others and reach out to them. I try to avoid the grand ego people, since I didn't grow up with that in music.

a voice
settling to zero
finds its home
in an open ear

if a voice
pulls itself up
by its grain
saying retains
its song
in a simple sound

Blowing One's Own Bone, or Truth Shot Through Me Like a Whistle, She Said

George Quasha

Margaret De Wys composition "*I OH [I have a magnetic shadow / bleeding on tape / as an echo]* is being issued on Thurston Moore's Ecstatic Peace label*, and my piece below was written as accompanying text. The context of her composition is quite important to know both in listening to the CD and in reading my remarks below. The composer writes:

This composition developed as a music-centered response to my personal work with 'liminal states of consciousness' that arose in a non-art context generally characterized as *healing*. Based on casual recordings of my own voice that I made during actual sessions, my soundtrack focuses on sequences of highly stimulated vocalization ('excited,' 'ecstatic,' etc.), particularly those that seem to embody a unique and intense experience of *knowing*, something like a direct encounter with vitality. The effects: sound, vision and emotion in the rawest possible state. Truth shot through me like a whistle.

The unaccompanied, minimally edited voice is, as she says, raw, embodying the emotional/psychic state that drives it; completely unselfconscious and without the slightest trace of musical training in evidence or any sort of affective enhancement. If you heard these sounds out of the blue, your perhaps anxious effort to interpret what it is you are hearing might range from someone is giving birth, reaching orgasm, or undergoing catharsis to embodying spirits, expelling demons, expressing rage or dying... This, of course, is the work of a highly accomplished composer with an impressive, complex and innovative body of work.

Margaret De Wys' *I OH* offers an unheard-of music. It comes to call itself music by a deeply executed stretch of imagination. To accomplish this the composer, whose previous music is literally nothing like this, has to wear her identity a cut below the known. She also puts her art, as she has put herself, seriously at risk. In truth, what she offers us here is something like risk itself. I suppose Artaud embraced a sister art in his sense of theatrical "cruelty," and I invoke his name here both to set a standard for the sense of the artistic in this work and for the aid only such a spirit can give us in *participating* this work and its possibility.

This is music that offers so little guidance in how to hear it or use it or, last *and* least, interpret it, that we fairly may wonder in what way it is music at all. Certainly it calls for conscious listening, yet conscious in a sense that's always without precedent, that is, truly aware, because it belongs so nakedly to its own moment. We may seem to be listening to ourselves in our deepest danger, or ourselves so transparent that we hear the earth itself. Fear, fear of succeeding, of finding out in fact what's *on her mind*. Fear of turning into something *other*, at the level of *animal*. Zero degree cognition. We may enter a confusion of identity that we feel is an intimate union with *earth herself*, gripping her strewn stones, limbs of her whose ecstatic pain belongs to *oneself*. Love in a lair. Vocal rhythm as sheer body, breath, larynx *released*. Being inside her, whatever she is.

* Bedroom label of Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth, distributed exclusively through Smells Like Records. Order through www.smellslikerecords.com. Scheduled for September, 2000.

If this is music, waking itself is making music. From *first cry* to the *sounds of dying* everything that originates has a music. How to learn it? If one recalls a music that was hard to hear and that eventually became hearable, one holds in mind an instance of *origination*, as well as the process that was necessary to experience it. In this sense music is what condenses certain modalities of access to the *unacceptable real*. With the availability of musics from many cultures we have all become more openly atunable. Musically, so much of reality is now “crossable”—as certain plants can be cross-fertilized to give rise to a new species. Musically, giving birth, reaching orgasm, undergoing catharsis, embodying spirits, expelling demons, expressing rage, dying...—any and all may come into their comparisons to a usable degree. Any and all may give permission to enter otherwise forbidding human dimensions. They come together, these life strangers, when we can no longer tell them apart. Diverse as these “states” of experience are, *extremes of being* may relate there. And our listening is their meeting place. When we recoil from raw listening we recoil from what we fear to know in life. No wonder, since we have had no sensible access to whatever it is. Art sometimes succeeds in offering a door to the *deeply unknown most familiar*. But such a door does not open of its own accord; it requires a certain *holding power*. In *I OH* we may learn of this power by discovering how we have to bring it up to sustain attention. For me it helps to think of a manifest principle: my own stranger realities consent to come forward and meet, indeed marry, and even crossbreed in my awareness *only* when my listening is truly open. Such openness to accommodate the strange is hardly easy or ordinary, but we may find that it’s “natural” in the sense of belonging to our true nature. What we hear there, from the root of music itself, speaks to us beyond reason, both terribly and blessedly. Perhaps Rilke had something like this in mind when he said “any angel terrifies.”

chris mann And the question

A thing is a technique of looking. It has rights. A cannibal grammar. Bored. A networked vending machine, ignorance remains a a form hospitality. To (whatever). And more is reason (the subject is a reasonable neighbour, a perjury (the law predicate) (guest) letter to english), a you-saying alibi on the blink, an habitual economy of bits and other is (with guilts - the I mean the zombie faces the impossible death, the question is the last ethical it). The yellow effect. A dyslexic not-yet. Indubitably too. Traumatically same. A picture state. The cop a tawdry, artful gift. Plain plate. 'lergic. (The state, the last art, fails to be indifferent to itself and so equivocates around (the given is a pretty doubt)): the dead have facts. A double flu. Seemly. And. () Who? Like anxiety, the cure. Language, the unconscious metaphor, blackmails that into proposing the symptom as neurotic, the conditional a - only a p'lice is true. Hysteric (adequate) lack. Quasi si too. A lit limit, sentimentally it (ironically I the substitute) in beaut secure, the name sweet be-ish projected as a blind spot on to sure as back. Style interrupts the subject-as-host (self is that lacks) itchy epiphany, the dictionary a pink justice on a both and facts the fic alone, a ghost an jack. A noun is how a grammar sublimates itself. A perfect debt, the wet event. Specious and queasy (luck is an extreme consciousness), learning was the first hypocrisy. The past, the better tech, the revelation, more apriori than before, a word (a name with promise): Not yet, a haps (a picture big english) (the subject recognise itself as the condition of the fess) the domesticated target that, and (being stuck in the condition of it's ticulation) it's credit, likes to and. And And is what is would be in snap. Betrayed. Ambiguous. And square. A box chronology of reps. A separation. Evidence. Of the not-all-at-once, of the postponed, the neurotic, the fat placebo, thing. Oh, bring in no tax, no is-with nuance all broody limited and come, a be may be ticipate on a string, a friggin xample, a be fuck. No plain but. Whinge is for crack. Hypocritically neat. Frigid. Dick on milk. The same. Remains change. Patient. Like hinge. The shit. An it is a bad secret. Coz it ideal. And not a bit complacent. A gaze, packet of anons, the more the more, a they on crutches, altruistically culpably dull. (Guilt, that prudent mode of reason that risks itself, a surplus of meaning (vengeance in yella), a likes to jump - it solicits that it likes. And runs.) A you of it is what I'm reminded of. (You is only transcendent. Therefore malicious.) A should on ice. A noun that renounces any colour of luck. Well, fuck me. Facts mourn consciousness. By getting dressed. In this sense are they prophetic. Ulterior pork. Identity, the poor trauma, as-if with lastic and implies (a name with nowhere cept up to go (cheap I suppose like talk)) tries rhyme: with with was with. Want (to be, with pee) to pop on spec: what a dog. Shot. An some heroic much like mug soaps up: so. (Quote, work is the unreasonable for work.) Unconsciously an object, the distinction scars the real, a prolapsed mimic (logic is the temptation of the night before (it takes pleasure in the name (the name castrates irony (by coining words (it makes a fetish of the pause))))). The law of it, the syphilis of the unsayable, the moral of the object is psychotic. An itinerary. On economy. A deduced ellipsis semantically fect. From the inertia waltz. (There is no was. Like all symptoms is soft.) That the picture is a debt is also sentimentally the case, an anesthesia that mentions words. As a way procuring. Yes describes. Is, a la coz, a qua suspended by it's knowns: sense is but just the poverty of you. A random 'xcuse. Neglect. Sacrifice it does the 'tent, the bribery of too much like. Stupid. As a pronoun. A the in heat. But the rates of context, the on (ambiguity is the guarantor of rights (make up your fuckin mind) an bags (which finds) the cliché possible in the red (On the medicalisation of names (it consoles the alphabet (with an appointment with an object (it colludes (with hazard)))): bed)). More, the desultory attempt to exhaust meaning, then tends. Already. The pet event. Meanwhile The nigma of being taken for (smuggled space into her place by looking the other way she did) some dud fuck is blah blah bad enough, but aint's some sort mas'chist bitch syllogist wif systm big as if, a picture lick, a did description of in britches, some mad ad cough it capped is wig. My itch the solipsist which bit picked through an through so fixed it up: no mid in mirror parlez vous - 's mine y cunt fuck off. (Context (the tax on standards) gossips with the stats: the boss has lost his cap. One too many fats an not nough counters tip the whatsit watch im toss it back. Flat chat. Franger is as does, y wank.) Procrastinate criteria and then obsess on next, the lot of. The only more pathetic than a sign the waiting it to do. Low horizon sugar without the grace. Oh, knowledge, designer guilt. The client. It blushes nouns. Pity bout the dog. One, the question is the beautiful question. Two, contradictions always bout a same. The paradox of fact (that it's supernaturally valuable) inches at the possible (the what sense of understand?) of from. Criteria had the pox before. An agent (see mind) for a pack of warmed-over nows (a present with a therefore and a nail), a data (it flatters the is-is-one-them-bitches-doesn-rhyme (on

teaching com-puters how to lie)): the costs of coz is high enough (technique - language is the later of sense (yes defines context, is aesthetic)) so 'pinion takes the the-er form of shit. Efficient. Like it mistake. (Understand, fuck y, competence cops on to a gobful full of peanut and loll so's to mug up on a me like you, a hum fuckin headache what (to understand, to confess a stick) kibitz paste the missy on.) By more. A profit of addition. And what would it mean if it work? Simile me as is, it says, and you as be and watch the bastards lik'ning such to kind of, count. A do do dubie proof. A lexicon. Of little itches and their squits. A word is not a word and that's it's point. An I O U. With pics. (If a context did the trick then it'd do just fine, but then again it don't exist.) What though is gossip when we got ten thousand other words to get us through? A sceptical? With list? A lisp of protocols and all? Aesthetics, the science of propositions: one, english thrown a temper tantrum, says example is all you could possible mean. I'm sorry. Logic is the first limit of description. Language is what describes knowing. It is not correct. Two, english is only a way learning english. A contradiction looks the same (a question is the cheapest proof), a represent. A doll dull lent of please. English. A fact is an adolescent standard. Has nappy rash. A crap kitsch this that, a colloquial pause, a fact is only unconsciously relaxed, copy logic proxied up to get a look at, a pretty pocket: and is not but what it was - it conjugates fits, with. A fiction sees a picture with a hole. An empirical. All. And. The catatonic nouns. Existence is logically necessary. That's why I invented it. No, actually that's why I did it. It's nice. Questions is just some way doing stuff with explanation where it get to be the game. A quasi-me-fictu pos with diction up the arse, a quite. (A word, a portable context that smiles a lot, then dobs me in, so now, not only more, is I's routine.) Decoration is a logical principle. Or, why is context so poor? (On the possibility of conversation being a rule and therefore impossible (I mean it's clearly not a name (knowledge is jus a blind revenge)): the picture is a big picture and therefore evidence (an event is an example of that between the general and its 'ticulars (the negative, a forlorn fetish of repetition)) of the invisibility of law, pet paranoia, kept. The picture aint no add-on and therefore's without hope, a dunno in was and other whatsits, a pack of grammar yea high, or close enough (love is one them pics of grammar don't show what at all) to bluff the soap with. And the fictional looks? Like looks? A blush on legs. It confess gravity some useful doubt. Gram I mean always run off at the mouth, eavesdrop some preposit. An object's a pathology. It covets its own cure. I on the other hand don't mind. It's narcissistic at. Its absence, I mean. You see, it trusts. Romancing the and of to. You I mean is not a rational idea. And fail as evidence (evidence, the charity) (fact, the switch) and is therefore possible to be mistaken wrong (though if you were my ego, I'd only pretend at be wrong). A default clause we. You still my secret - it's complacency excludes the voyeur. It with. A complicity string. 'It' defines proof. An ideal gimme. And even if knowledge weren't imperial it'd is all over the fuckin shop. Like some immune bloody price. 'It' is the contradict of three. Existence, some pathetic description of, what wants now to be experience, a greed, with chewy farts and other stuff, like you, is full of. An interrupt. The implied I in it. A generally of the distract side. A my rhyme. Time, she say, is up, the fuckin in-between. (Failing as an object, it smiled. A bunch of times. A sweet need please to stub yr toe again. And if time be so unique, how come the kitsch particular holds it so then togeth? A precautionary ignorance? The fallacy of the past? Coz gifts is classed a knowledge? Feedback, disney for surveillance (but the site didn know it's not a market) (code's a node (it imitates)) blows off the diff: logic is a dotcom with a now, a dow on ice. (Nice. But cunt's not context 'cept.) Roles (a mole what volunteers as subject to get through), data aspire to be a crime. A reductive but. Rationalised for. Why, did you think there would be two?) To be is same for square. And projected, it IDs. Thought though only thanks - negation comes as 'pology, a pink comeuppance. Reason, the pathetic of maybe, the passive of, space was the 'riginal stick. Only not absolved in some surrogate time, like with. I mean, the act adequates its object with the nalogy of perception, a box of onlys. A hid of. Cause, y know, just a way that lot hangin out togeth, a debt. To is, at that, was not enough, but. Like all partics it imitate a law, give lip. Ah stuff it.

J.K. Randall: *intimacy (a polemic)* *

Mary Lee Roberts

intimacy (a polemic) begins with Jim entering on to the scene, like a performer walking on to a stage. Jim's first "IN WHICH" marks the basic laying out of his intentions for the piece: Jim says, "I sing a song by the Troubadour Bernart de Ventadorn, which I am composing". We find out right away that the Troubadour, as noteworthy depth-artist-model (the one whose soul desire is to pursue intimacy through music, the one who is able to achieve intense expressive-modes within the seemingly, at least by contemporary standards (mythical or not), confining structures of courtly mannerisms) is the concern here. Moving inside into the tender underbellies of Troubadour-styled desire, Jim dutifully reports on his realizations of appropriate experiments in Troubadourian composition making in the modern world. Jim mixes the repetitive mannerisms of our present day culture with those motions repeated in Troubadour times into a gnarly concoction designed to ensnare the be-deafened contemporary culture vulture crowd. Put into theme and variation mode, launched into inter-sexual, and at times inter-species, co-mingling, co-essencing, just about co-everything, so that all the bases are covered, we are left at the end of *intimacy (a polemic)* with a thesis for comparative gesturing with song, in the contemporary world, with a Troubadour twist.

Spaced in between his In Which-es Jim places the soft place; that place that is so defined by ritual that the intimacy is achieved not through physical realization but consummated by the defined distance. No gesture is misplaced, only the occasion may be unexpected, the outcome once the act has commenced is predictable yet not un-intense because of repetition.

In Jim's intimacy there is a Troubadour mounted on a horse, singing his song to the be-windowed maiden; her responses are predictable, each set of gestures moves closer to a gross effect, yet even the slightest response is amplified into a complete statement of desire. Jim doesn't miss a combination, or a detail; like physical contact with ultra-consciousness, no gesture is missing, nothing is inappropriate. On Jim's CD intimacy is laid out with squirming, denuding, and "ejaculating through obscure densities". As I had previously mentioned, *intimacy (a polemic)* begins with the defining of the soft-place, the place that many of us may deny in public and/or deny in private. I had an idea that while ejaculating through the obscure densities of the contemporary social scene most people either do public or private; Jim makes no distinctions -- obscure densities are obscure densities, whether public or private, the soft, tender, under-parts are undeniably intact for modern day Troubadour action.

A Rant along with Jim's Rant about contemporary mannerisms in potentially musical circumstances that comes before Jim's documentation of his Experiments in Modern Day Troubadouring (or how I interpret Jim's Rant at the beginning of his CD)

By militaristic-styled organization, folks sitting in rows and columns, flabby (or flappy) palms are purposefully collided, by design, this is what I have to deal with after a potentially musical experience in the modern day concert hall. We get "BRAVO", we get the fat gesture, the mannerisms, or maybe the scandal of, "boo, hiss, hiss". But when do we get hearing? When is ear-engagement? When do we hear rather than see, when does intimacy happen in the aural domain? When do I get to sit, side by side with the composer, looking over her shoulder, with nothing to look at, only the sound, the sound hits the back of my neck, hustles down my spine and stretches out to my be-goose-pimpled arms. Or even the moment of complete intimacy where tears enter, the joy of complete take-over, let me lie in the composer's sound-arms, let me let the composer, let me let go of my control over my control mechanisms, let let happen.

* on Open Space CD 10

This letting is impossible because I fear the clapping, it takes my nerves on a trip they can't bear. But if I was the Troubadour, or the Lady, I could just listen. No applause would be required. I would know what to do: stretch my right arm diagonally across my body to place my hand on my left side then bow, or tilt my head, or speak softly; do anything to carry on the intimacy initiated by the music. Certainly not wallop one mitt against the other; but regard the event, perpetuate the intimate excitement by adjusting my position in my seat or hiking myself in my stirrups. Let the envelope of song-silence carry on behind me as I ride away being the horse-be-mounted Troubadour, or most purposely move from the window as the be-desired Lady.

Jim documenting his test runs in Troubadour-ing, what comes next on the CD --

Then don't miss Jim revealing his (under)parts through song to: his self, a loved Lady, his Therapist, his Old Sidekick, a Singer, his Grandfather, a Composer, a Medievalist, his Teenaged Daughter, and his English Setter.

But before these test runs of Troubadour-ing, we're reminded of appropriate formats for song singing, formats appropriate for the type of intimacy that Jim is wanting to achieve. A singing *To* the test-run parties and a singing *For* these test-run parties provide for different experiences. The *To*-singing may be easily botched into implying the wrong intent by the wrong voice to the wrong ear. The *For*-singing allows for non-implication-status: the singer and the listener are both the audience.

Within each test run is a Jim-sung-song with percussive strikes for accentuation. I imagine that the poems that describe the test runs are extensions of Jim's singing parts, though I'm not sure, I don't exactly know what Jim is invoicing when he sings.

Test run #1 — Jim and his Therapist listen to him sing his song.

"Despair enjoins concupiscence" — despair forbids lustful desire(?). I get lost here, I don't know how to interpret what I'm hearing. I could imagine that the Therapist might not go for the Troubadourian nature of desire and might interpret desire-from-a-distance as some type of denial, or whatever. I'm lost here.

Test run #2 — Jim and his Old Sidekick listen to him sing his song.

Like the documentation of Jim and his Therapist listening to him sing his song, this test run with an Old Sidekick presents mostly obscurities to me. Jim mentions that there is an instance of "too cozy for porn" and pules (cries, whining). I imagine that these are references to his singing — but things are obscure. I am able to get a feeling here, but nothing too clear. Jim's posed question regarding the possibility of a noun being a placeholder for an adjective has helped me out here a little bit. I listen multiple times to this test run, training my ear to hear in only adjective mode. I've never done this before, I'm uneasy, hesitant, yet excited to try something new.

Test run #3 — Jim and a Singer listen to him sing his song.

Here we get snippets of documentation of what happens as Jim and a Singer listen to Jim; though it is now occurring to me that my documentation of what I thought was Jim's documentation of Troubadourian test runs is as good as spitting in the wind — I mean, what I'm getting from this part of Jim's CD seems to be more about my struggle to interpret Jim's performance than a true listening to what is actually happening. At this point what makes sense is for me to try and live inside the poetry that Jim sets forth here rather than struggle to look for an interpretation from Jim. With utterances, repetitions of short phrases, I hear three sides of a

story: Jim singing *For* himself, Jim singing *For* the Singer, and me listening to the results of the *For* singing.

Test run #4 — Jim and his Grandfather listen to him sing his song.

In this test run I hear a theme that sets a mood; a theme of optimism, I guess an optimism for "time" and essences or meanings for "time". Words like "ineradicable" and "good" are tucked alongside phrases like, "all is possible". Sentences and phrases are getting longer, the stories are fleshing out, it's as if the material that seemed obscure to me before is getting hooked up with the information I'm getting now, there's a connectivity now, things are getting clearer. I realize that the essences are what are giving me the most information. Jim's singing remains to be as beautiful, tender, and spirited as ever.

Test run #5 — Jim and a Composer listen to Jim sing his song.

With the Grandfather test run we got essences, meanings, and concrete ideas concerning experience. With the Composer I hear analysis, abstractions about analysis, technique, and talk about technique for talking about technique. Jim mentions pitches brushing against other pitches — I hear a type of modulation of meaning going on here as Jim brushes pieces of analysis up against other pieces of analysis of his song.

Test run #6 — Jim and a Medievalist listen to Jim sing his song.

In this incredible part I begin to realize that Jim's new song is starting to influence the old songs: those of Bernart de Ventadorn. I take a break and go to the library to listen to a Bernart de Ventadorn CD. "As between live and dead, live and live, body and soul": this we hear from Jim. The influences become confused, I let my ears become confused, I just want to listen at this point, I don't want to care about sorting things out.

Test run #7 — Jim and his Teenaged Daughter listen to Jim sing his song.

(At first I wonder what it's like to be sung to by a father. It's always been difficult for me to imagine creatively minded parents, but this is getting off the track.) What sticks with me most here is Jim's documentation of singing *For* his Teenaged Daughter. He mentions that, "she and I fade from view" as if the *For*-ness is in full effect or maximally "applied to their account" — which means that Jim singing his song, his Teenaged Daughter listening to Jim sing his song, and Jim listening to himself sing his song, are all able to hear and join in the hearing. I get the impression that in this test run the *For*-singing is the most successful. Also, I think that this test run is the longest in time and also the slowest in tempo. Toward the end of this test run I begin to feel like the slowing up may bring *intimacy* to a halt, but the increments of time and space continue on their course of increasement until finally the last test run begins.

Test run #8 — Jim and his English Setter listen to Jim sing his song.

Here, as I had mentioned earlier, we get the only inter-species *For* singing. "Ours is the world of the known sign" Jim says. As I imagine, Jim's song, if sung in the voice of the food provider, could provoke his English Setter to respond typically and as suggested. In fact, with any animal, a man or beast that speaks and understands another native language than the one presently being spoken, the interpretation can only be on the grossest level of signage. (If I was holding a doggie treat in my hand while singing excerpts from *Don Giovanni*, or *Disco Inferno*, I

imagine that Jim's English Setter would interpret my utterances as being one and the same.) Jim mentions that he and his English Setter are co-partners in servitude to each other, even when Jim mentions what may be of importance to him (which he never details) is certainly not the same as the important events in his English Setter's daily routine (which is detailed to be something about what the neighbor dog leaves on the rug). In all events the test runs come to a close here and *intimacy* (a *polemic*) turns toward a documentation of old-time Troubadour culture.

Old Timey Troubadour Test Runs

What follows now (track 8 and up) is a kind of encyclopedia for Troubadourian responses to song making in a medieval setting. It is interesting that Jim first lays out the test runs, then provides us with the prototype model afterwards. But really, the form of *intimacy* (a *polemic*) is not too far out if we remember that Jim began his CD with a reminder of the seriously silly sonic setups that modern concert hall performances provide. In this last section Jim lays out the hazards met by a Troubadour, his Jongleur (the "hired gun" guy who sings, belts, and wails, at times in vain, the Troubadour's songs), and the Lady-song-consumer — the intended target for long-distance desire. Jim is constantly reminding us of the fact of a "Motley Throng" (Mötley Thröng ?) that hangs around these medieval halls and makes "Dins" all the time, seemingly intent (the Throng that is) on discombobulating the sending and receiving of desire through song from the Troubadour (sometime via the Jongleur) to the Lady.

Things get complex:

The Troubadour first tries singing to an empty window, he doesn't seem to be bothered by the unrequitedness of the scene. Another time the Lady actually gazes at him. The Troubadour waits patiently for a more giving signal, eventually, as if the world were going to go flying out of orbit if she even bats an eyelash — she inclines her head slightly — a fully intense moment.

The scene shifts to a hall, the Troubadour sings his song, then approaches the Lady. Eventually they end up in an alcove (too cozy for porn?) and when his song is over, as if a cat could be heard stomping around, they talk in lowered voices.

Then we get the examples of the Lady being sung to within shouting distance of her window. The Jongleur is engaged to sing the Troubadour's song, which he does, then he (the Jongleur) rides on. The Jongleur is a fool, he gets frustrated, and he can't sense any sort of intimacy unless a gross blob of it hits him in the face. After singing to the Lady the Lady looks the other way. Not being able to make any sort of interpretation of this response the Jongleur decides to call it a day. Eventually in another scene the Lady nods to the Jongleur after he finishes the Troubadour's song — "Great God in Heaven" must think the Jongleur — so he dismounts and takes a bow. Then in another instance, in a Hall somewhere, the Jongleur sings the Troubadour's new song and he (the Jongleur) gets a gift: a pocket full of ginger and garlic. Pretty neat. On another occasion the Jongleur sings the Troubadour's new song and the servants are ordered to serve boar's flesh and spiced wine. Really neat.

Next comes the sequence where the Troubadour is composing in a "large dwelling place". He is the lone artist, the image of intense concentration as he crafts his song. Black frocked, mumbling, ambling about, composing, the Troubadour is the only artist left on the earth at this moment, he's the last concentrator, the last deep thinker, that last artist, as if no other person matters at this moment. Then, bang-o, Jim contrasts the scene of monkly reclusivity with a scene involving the Troubadour composing in the midst of the Motley Throng. How can he do it? It must be that his concentration, his dedication, all his facilities are able to muster a transcendental cloistered existence amidst the Din.

And that damned Motley Throng, for a long time they throw a wrench in the works. The Troubadour signals the Jongleur to give a shot at his song and "a new thread weaves through the Din". Amazingly enough the Jongleur's voice can cut through the cloud of drunken revelry with such success that, for crying out loud, the Lady's eye seeks the Troubadour. At times, amidst the Motley Throng, Virgins, Ladies, Troubadours, and the (our) Troubadour, the Jongleur is able to fill the hall with his voice. At other times the whole scene seems pointless to the Jongleur, the Motley Throng is dinning way too much and the setup for singing is less than desirable. Sometimes the Lady gets the message of the song, sometimes the Motley Throng gets a message, the aim for the desire and message seems to be inaccurate because of the Din.

Eventually the Troubadour takes to voice amidst the Din. Somehow, unlike the Jongleur, the Troubadour is able to aim the message of desire directly at the Lady for a precise hit. Only the Troubadour and the Lady know what the message is.

Then with respect to the Lady, the Motley Throng "attends to the voice of the Troubadour". Eventually the Motley Throng is entertained by the Troubadour's voice. The Lady listens. When the song is over, the Virgins crowd around the Troubadour, the other Ladies "keep their council", "a few (nervous?) Husbands attend to their Ladies", and "the Troubadour knowingly receives confidences".

• • •

Jim gets up, walks out of mic-shot and the CD ends. I can start breathing again. The world resumes its revolutions. I sit in a small room, surrounded by silence, by myself, taking a breather, before I press Play again on the CD player, ready for another shot at another layer of *intimacy (a polemic)*, because I certainly can't get it all at once, it's thick, it's tough.

**2 texts about
Language ,as a music
six marginal pretexts for composition
by Benjamin Boretz and Elaine Barkin**

Notes for Open Space CD 10

Benjamin Boretz

- I Thesis
- II Argument
- III Spec Sheet
- IV Red Hook
- V Ivy
- VI Epilogue

“...something that only a composer could have written” was how Jim Randall introduced *Compose Yourself* to me, to suggest why it might be relevant to publish it in a composers’ magazine. My revelation was: there are things you want to say, anxieties you want to engage, arising from anything in your life, arising in your perception from your perspective as a composer, that are not music itself (because they’re explicitly *about* something(s)) or poetry either (because that’s a different perspective of saying), and cannot be discourse (because that’s a closed world in which some things are unsayable, or even indiscernible except as composite masks) — but such things may, still, be composable as something — not as music, but as music is composed, as something being what it is about: as languagemusic, composed out of the specific sensibilities which belong to you as composer, listener, reader, writer, player, speaker. To engage your reading in your writing as you engage your listening in your composing. Even though — maybe even because — my preoccupations, my compositional habits, my literary habitats are distinctly different from Jim’s, *Compose Yourself* did not just open the enormous creative space it inhabits fully by itself, it gave me the means to transform my own mental universe, liberating thoughts, awarenesses, images (“...resurrecting a new world...a new way of constructing, of imagining...” [*Compose Yourself*, pp. 11-12]) — and, inevitably, texts: first, “In Quest of the Rhythmic Genius”; ultimately, *Language ,as a music*:

April, 1979: Barrytown, New York; August, 1979: San Diego, California: Part of Kenneth Gaburo’s extraordinary generous Lingua Press project is to propagate essays in ‘extended composition’; in particular, he’s gathering ideas for his monster ‘whole-language’ collection *Allos* consisting of texts about language mostly by composers; so, after publishing our twin piano pieces in a gorgeous album, he invites Jim and me to produce *Language ,as a music* and (Jim’s) *Something Medieval* in the Lingua “Collection Two” series. Typesetting *Language ,as a music* becomes my first move into hands-on type composition, which eventually becomes a normal practice for my work. Susan Quasha, who is principal artist-designer for the uniquely artist-supportive small press called Station Hill in Barrytown, works tirelessly and meticulously with me to refine every graphic detail of the text. We’re using an early programmable (pre-computer) typesetting system called Alphacomp; cumbersome, but its output is controllable and good-looking, and it’s totally accessible to my input as no commercial composing-room is. When we’re finally done, I deliver the output by hand to Kenneth Gaburo in San Diego — Alphacomp makes no duplicates, and saves no files after spitting out galleys (they have to be cut and pasted by hand like sounds in a tape studio). The book, with a surprise hard cover designed by Kenneth, is a magnificent token of Kenneth’s interpersonal largesse, and of his dead-serious pursuit of publishing as a medium of creative composition (see his and David Dunn’s *Publishing as Eco-System*).

November, 1979: A Faculty Seminar at Brook House, Bard College: The fortress of audio-reinforcement gear, speakers, table lamp, bookstand, piano that minimizes the speaker/player’s visual presence ensures that what’s ‘live’ in the performance is just a voice: my voice, placed at people’s ears rather than coming at them from where my body sits. It’s also a comfort zone for me to be able to speak and play for an hour and fifteen

minutes sustaining focus on an unbroken continuity of utterance. Afterward, everyone assumes that the voice of the character portrayed in Part V is my 'real' voice, putting out my 'real' message. And everyone tells me how much they enjoyed the Irving Berlin song in Part IV.

May 4, 1980: Center For Music Experiment, U.C. San Diego: C.M.E., directed then by Virginia Hommel Gaburo, inhabited by a credible collection of intense people in a variety of intense ways; Jean-Charles Fran_ois and John Silber in particular interacted so intensely with me that we practically laminated; but almost that much intensity was routine for the typical interactions with and among the citizens of that community: Warren Burt, David Dunn, Virginia Hommel Gaburo, Diamanda Galas, Jonathan Glazier, Ron George, Anne Hankinson, John Mackay, Will Parsons, Ron Robboy, Isobel Terceo, Richard Zvonar — the ones I can remember. My self-invited performance of *Language ,as a music* surfed on these intensities — it was effectively conducted by the (— intense! —) body language of Diamanda Galas glaring furiously from the front edge of listeners. The giant gamelan hanging on the wall facing me sang back whenever my voicesound crossed a certain resonance threshold. I implicate them all in the performance — they're all present and tangible on the CD. (The pianomusic movement (Part II) is borrowed from Sarah Rothenberg's performance of the long piano piece on Open Space CD 1 — C.M.E. had no piano so we had to roll it on tape there too.) Right after (it seemed way too soon after) I got intensely lectured on the manifold deficiencies of the performance and the piece — one colleague assigned me to remedial attendance at her next-night concert of extended-vocal-cum-electronic screaming; another assigned me to remedial study of Bunraku puppet theater. Personally, my only regret was the unscheduled (and still unfortunate) crescendo/decrescendo toward the end of Part I. Otherwise, my event felt to me like an integral piece of an average C.M.E. week of way-of-life practices (including crucially playing/movement sessions with the intrepid KIVA techno-exploratory ensemble). C.M.E. was so promising a model for music-intellectual-creative-performance experimentation that I was scarcely surprised when it disappeared soon afterward.

Compose Yourself, C.M.E., the C.M.E. community, KIVA, the gamelan are, for me, embedded in the sounds of this performance, the looming spectres bonded inextricably into the identity of this piece.

B. A. B., 6.99
Barrytown, New York

Language ,as a music (the score) is published by Lingua Press; to be reprinted by Open Space as part of *Being About Music*, a collection of printtexts by Benjamin Boretz and J. K. Randall, scheduled for publication in 2000. *Intimacy* will appear in the same collection. *Compose Yourself* is published (with B.A.B.'s *Meta-Variations*) by Open Space.

reexperiencing Language ,as a Music revisited

Elaine Barkin

Take 2 / Roll 2

Trip 2

begins:

As THESIS unrolls, a deeply reverberant voice—of unmediated inner experience—is overheard: worldforming, giving birth to consciousness and language; neither incoherent nor non-cognitive yet not yet cohering as ‘meaning’; not yet identifiable or measurable in units or as qualities: “in specious increments attaching”; neither naming nor calling; ‘here’ and not-‘here’; inchoate ‘it’ and not-yet ‘thing’; not yet ‘referring to’; a feedback of whatever is in process of forming—consciousness, language, music, meaning, allusion; wanting to express the “vanished traces of elusive experience”,¹ worldforming which “begins” again and again with the evolving accumulated experience of earlier beginnings entwined within; fully formed verbal language—language in order to speak with and to oneself—not yet the bedrock of experience; born from within, fusing interior with exterior; out of the confrontation of in-thing with out-thing, ‘reference’ gets to make it into language; language and meaning form in the presence of reference.

THESIS imagines awareness of those somethings called language and music; how, in a not-yet supra-stage of consciousness, I might take in and process sensory and sensual experience “without benefit of theory”; any some thing not yet any thing in particular, not yet belonging to a, not yet a member of a, ‘group’ or class, not yet named or termed or defined or associated with; how for a time I might take in what there is to be taken in ‘pre-articulately’, “nowhere metabounded”; moving from ‘noworld’ to ‘worldnow’, at best at first I am, it is, uncertain, wideopen.

THESIS is about time, about not-yet qualified ‘things’ originating and arising in their own particular singular unitary time and place; an aboutness characterized by time-marking and place-changing modifiers, a profusion of ‘within, between, before, sooner, later’; about how as time goes on ‘awarehood’ of how from some “firstindexed moment” then and now and was and has been are received, perceived, recalled—from “metabounded nowhere” to “metabonded herenow”; is of Experience speaking pronounless: there is no “I” or “we” or “you” (for a long time an absence I was unaware of), an absence enabling listeners to get ‘into’ what is being said about what is being sensed, unhindered by who is speaking to whom, in the best possible yet least palpable dimension: time; in the time of its own time; in time-meaning utterances, in everyday words and in struggling-to-be&mean&relate-to words expressly madeup for the occasion:

*“...from now was begins then emerging elapsing along a line anytime immemorial is here
always following nowhere unfolding itself beyond its time retrieving remembering recounting conjoining
backcumulating multiprescient urnow...”*

Time-meaning and meaning-meaning utterances, neither claiming nor declaring, in process of trying themselves on and figuring out how they belong to one another, in re-ordered, re-syntaxed, or re-contextualized successions of content-invariant 4-5 (or 6)-word ‘units’, where possibilities are given for conjuring how a word can mean, re-mean, and refer-to:

¹ From Ben’s “Interface Part II: Thoughts in Reply to Boulez/Foucault, ‘Contemporary Music and the Public’”: “In music, as in everything, the disappearing moment of experience is the firmest reality; but the fictions of permanence, invented for the benefit of discourse and contemplation, are so much more firmly graspable by the conscious minds whose invention they are, that they, rather than the vanished traces of elusive experience, are the referents on which the firmest conceptions—intuitions, even—of reality are built.” In John Rahn, Ed.: *Perspectives on Musical Aesthetics*, New York: W. W. Norton Inc., 1994.

An utterance within, a view about...

utterance within view (: about),...

view within utterance about,...

within view of utterance about;...

utterance within of view about:...

view within utterance of;...

In THESIS, not-yet 'correct' grammatical wordflow twists and meshes, wordflow re-arising in new beginnings none of which deny earlier beginnings; the birth of a grammar becomes evident in a language with which we are familiar; I and not-I struggle with slippery multivalent:

there recalls something, [or]

only / increments / onflowing / torrent / perhaps / slightly / tilts / warp / ridging

all sounding in someway familiar, not yet "touched by reference", but once 'touched' and 'things' have become "irreducibly reshaded", formed as language, THESIS ends and closes with its sole period: "to be: is: to mean."

At the core of THESIS, the 'single-doubledup word passage', lies the story of thing-to-thing confrontation; Ben's voice erupts as he tells of worldthings meeting and encountering. Erstwhile unmediated interior experience begins to know connections, begins to sense qualities, begins to recall:

an echo / of self / or other / reverberant / within / the screen / of sound

as "each and both" begin to bond—"each recalling the other"—"selfness qualified by otherhood infused", and when the "speciously incrementing" 'it' "returns to place" it is with a sense of having been forever transformed, linked evermore: reference within creating reference without. Thing-to-thing concatenations themselves unnamed, unidentified, undefined, embodied, expressed 'in action':

attaching; membering; resounding the gathering echoes, detaching;

retrieving; conjoining; encreaturing; creaturing, confronting

(soon palpable as a music-sound-metalanguage in ARGUMENT in those re-combined, re-registered, and re-ordered—in time and space—2-sound and 4-sound successions which re-reveal who and how they are and can get to be).

Music-sound in ARGUMENT does what THESIS says: through its first 'half' (up to 3:04 minutes in), I can hear successions that seem to be similar in some way to each other or I can hear how such seemingly similar dyads never identically succeed or attach to one another² or I can distinguish between such seemingly similar dyadic successions yet observe exactly how they differ or—if I think I've gotten accustomed to a stretch of similar sounding successions—I can hear just how something can be different and uncommon or I can hear either totally different, hence unique, successions of attaching, conjoining 'dyads' or, later on, I can hear how no-things in common sound against a backdrop of so-called recurrences—all shape-shifting about fluidly, not stuck in a hard place.

...the shaping spans of singularity retrieved / plurally compounded as unitarily infused / endlessly recalled to the brink of awareness [THESIS]

THESIS' ideas of births of language, consciousness, and reference, and the unmediated experiencings of those evolutionary births—whose at-first "noworld" of "specious increments", expressed in and with fuzzy grammar

² Speaking strictly, the label/term 'dyad' shouldn't be used yet, but I trust that the reader will excuse me for jumping ahead and omitting prior stages of identifying same and different 'things' as well as subsequent stages of cognizing pitch and pitch-class and interval—simple and compound—and register and motion—parallel, conjunct, and disjunct—and inversion, but almost never phrase units.

and equivocal referentiality I ‘struggle’ to get—do not transfer directly to ARGUMENT. In ARGUMENT, a music of thing-to-thing concatenations is created; preoccupations with ‘correct’ grammar or evolving syntax and awareness of reference are conceived and experienced appositely, differently here. I hear, I “retrieve” ‘re-ordered, re-syntaxed, and re-contextualized successions of content-invariant’ 2-4-sound ‘units’; in language and in music:

...retrievable now / as was...attaching what there was to what there was...as now of then / foreshadowed / as then of now / as here of there / reechoed / as there of here / as nowhere / emerging / as somewhere
[THESIS]

At ARGUMENT’s start, I hear high F-A attaching to low G-B which attaches to high B-G, at which time high F-A ebbs, followed by low A-C attaching to just-heard high B-G, at which time low G-B ebbs, followed by high C-A attaching to and holding on to low A-C. So what befalls those 3rds and 6ths as they ‘attach, conjoin, encreateure’ and become a who-knows-what-to-call-it? In which ways is my experience of these 2-4-sound units enhanced if I invoke all-too-familiar and standard names and terms and symbols? (Lewis Carroll’s White Knight, my metahero, knew the score about naming and calling and meaning: calling something by a name is not saying anything about it. As the Knight says: “That’s what the name is called.”) If the signification of these attaching Xs and Ys *et alia* is identical with their ever-changing positions and roles, do their meanings get to be more profound when they are called by the same or by a similar name?

In ARGUMENT, attribution of ‘phrases’—in the usual textbook sense—is thwarted by an onflow of slippery multivalent successions—especially in the ever-luscious Chopin-y modulatory multi-registral, muti(re)directional un-specified note-against-note flatside-sharpshire, arms & elbows and body swaying, single finger per hand 2-sounders passage (ca. 4:00-6:00 minutes in). Let’s say that quantifiable phrases are the counterpart of a syntax, yet however it is I might try to ‘slice’ the passage, I’m flummoxed; the ‘tool’ and its cutting edge are inapt and inept: onflow of “otherhood and selfness elicited in unison,...” obtains. While futility intervenes in my attempt to pigeonhole phrases and phrase-units within sections, longer-larger texturally distinct, Debussy-Stravinsky-like section-units are easier to hear, as are their backgrounded diatonic and chromatic, 6- and 8-pitch-class sets.³

While parallels between THESIS and ARGUMENT abound; distinctions between language and music are conspicuously revealed. With and in music, ‘meaning’ lodges elsewhere and differently than in language; in music, what joins and follows next is what there is, is how music ‘becomes’; if grammar or reference or syntactic structure-like back&fore&middle-ground concerns of ‘meaning’ crop up as I hear a music, at best they are sui generically pertinent to the particular work; music is always now and here; attachings and reference emanate from within, then attach to and make nows, but if and as I struggle to speak of them I’m transliterating; music doesn’t need what language depends on; ‘meaning’ and reference within do not need to give rise to reference without in order for music to be. Music as music, as recreation of experience, is totally liberated and wild and free.

* * *

SPEC SHEET re-tells the birth-tale of reference, of encountering and coalescing, of qualifying and re-calling, of identity and consciousness, a tale of reciprocity and interaction told by a narrator who now and then explicitly addresses ‘the reader’ (and auditor): unlike in pronounless THESIS, here a ‘text’ is speaking. SPEC SHEET’s multi-hued fable-tale, which recaptures and specifies THESIS, is told in smoothly shifted-into

³ During early listenings to the complete piano work of which ARGUMENT is a part, I suspected but couldn’t be certain—in my unperfect-pitched world—that the entire chromatic universe isn’t included; uncertain and a bit mystified since “chart”’s journey and trajectory are so all-encompassing; nonetheless ‘exhaustivity’ is not inexorably commensurate with such attributes; after further listening and score-checking, mystery solved and suspicion corroborated: “chart” makes up its travels in a 10-p.c. world. Moreover, ARGUMENT’s 6+ minutes length is just about identical to the time it takes in THESIS for Ben to perform the cululatively crescendoing down and up again single-double word unspooling.

sections, each manifest by distinct timbre, tempo, and descriptive mode, as the 'protagonists' venture out, progress, and transmute. In no way is their end their beginning.

On first hearing, hints of THESIS are elusive, but once caught onto, affinities are almost obvious.. As SPEC SHEET opens, the narrator speaks of "the word"—"abounding about in a spate...[of] unrequited referentiality...inconsolate...alone...repeating its redundant refrain". "Word" (a sense maker, making sense), endowed with encreatured thinghood, ultimately is to encounter and confront "not-yet-bird" (a self maker, making self), a(nother) "singular creature...of estimable qualities" whose ornitho-morphized thing differs enormously from that of "inanimate ... inexperienced" 'word'. The narrator expends much breadth and breath and time describing the demeanor and characteristics of the approaching "whispering whirr", and contritely tells us of the "peculiar insufficiency of [the text/'author's'] vantage point", preventing his "access to that specific consciousness" within which the action takes place. Yet not only do word and bird meet, but insofar as this is a story with a happy end, they ultimately attach, 'acquire nuances', engage in "meaningful relation", enable 'reference', and become a whole new entity: "ordained together to be forevermore BIRD"; should they ever be detached, each will remain "forevermore" transformed: creaturesensesound/ soundsensecreature: "Living form become form of life..."

The ontogeny of reference is played out in the 'single-doubled-up word passage' in THESIS; an identical story is rhapsodically expressed in SPEC SHEET ("But whether it was written in the stars..."), where the protagonists—'who' in any other world of reference would belong to different classes of 'things'—are conceived of and act as equals, meaning having arisen from the consummate mating of sense/self/sound.

SPEC SHEET's first literary-stylistic foray spews Joycean puns and rhythms—more *Finnegans* than *Jabberwocky*.⁴ SPEC SHEET's polysyllabic, multi-referential, poetic, alliterative, descriptive wordplay is at times flashy, at times elegant, at times sassy:

"...in dismal retreat, selfhooded in shameful solitary habits.." (the word alone);
 "...a fleck of form..a fluttering downscendant shred of fuzz.." (an other approaches);
 "But whether it was written in the stars, or only on the wind, or emblazoned in chalk on the white glyphs..." ("word" bonds with the "thing of flight");
 "...consummating an act of referential miscegenation.." (each creates the identity of the other);
 "the cracks and the populace straining in hot pursuit.." (no comment)

SPEC SHEET treads and unfolds slowly, taking its time, traipsing through trails jam-packed with words and images; replete with pauses, timbral and volume change, and sing-songy tale telling (and THESIS is recalled); I can hear the gentle tweaking of Carroll's White Knight and deeper in wordplay re-entified as foreplay; one thing gradually approaching another, opposites attracting, each unaware of the other, one thing encroaching—albeit reciprocally—upon another; and then—after a longish discreet pause—in so many words, so to speak: it happens.



During those moments of 'consummation'—when "some antique fusion" is (re)enacted, when each confers meaning and identity upon the other, one becoming the other: bird/utterance↔bird/creature, "the named bearing the name...the name calling the named", when reference and meaning are (re)born—the narrator voice softens and mellows; song of ecstasy echoing love-making, puns receding—for the moment.



⁴ Toward the end of the Anna Livia Plurabelle chapter in *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce speaks of light and moon: "My chart shines high where the blue milk's upset", the 'sentence' which Ben took to name his piano piece from which ARGUMENT is taken.

The mood-music trajectory ebbs; text in 'narrator-persona' guise returns in prurient yellow-tabloid mode and speculates on a possible future scenario for this 'miscegenated' 'adulterous' "wordbird" sensesound/soundsense creature, an unmanageable and dangerous two-thinghooded entity, whose "progeny" might cause difficulties for "fastidious" language police who prefer to call a concord a chord. And with such speculation, the pun and games world turns Keystone-Kops-wacky-below-the-borscht-belt-corny and—to call "a spate a spate"—downright grungy.⁵ But the tale is done and the narrator, opportunely and abruptly, cuts himself off.

Just as ARGUMENT can be heard through an experience of THESIS, SPEC SHEET can be heard via the still-fresh pianosound of ARGUMENT. All throughout, subsequent sections attach to what there was, and soon the two-tinged referencing-meaning-attachment consummated in SPEC SHEET will resonate in RED HOOK—getting deeper into the heart and brain and body and soul of music—that is, language.

G. P.

The crossover into RED HOOK—suddenly new pianosound beginning that becomes Annette Sanders singing Irving Berlin's "Remember", unselfconsciously seductive. And then, stat!, whoosh!, prewar-postwar-DJ-Radioman, a with-it *persona*, comes on real strong blurbing that "Remember" is "the payoff on all" of THESIS-ARGUMENT-SPEC SHEET's highbrow thing-to-thing-consummating "purple burble". Street-mouthing, fast-moving, Brooklyn-centric, jive-talking deejay tells it like it was, with nary a pun nor a neologism: dialectal ("then I could ax how he does it") and slangy ("whiffed out on three and two on a nickel scroogie a mile outside"), composed with resonances of, and 1910s-1960s references to, jazz, pop, baseball, Tchaikowsky, Public (PS 45) Schooldays, modes of public transport, theater/ radio/movie celebs; fully loaded with a century's worth of 'current events' and local color.

More significantly, RED HOOK swerves into another realm, another take on 'meaning', on how: 'how a thing sounds is how a thing means', and how, in a song, Irving Berlin's "Remember" for instance, the way you say the words 'in music' is not only how the words sound but also how and what the words mean at the new, now, conjoined 'sensesound' music-moments. While the brittle surface of Mr. DJ's vernacular might not alert you to its depth, he talks straight talk, his thought process is right in focus⁶. He essentially relocates the issues from language-or-music to language-and-music: song, or inflected speech. The creation of particularities of (essentially verbal) meaning within interactive contexts, via words-with-music interaction, becomes obvious.

The move to RED HOOK from SPEC SHEET—physically enacted when CD 2 is switched to CD 3—is like crossing a bay or strait, with a sudden shift in ecology or culture. As in Indonesia, traveling eastwards from the island of Bali to the island of Lombok just across the Badung-Lombok Strait, where you've suddenly been transported from wet, tropical, super-fertile Asia to drier, desertlike, less fertile Australasia. RED HOOK 'speaks' about inseparabilities, about what song and its practitioners can do without metaverbal intervention, about song's supra-musical, supra-verbal modes of meaning, coming through—or despite—Mr. DJ's nonstop stream-of-consciousness jabber.

In breathless hyper-talk—once I get down from "Remember"—Mr. DJ lays it out: embellishing, elucidating, embodying, exemplifying. 'His' gapless talk-mode instantiates what he's enlightening us all about: how you "couldnt pry it apart with a tendollar toothpick..."; how he admires Old "honkyman" BERlin for 'taking a flyer' and putting together those "mickeymouse...lyrics,...those tinkertoy words" with that "...tin foil ...tune" and then coming up with "some meaning in them that no way was there before...making those licks talk like they knew their way in the dark"; he goes on and on, rapping on the theme, never letting up, telling us how it's like taking

⁵ "Calling a spate a spate." is a *Finnegans Wake* pun.

⁶ (a reminder for me to be on guard with respect to exteriors and interiors, a hot issue in current thought about biology vis-a-vis sexual/gender 'construction', destiny, and identity)

“some regular old words youd known all your life and make them sound like something youd never heard before” and when you say the words without the music it’s “like the meaning just took a powder ‘n’ left you in the lurch...” And even if you heard lots of these same old words as a kid, “when you’re a grownup and heard a lot of Berlin songs...they keep sounding moremore different than all the other words, like they pick up some new crud...”

So now, after quoting Ben’s-DJ jive-talk, I feel sheepish sliding back into my own voice, “know what I mean?” It’s like putting on heavy clothing, feeling a bit klutzy. But maybe I can soften the blow by returning to “Remember” which is where RED HOOK begins, its sweet ‘n tangy lyrics in 3/4 waltz-time, with rising “remember” nearly always heard as query—in opening and tag positions—, but never quite sounding exactly as it’s been, but then, at the close, when “remember” shifts into reproving declarative reverse, its everything—order, character, ‘part of speech’, nuance, and meaning—totally transforms. So if I wanted to recall “remember” apart from the whole song, each recollection would ‘mean’ something different, would have a unique identity and a unique reserved slot,⁷ and any conceivable speck of referentiality would emanate out of, and only out of, where in the song I am, a referentiality, a definition, an identity fully explicit, yet verbal descriptive utterances about such matters are often banal.

All of us have remembrances of how something sounds, of what something is, recollections retrievable with but the slightest sound-stimulus trigger, as in games some of us used to play: a pianist softly plays a r.h. middle C and a l.h. C two octaves lower and voila!, Beethoven’s “Appassionata”; another soft middle C, played by violas, takes me into the Adagietto from Mahler’s Symphony no. 5; a widespread, snappy and loud, e-minor chord in piano or harp, with or without winds, overlaid with G’s, and Shazam!—the opening of Stravinsky’s Symphony of Psalms throbs. The absolute specificity of sound is all the reference needed; how it sounds is what it means, which is what I get from RED HOOK; (and perhaps too what’s lurking about is the sense that music-language might be closer to body-language than it is to verbal-language, ‘because’ it’s possible to say that the former two expressive languages can easily convey their meanings intersubjectively and interpersonally without ‘benefit of’ the latter); but yet I (and Ben and you) still want and like to talk about ‘our’ music. Which helps me get into IVY, where the stage is taken by another of Ben’s invented *personnae*. But given the lingering resonances of Mr. DeeJay’s street-smarts savvy, IVY’s school-smarts Professor comes off as a plodder (and a bit of a wimp).⁸

Right at the outset, IVY’s *persona* (speaking his letter to a former, revered, mentor, or maybe even performing it in his head⁹) comes off as eager to remain respectful in his hierarchically subordinate position, almost obsequious, but at all times painfully sincere, compelled by his intellectual obligation to convey his deeply subversive qualms, desperately trying to think through and communicate his troubling perceptions on some matters that deeply concern him and, presumably, his old professor as well as the community which they—and many of us—inhabit. He addresses us in the collegial “we”, a locution scrupulously avoided elsewhere in this work, insulating himself from direct confrontation with his letter’s recipient. Everything about ‘his’ mode of inquiry—fastidious locutions, intellectualizing manner, scholarly analogies, multiple reformulations of a few points, conventional discursive-speech forms—is fixed in the timbre, rhythms, and breath in which he is performed and was imagined. (Of course, it’s intended to be experienced as heard; that’s part of how it’s ‘a music’.) To me, there’s a paradox, a duality which derive from IVY’s academic-surface-voice received within the context of Ben’s life and role within the ivied-academy; how Ben himself might then have been (and might

⁷ Balinese-Hindu regard their world and their place in it as being determined by in-tune- or out-of-tune-ness of the ‘coordinates’ *Desa*, *Kala*, *Patra*—place, time, situation—and so with “Remember”.

⁸ There’s little doubt that RED HOOK’s street-savvy DJ outsmarts and clobbers IVY-speaker, that DJ is the deeper brainier guy ‘despite’ his lack of academic credentials. The sense and clarity of DJ’s street-lingo seduces and charms, whereas Mr. IVY is clearly uneasy and strives to be correct. Moreover, ‘expectations’ are topsy-turvied, that is, would most of us expect Mr. DJ to be the head honcho in the deep-brains department?

⁹ That IVY is a letter escaped me for decades, notwithstanding obvious epistolary conventions at the opening: “It has been entirely too long since we were last in touch.” and at the close: “I await your response with intimate concern.”

still be) perceived by some members of The Academy to be speaking IVY 'in his own voice' (a subject which Ben mentions in his CD notes).

It's even possible that IVY fits the descriptive label 'rondo-sonata-andante-form-themes-and-variations movement', a traditional way of hearing it that epitomizes IVY's concerns—and its own problems in saying what it want to say—and, rather like the speaker's own *modus operandi*, covers many bases.¹⁰ Among IVY's leitmotifs are the solemn locutions: "I have been thinking..."; "rhetoric of discourse"; and varied references to creative work, such as "works of art" or "so-called works of art" or "Suigeneric objects of thought... objects of our interest". During this exegetical talk, the speaker implores us to consider contradictories that lie between 'our creative work', so "inexhaustibly various in color", and the "colorlessness of our...invariant... neutral... monochromatic... linguafrancic rhetoric of discourse". That he speaks to us about the potential benefits of diverse linguistic modes in a species of the "rhetoric of discourse" is part of the plot. IVY-speaker-*persona* almost collapses under the weight of his efforts to persuade all his recipients of the gravity of his mission: his (and Ben's and our) heavy concerns really do matter.

In order to be sure that he not only touches all bases but covers his ass all the way around, the speaker modifies and uses grammatical qualifiers to a caricatured fault. At every careful, fearful, ponderous step along the way, he makes every effort to be sure that his mentor, his colleagues, his students, his community, really really 'get' what he is so painstakingly trying to convey to them—and to himself:

"And how can we be persuaded by, assent to, disagree with, or correct, anything which merely is, even if what it merely is, is thought, but thought which has signally failed to address us in the rhetoric of discourse which we know how to receive, and in which we know how

to respond?"

"Perhaps we could even agree that in language of any degree of individuation, from outright plagiarism to total paraphrasability—and not excluding, certainly, any instances of the rhetoric of discourse—it is possible, depending on the circumstances and content of utterance, that something is being said."

Given such solicitude, a listener might be confused, or at least might worry whether what is being professed is really where the speaker is 'at'; the sentences are plausible but is this guy walking on the earth? And—with all of his disquietude about the vagueness and imprecision of the particular languages 'we' may find ourselves resorting to in the formulation of analyses and descriptions, or his anxiety that if we find ourselves helpless to formulate within "the common rhetoric of discourse an intelligible duplicate of what we have received" we would then need to acknowledge our inability to "verify...to identify what, in fact, was there to be understood, or even whether anything was."—the speaker is, according to his own fervent confession, in a bind.

His bind is deep, about our music. How is it that we all speak about what we evidently value most deeply, those "suigeneric objects^ inexhaustibly rich in color", so totally precise in their being yet so often rendered, described with the vernacular attributes of a Dust Bowl-abundances and plenitude transformed into disiccated wasteland; feasts are offered yet accounts suggest famine. How is it possible to speak of something whose very expression and identity derive from its being uttered in a 'language' other than our common language of intercommunication? How much am I, are you, willing to risk losing?

And then, listening split-personality-wise to himself as if in a Socratic dialogue, the speaker begins to question constraints and limitations 'self-imposed' on us all by our invented music-descriptive modes of verbal expression. As he gets into his own thought process, IVY-speaker considers the question "while we may not

¹⁰ Somewhere, Kierkegaard has said "When you label me, you negate me." In similar mode, Beckett has said: "The danger is in the neatness of identification."

speak as we perceive, we will soon enough be perceiving as we have spoken...description transforms the described". His codetta query reverberated back then (the 1970s), and still does:

"whether this neutral medium, this impartial arbiter of the issues of thought, this unprejudicial vehicle...is really so innocuous after all."

IVY likewise confronts us with predicaments not wholly peculiar to The Academy, but alas habitually experienced therein, perils intrinsic to institutional life: preoccupation with 'merit badges and Brownie points'; the power to influence others by means of our knowledge and our modes of "professional intercommunication"; and the relegation to basements or vacant lots or graveyards of so-called "purely intuitive" senses, and non-techie—"Are you serious?"—modes of thought and discourse.

A discursion: From Jim Randall's "Are you serious?"

Commentary #9B:

The following three corollaries are apocryphal imitations of the original:

1. "composing sucks"
2. "performing sucks"
3. "professing sucks"

From Commentary #4A:

2. "you're not trying to dazzle us with your superlative and inimitable gifts"
3. "you're not confirming for those who Can't their special dependence on those who Can"

Commentary #5B:

"Outrage lingers over 'the threat to treat their sacred cows as bunfiller.'

Others cool it; hang tight with their pet cows and veggies."

From Commentary #9B:

3. "professing sucks" ¹¹

IVY—heard after hypercharged RED HOOK, after the accumulation of creation myths of consciousness, reference, utterance, language, and music; of attachings, consummations, and inseparabilities—almost throws a curve. IVY confronts us with the possibility of heavy-duty disparities lurking between music-talk and language-talk. Many of us were or are still gripped by the illusion that in our efforts to talk about music, some sort of one-to-one relationship, some sort of one-to-one referentiality between what is heard and what is spoken is not only possible but desirable. In our line of work it seems to fit the job description, else why do so many of us get slammed for playing an entire movement, if not a complete work of music, in class, and maybe not even talk about it afterwards?

A Supplement: In 1981, a few years after "Language as a Music", Ben wrote "If I am a musical thinker", a text 'in his own voice' in which introspections of music thought & expression, and language thought & expression, of our self-created social & musical identities and our specialist *personnae* are contemplated anew.

"The reification of competence and skill enables us to substitute the visible tokens approval, admiration, and status for the non-negotiable needs interest and expression....That web of structures which we erect for our own protection may be strangulating us....We need to think about our thought to salvage our expression; for we need our expression for our salvation. People are always asking what music expresses. They do not so often ask what language expresses. But they both express the same thing; the whole person, the whole group of people—warped this way, filtered that way, focused so, angled thus ... the raging against extinction of ourselves as person, shaped to a fine point of articulation, for ourselves, for each other." ¹²

¹¹ Excerpts from Jim Randall's "Are you serious?" (Oct.-Dec. 1984), first appeared in *News of Music*, May 1985 (in Jim's inimitable southpaw manuscript); the complete text (in machinescript) has been published in *Perspectives on Musical Aesthetics*. Many of us have been inspired by Jim's genius for composing/expressing profound music-thought in "casual conversation", as well as in sleazo-grunge, mode.

¹² Ben Boretz: *If I am a musical thinker*, published first in *Perspectives of New Music*, 20, FW81/SF82; then in bookform by Station Hill Press, 1985; OPEN SPACE 1995. The confluence of text and graphics is extraordinary.

“Language ,as a Music” exists and breathes within uniquely composed reverberant spans: step-by-step / sound-by-sound multirhythmic THESIS-ARGUMENT soundwords morphing into and out of one another; multivocal resonances and textures of multitempoed pun-fabled SPEC SHEET, upbeat jivey-slangy RED HOOK, and steady serious-sober IVY; each movement ending elsewhere than where it began; each moment, each movement bearing down heavily on what comes next; multiform linguistic sound modes accumulatively progressing—verbal soundsense, music sensesound, verbal-music sensesoundsense; heard/time-ordered utterances essentially dependent on external reference for meaning; heard/time-ordered utterances characterologically undependent on external reference, mysteriously contented with their own, internal as-it-happens, ever-changing phenomena as reference for meaning; so how to speak about them?

At IVY’s close, EPILOGUE, heavy as expression, as listening experience, pulse slower than heartbeat, massive timeflow progression of one short phrase at a time, heard silences throb within and without (it is possible to love one’s self looking at and in its spacey bare pages), darkness, mystery, intimacy draw me in. Ben is speaking to us. I am, you are, “you”, and for the first time, Ben is “I”.

“Listen:”

command-speaks Ben quickly; a 30” silence follows, the longest intra-movement silence in the entire work: silence(s) trajecting time to reflect? to improvise?; silent time composed to wait, to hear fermatas and rests preceding what comes next. (Just what does it take for one body, one mind to listen to and get into the rhythms, the sounds, the silences, the flow of another?) Silences, blank pages, never easy for audiences or readers; silences all too often a signal for ahems and coughing; blank pages a signal for page turning; Ben’s UCSD audience is attentively and remarkably still. ¹³ Each “Listen:” is singular; each sounds-of-silence-span, placement, timbre, page-configuration is distinct, as is what follows each. ¹⁴ (In print, EPILOGUE opens with a visual cue, a neat graphic designed by Ben: imagine a snippet of 5-line music staff notation, page-center, topped and mirror-bottomed with fermatas.)

Nowhere in the entire work does Ben suggest any particular linguistic mode—suggest as in tell which is best, which to choose—within which to render or shape our own discourse about music; each and every utterance in the work is; not how do you and I speak of music, but ‘in and on whose terms’ can/does music speak to us? “Listen:”: both projectively: ‘Listen to this:’, and, unmediatedly, ‘Listen:’ Not as an idea or a commentary about listening, but an instruction for immediate behavior—just listen!—at this very moment of receiving this very piece. Listen, not ‘how to’ or ‘what to listen for’ but: “Listen:”

Listen:

you can hear an image

or

you can hear a symbol.

¹³ John Cage’s score of *Haikai*, a work for gamelan composed in 1989, includes a spate of fermatas which separate singularly textured, ‘toned’, and orchestrated events. Cage asks one player to provide visual hand cues—palm up, palm down—for the fermatas, a body language which cues in players and clues in an audience. No doubt, the position of Ben’s body after he said “Listen:” and “or” spoke similarly to his UCSD audience. (In my crypto mode I’ll mention the obvious, that ‘listen’ and ‘silent’ are anagrams of one another.)

¹⁴ During a recent afternoon stroll on the boulevard I spied a billboard, monster white letters on a midnight blue background: “It’s dark on purpose / so just listen.— Lawrence Raab, www.poetsanonymous.com.” (Check out the site!) Insofar as I was preoccupied with EPILOGUE, “so just listen” spoke directly to me, way up there looking down on a Shell gas station, a mix typical of L.A.’s crazily contradictory cultural and streetscene ambiances. But three days later, the billboard had been changed to an *hp* (printer) ad, saying: “True to the original.” Today is not yesterday, tomorrow may be a word but it’s never real, and I am not a butterfly dreaming.

Rules are not laid down. Coercion is neither expressed nor implied.

“...listening is primal composition...”¹⁵

An aside: Several years prior to L, aaM, Ben was trying “image” on; “musical image” multi-sensorily expressed, imagery with no world-outside referentiality. Images/imagery whose meaning and being are as real as our senses, our minds, our thoughts, our sensibilities, our experiences, our sensations are real.

“...does a musical image incandesce because it flashes forth by a twinkle of surface the full depth of the pool of reference on which it floats?...the pool reshaped as twinkles unveil newfolds...time, shaped over time...If the reference is the surface, then the incandescence never glows.”¹⁶

As the text’s speaker, here in the room with us, Ben’s own image/symbol bias, if not instantly apparent, becomes progressively obvious. His “image” voice is breathy, raised and open; after he says “symbol” his voice lowers and closes. EPILOGUE progresses, I am led down deeper in, differences between “Listen:” choices accumulate and unveil, from “you can hear [an image or a symbol]...” to “Listen to: (an image of ... not, to a symbol of); the lake turns itself over in order to get at what’s undermost. “image”: retrieved tangible incarnation of our “Suigeneric objects of thought...”; “symbol”: recreated instance, translated image-token of our “Suigeneric objects of thought...”; “image...creating time as sound of meaning,” inviting us to cherish, to cognize each emergent attached-to-its-selves soundwave moment; “symbol”, always not heard as itself, but tick by tick, in and out, “language [and music] vanishing in terminal utterances...”; “image”: whose accumulated experienced heavily indexed identity is its meaning.

Charles Stein writes:¹⁷

The mind
of music
thinks a world
compelling where
words’ worlds
fail us.

And mind and world
both seem
as music is.

I wait upon my own intent
to hear what music worlds
when silence holds.

Now the sound
exceeds all sense—

and space resumes.

Toward EPILOGUE’s close, Ben says:

¹⁵ Ben Boretz: *If I am a musical thinker*.

¹⁶ “Mirage” (3/76), in “Of This or That”, manuscript.

¹⁷ Charles Stein: “An Essay on Music” (from Essays 1, 3, & 4, in *The OPEN SPACE magazine*, issue 1. I particularly delight in ‘worlds’ as both noun and verb.

“Listen

to an image of
of thought presented
asking only to be
received,”

“asking only” is really groovy, music—wherever she’s come from—can’t speak back; a bit like Plato’s Socrates, in *Phaedrus*, bemoaning the invention of written words which “...if you question them...they always say one and the same thing...when ill-treated or unjustly reviled...Every word, when once it is written, is bandied about...and has no power to protect or help itself.” Two decades after “Language as a Music”, referring to metaphorical, theoretical, socio-ideological, *et alia* discourse about music Ben says: “[such discourse] transfer into music itself the very characteristics and functions...they attribute to it...As music, music has to be its own interior discourse, its own, only, fully concrete metalanguage.”¹⁸ Ben’s discourse-signpost is not: ‘I can’t go on.’ Rather it’s: Go on. Proceed imaginatively, attentively, and passionately.

Detour B1: John Berger, in *Ways of Seeing*, speaks of the ways in which we see and look. The “manmade” images he speaks of—graffiti, drawings, paintings, photographs, advertisements—tap into our sense of sight and seeing, where seeing “establishes our place in the surrounding world”: “Every image embodies a way of seeing...Images were first made to conjure up the appearances of something that was absent. Gradually it became evident that an image could outlast what it represented.” Nonetheless, and to demonstrate the power of words, Berger presents a small black and white reproduction of a painting, first without, then with, an explanatory label, and he says: “It is hard to define exactly how the words have changed the image, but undoubtedly they have. [With the words] the image now illuminates the sentence...the words quote the painting to confirm their own verbal authority.” Berger’s “essays without words”—oil painting reproductions, photographs, and advertisements—are commensurate with an absence of advance or subsequent commentary during a music-listening episode, an absence quite rare in the experience of most music listeners. Also compelling are Berger’s critiques of the sinister influence of Publicity, and the exploitations of Capitalism.¹⁹

Detour B2: Might I—as did Jorge Luis Borges’ Pierre Menard, in order to ‘get’, to ‘have’ the *Don Quixote* (ca. 1605) of Miguel de Cervantes—no, not replay, recompose, or respeak the work but rather—produce the work, “*the Quixote itself*. ...word for word, line for line”; could I ‘produce the adagio movement of Mozart’s D major String Quintet, K. 593 *itself*, note for note, nuance for nuance’?²⁰ In whose voice and in whose name? Borges writes: “Cervantes’ text and Menard’s are verbally identical, but the second is almost infinitely richer.” Whoa, I gasped!, and then marvelled at Borges’ inventive comparisons. In this *ficcione*, Borges examines post-modernist assumptions, that “all epochs are the same” and are thus interchangeable; he fully engages me in possibilities of reading suggested by ‘his’ Pierre Menard’s *personnaed* ‘production’.

Detour B3: Ben’s “Experiences With No Names” probes the “ontology of musical experience” and the ways in which “discourse and theorizing and describing (had earlier on been understood by Ben) as ontologically generative for ...what is captured, what is defined, what is conceived, and what is experienced...” in and as music. He then speaks of “ontological gaps among what is captured, what is

¹⁸ “Music, as a Music” in *The OPEN SPACE magazine*, issue 1.

¹⁹ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, London: Penguin Books, 1972.

²⁰ Jorge Luis Borges, “Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote”, in *Labyrinths*, Selected Stories & Other Writings, 1962. Also see Arthur Margolin’s “Mozart’s D Major String Quintet, k 593 2nd movement mm 54-56” in *Perspectives of New Music*, 18, FW79/SS80.

defined, what is conceived, and what is experienced.” But then too therein, he invents and speaks several music-discursive possibilities.²¹

Ben’s quest is ontological and epistemological: he seeks to know what music *is*, how it ‘means’; how does music, his experience and his thought about music come about? Where and how does music lodge within him, within me, within you; in how many and in which ways can he compose his discourses and intercommunicate thoughts about his composed-time-sound expressive phenomena? (Can I, creature of verbal habit, totally renounce discourse, reconcile myself to silence? To (just) imagine and listen. Do I really want to?)

∞

“Language ,as a Music”, intended to be heard as music is heard, inchoate at the start, evolves into ever soniferous realms of language/music utterances, worlds and modes of linguistic expression and expressiveness, worlds of soundsense, of intense inquiry: “to be: is: to mean.” In his own voice at the close, Ben’s sound—in a here-space—is just barely there.

“I, have been listening, for something to speak, ...

so that I
may speak
to
you.”

As before, and in allways: here, not there / now, not then. I wait and listen. Music gets at me, I can be possessed by it, at times I speak of or listen to music as if it comes from another planet, untouched by human hands, I can become 'that' music, it can happen to me, to us. Music, in Ben's words "can come and go like thunderstorms....Music, received as music, might still be...enriched and suffused by everything else in your life, your history, your world...being itself unspecifiable in its transcendent metamorphosis of 'sounds' into 'a sound'. ...Music fills me full of things to say, which I can not have a way to say; I am, ineluctably, completely,...on my own: alone with music." ²²

Alone perhaps but still always listening to how others sound and speak, listening to speak of and recreate those experiences which illuminate for him being in and of, meaning in and of, interior and exterior, real and imaginary.

In “Language ,as a Music” Ben has composed soundworlds so as to enable himself to imagine beginnings, to question how things mean, how people mean, how languages do and can mean, how to make the most out of experience, how to find ways—genuine, singular, explicit—to actively imagine, compose, image, and speak of those many expressive languages in and of, and yet-to-be in and of, a world of times and sound and meaning.

October/November/December 1999

²¹ The text, written in 1991 for a conference on interdisciplinary perspectives of music held in Calgary, Canada, has been published in *Perspectives of New Music*, 30/1, W92.

²² “Music, as a Music”. As I read these words of Ben’s, Mahler-Rückert-sound pours in, from opening low harp B-flat/English horn B-flat to C, to voice at the close: “Ich leb’ allein..... in meinem Lieben..., in meinem Lied.”

TOO MANY NEW CDS: MINI REVIEWS

Warren Burt

JOHN CAGE: BIRDCAGE (EMF CD 013 from Electronic Music Foundation <http://www.emf.org>).

Despite his reputation as a pioneering figure in electronic music, the major electronic works of John Cage have been hard to get. Of these, only Cartridge Music (1961), Roaratorio (1979), Williams Mix (1952), and Variations IV (1967) are currently easily available on CD. Birdcage (1973) is the product of three intense days of work by Cage and Joel Chadabe, in which tapes of birds, environmental sounds, and Cage chanting his own Mureau (1971) were subjected to electronic fragmentation and processing. The result is 12 tapes to be played on 8 tape recorders through 8 loudspeakers in "a space in which people are free to move and birds to fly." This stereo realization reveals the timbral richness and challenging structure of the result. I find the result fascinating, beautiful, and at times, just plain goofy. Your opinions may differ, but Birdcage is indisputably an important work, both on its own, and as a part of Cage's evolution from the complex to the simple which was occurring just at the time this work was composed.

HERBERT BRÜN: LANGUAGE, MESSAGE, DRUMMAGE (EMF CD 00614); **WAYFARING SOUNDS** (EMF CD 00624); **MUTATIS MUTANDIS** (EMF CD 00634); **SAWDUST** (EMF CD 0064). (Four CDs from Electronic Music Foundation. <http://www.emf.org>)

Herbert Brün is more than just a composer of computer music - he is, in large measure, the current representative of a dissident Germanic tradition which views art as an ethical and moral force, rather than as just the play of sense perceptions. His views are no facile modernism, easily knocked down by the Sancho Panzas of contemporary critical theory, but constitute one of the most rigorous bodies of challenging intellectual engagement going

today. So what is his music like? Diverse and rigorous is the answer. On these four CDs are most of his works, ranging from his neo-classical Five Pieces for Piano, op. 1 (1940) to his 1997 work for viola and tape, on stilts among ducks, which combines intricacy and seriousness, sarcasm and whimsy. His Project Sawdust pieces, which involved programming computer sounds from the waveform up, and observing and exploring the results, take up a complete CD to themselves. These pieces are some of the crunchiest, raspiest sounding music ever composed, and Brün makes the point that there is a profound political difference between composing a situation, or a set of rules, and observing the result; and composing every element of a piece with total control every step of the way. These pieces definitely are the result of the former, experimental attitude. There are a number of classic pieces on these CDs as well.

Generations of electronic musicians have been raised on Brün's Futility 1964, with its alternation of advanced sounds and fragments of a nihilist text; and early algorithmic classics Non Sequitur VI (1966) and Soniferous Loops (1964), both for instrumental ensemble and tape. These four CDs, which cover almost half a century of uncompromising questing by one of our era's most penetrating minds, are simply essential listening.

STELARC & RAINER LINZ: FRACTAL FLESH

(NMA CD 9902 from NMA Publications; PO Box 5034, Burnley, Vic. 3121 Australia) Stelarc and Rainer Linz have been performing interactive body-based electronic performances for over a decade. The most recent phase of this has involved the use of body sensors providing information to midi translation devices, which in turn control digital synthesizers.

Additionally, they've developed a means of scanning the Internet for sound files, which can also be inserted into the performances. In some of the performances, remote audiences can see a map of Stelarc's body over the net, and by pressing certain spots on the map, can cause a low voltage to stimulate one of his muscles, forcing him to move involuntarily. These movements are then detected by the sensors, and the control signals resulting from this tell the digital synths what to do. So here we have a remote control performance

system where the actions of several dispersed audience members produce sound in ways such that none of them can be aware of the totality of their actions, and that further, is mediated by the way Stelarc responds to the signals they apply to his body. This is systems composition of either an elegant and refined, or a frightening kind, depending on your orientation. I tend to favour the elegant and refined interpretation, but I can understand others, with a greater emotional investment in the notion of individual control and autonomy, being a bit puzzled by it. This CD consists of 8 excerpts from various live performances. The electronic sounds are fairly unprocessed (Rainer doesn't use all that many instrumental samples), often pretty crunchy, and they match the mechanical sounds of Stelarc's prosthetic third arm device. Additionally, in some of the Parasite tracks, various found sounds pulled off the Internet are mixed in. Track four, from the Pittsburgh performance, is fairly heavily techno-oriented, because that's what the majority of sound files the search engine found on the Internet that day were. In track five, another Parasite performance, the irregular clicks and pulses coming from Stelarc's body nicely subvert the regular rhythms of the found-object techno music fragments. It's a fascinating CD, one that repays a number of listenings. Highly recommended.

LEO KUPPER: WAYS OF THE VOICE (Pogus CD 21018-2)

New York based record producer (and composer) Al Margolis is dedicated to bringing lesser known and historical electronic music figures to light. He has already produced CDs of early works of Pauline Oliveros (Pogus 21012-2), Rune Lindblad (Pogus 21011-2 & Pogus 21014-2) and others. His most recent release is a CD of collaborative pieces between Belgian composer Leo Kupper and Brazilian singer/ improviser Anna Maria Kieffer. The collaborations, which span a 16 year period, use Kieffer's amazing voice as material for further elaboration (mostly using granular synthesis techniques) and also for the lovely melodic quality of her voice. The work deals with many aspects of Brazilian culture, from popular prayers, set for two voices and vocal fragments in the first piece, thru the sounds of

the rainforest, used in Anamak and Annazone, the second and fourth pieces, to an electronic fragmentation and reconstruction of her voice in Amkea, the third piece, of which the third movement Recit 2 has some ravishing vocal textures and treatments. The musical material of Anamak additionally, derives from Kieffer's research into the music of the indigenous peoples of Brazil. An absorbing, beautiful, and extremely listener-friendly album.

ROBERT PAREDES: FORGETTING AND REMEMBERING (Innova CD 528)

<http://www.composersforum.org>)

Those with long memories will probably recall Robert Paredes' years in Australia (1984-86) with fondness. As a composer, performer, and musical thinker, he had a great impact on the Melbourne scene. While here, he produced, with the help of the ABC, a remarkable tape work for 7 clarinets, called Forgetting and Remembering, in which each day for a week, he recorded a 30 minute clarinet improvisation on to one track of an 8 track tape. Each subsequent recording was made without having listened to any whole (or part) of any previous recording in order that he might be able to access the past solely through memory. The result is a strong statement of an experimental aesthetic in which the overall sound of a piece is the result of the processes used to produce it, as well as the result of any moment-to-moment decisions the composer might make. Later, in Iowa City (where he still lives), he produced an incredible series of seventeen electronic works, entitled (Speakers), which further explore ideas of process, physicality, and a penetrating inquiry into the nature of performance and composition. As well as Forgetting and Remembering, this long overdue CD has the last of this series: #17 (Speakers): [in every moment {of} decay]..., a half-hour work for "the sounds of analog electronics, clarinet, tenor sax, kalimba and assorted noise makers in which "decay"... informs the music at levels large and small." It's a large, absorbing, and dense work, which builds energy only to give way to a steady-state energy, which to me sounds like one of the longest slow releases of energy I've ever heard in a piece. Paredes work continues to

be, after all these years, intense, probing, and unique.

**ROBERT ASHLEY: YOUR MONEY MY LIFE
GOODBYE.**(Lovely Music CD LCD 1005

<http://www.lovely.com>)

There are other people working in the field of contemporary opera and music theatre, but in my opinion, none of them combine technology, theatre and conceptual thought with the adroitness of Robert Ashley. Over the years he has produced an amazing stream of music theatre works, each of which has its own unique identity. His latest release from Lovely Music is the 1998 *Your Money My Life Goodbye*, a satirical and sordid tale of the mysterious death in prison of a Ms. Ona, a disgraced financier, whose husband (very much alive) is a spy. This is an absolutely amazing opera. No one but Ashley would have the audacity to construct an entire opera (more than an hour long) on a single repeating rhythm and an incredibly slowly changing pulsing chord progression. But he does, and it works, and the results are absolutely rivetting. The electronic timbres (except for the voices, all the sound material is electronic) are worth listening to in their own right - Ashley uses the most commercial of electronic equipment, but produces results that would pleasantly surprise people from both the commercial record production world and the "avant-garde" academic computer music world.

GARY VERKADE: WINDED with compositions by KENNETH GABURO, WARREN BURT & PHILIP BLACKBURN (Innova 524

<http://www.composersforum.org>)

MUSICWORKS 75 - with compositions by KENNETH GABURO, HOPE LEE, LINDA TILLERY, PAULINE OLIVEROS, & SCOTT JOHNSON (Musicworks, 179 Richmond St. W. Toronto, Ont. Canada M5V 1V3;

<http://www.musicworks-mag.com>)

(Some people might consider my writing of this review - in which I have a piece on one of the CDs, and was involved in producing the other, to be a conflict of interest. If you're among them - yeah, yeah! Don't read any further. Otherwise, read on. :-))

Kenneth Gaburo was one of the masters of experimental composition in the late 20th century. Unfortunately, his work has been incredibly difficult to find. Finally, this situation, with the assistance of a small band of dedicated people (yours truly included) is being remedied. The above two CDs, which contain material previously unavailable, are now augmented by a just-released third CD, of Gaburo's works for tape solo, released on Pogus. Over his career, Gaburo began 11 pieces for instruments and tape - the Antiphony series - of which eight (1-4, 6, 8- 10) were completed. Antiphony X (Winded) for organ and tape is the last in the series, and it's an undisputed masterpiece. A complex, searing half hour of high energy organ and tape sounds, its performed with incredible energy by Gary Verkade, a virtuoso of the first rank. Also on the CD are two other pieces, both made by students of Gaburo, yours truly, and Philip Blackburn, and both of which are, in their own different ways, as uncompromising as Gaburo's piece. Both of these pieces also deal with the sound of Gaburo's voice, in homage to his concern with the voice as the primal expressive mark of individual being. In all modesty, I think the pieces by myself and Philip Blackburn are pretty good, but the real reason you'll find this CD essential to own is Antiphony X, one of the high points of experimental music composition in the 1990s.

Does anyone out there, by now, still not know about Musicworks? Originating in Toronto, it's just about the most informative new music publication around. Every issue is crammed with articles, reviews, interviews, and each issue comes with a CD. I find it absolutely essential reading, devouring every word of every issue. If you aren't already a subscriber to Musicworks, you should be. In the current issue, #75, there is an extensive interview with Philip Blackburn and myself about Kenneth Gaburo, which provides a lot of information about him. The treasure in this issue, though, are the four previously unreleased Gaburo works contained on the CD. Of those, Antiphony II (Variations on a Poem of Cavafy) will be of most interest to readers of Chroma. This is a recording of a live performance of a piece for 16 voice choir and two channel tape from 1962. The quality of

the tape is a bit distorted, but nonetheless, the essence of the piece comes across well. The relation of the choir to the tape is complex, and virtuosic. This is a more relaxed piece than *Antiphony X*, but not any less serious. The CD also contains a few minutes of the *Hiroshima Day 1987* Andrew McLennan - ABC - Kenneth Gaburo collaboration *Testimony*, which, 13 years later, emerges as a moving document of people's refusal to accept the way that the military and governments were viewing them (as expendable). Also on the CD are several other pieces of interest to computer music makers and fans - Hope Lee's lovely *Voices in Time* for chamber ensemble and tape; Pauline Oliveros on accordion and live computer processing with Pauline's Solo; and Scott Johnson's witty *Listen*, for sampled voices and instruments, in which the vocal contours of a simple, common phrase are developed for a rock/jazz based ensemble.

RICHARD MAXFIELD & HAROLD BUDD:

THE OAK OF THE GOLDEN DREAMS (New

World Records CD 80555-2 New World Records,

701 Seventh Ave. New York, NY 10036 USA.

<http://www.newworldrecords.org>)

Richard Maxfield (1927-1969) was one of the true pioneers of electronic music. Harold Budd, now better known for his ravishing ambient music projects, has a far more varied musical past than one might suspect. This CD is a reissue of two classic solo LPs which appeared on the even-then hard-to-get Advance Recordings label. The first, of Maxfield's music, has four very different pieces, all of which are prophetic in their own way. His *Pastoral Symphony* from 1960 is vintage early analog electronics, exciting music made well before the advent of voltage control. *Bacchanale* (1963) is one of the purest expressions of Fluxus in music, with its mixes of world music (recordings supplied by Henry Cowell!), improvisations and beat poetry readings all juxtaposed. *Piano Concert for David Tudor* (1961) is an extremely dark and sparse piece, influenced by Cage, but with its own clear voice. *Amazing Grace* (1960) is probably the first tape piece using loops of a Black American English. Its more popular

descendents include Steve Reich's *Come Out and It's Gonna Rain*. Harold Budd's encounter with the Buchla Synthesizer in 1970 produced some extremely minimal, but gritty and hard edged works. *The Oak of the Golden Dreams* (1970) is 19 minutes of modal improvisation over a raw sawtooth electronic drone. I get the feeling that Budd was using the Buchla touch keyboard for this piece. On this keyboard, you could trigger off notes simply by sliding your fingers over its surface, resulting in "sheets of sound" (ala Coltrane!). This is quite a different way of performing than depressing notes on a keyboard, and produces different musical results. *Coeur D'Orr* (1969) is a piece for improvising saxophone and tape. The tape is two tracks of sustained chords on an organ, and saxophonist Charles Orena makes extended modal melodies, again, sheets of sound, within the harmonic world of the drone. This piece is probably the first in which Budd discovers his ability to put together ravishing worlds of timbre. Again, another CD that is valuable both for its historical nature and for the lovely music it has.

MARY LEE ROBERTS: 6 COMPOSITIONS

(Open Space CD 9; Open Space; 29 Sycamore Drive;

Red Hook, NY 12571, USA

<http://www.the-open-space.org>)

Mary Lee Roberts is a composer whose work is grounded in a love of nature and an interest in psychological process. This new CD of hers contains five computer pieces, and one chamber work for instruments and voice. Some of the computer work is narrative, in an oblique sort of way, and some of it is abstract. An example of the narrative work is *Eusebio Consumed*, which deals with an imaginary analysis by Sigmund Freud of Schumann's *Eusebius!* Granular textures, harmonic and inharmonic spectra, slowed down voices and music boxes follow each other with an almost impressionist sense of harmony and structure. Even without the programmatic context, it's a solid piece - with it, the sounds have a richer environment to resonate in. *Things Fall Apart* is a piece that pulls apart a vocal sound, juxtaposing granulation, long time-stretches, digital clicks, etc. to produce a haunting sense of a voice being gradually disembodied. Many of the pieces feature textures of

inharmonic partials which have a kind of disturbing rumble underneath them - I was especially struck by this in *Winter Cranes*. *Crossing the Salmon*, a setting of a text Roberts wrote while in the Salmon River country of central Idaho, is a lovely dialogue between a soprano and an instrumental ensemble. Although there are similarities between this work and the computer works (in ideas of timbral matching, harmonic choice, etc.) what impresses me most is the sheer difference in sound between Roberts' computer work and her instrumental writing. It's as if the works came from two different worlds, and maybe (as more and more of us involved in computer music have less and less to do with the world of classical music performance) they do. *White Writing*, Roberts' most recent work on the CD, uses a varied palette - lush drone-like textures alternate with what sound like short wave sounds and the voices of some favourite late-night radio talk show hosts.

HENRY GWIAZDA: noTnoTesnoTrhyThms

(innova 505 <http://www.composersforum.org>)

To say that Henry Gwiazda makes collages is a bit like saying the Beethoven is a composer who uses tonality. Gwiazda makes the most elegant collage work I know. The quality of sounds used are stunning, the choices of when and where to place sounds, both spatially and structurally, are immaculate, and the works are both immediately engaging, and continually fascinating on repeated hearings. This CD contains 7 works of his, written between 1989 and 1995. Additionally, the last two works on the CD use virtual audio, so that, if you take the time to set up your listening environment properly, you'll hear the sound in amazing 3D definition. I resisted doing this for months, but when I finally did it (moving speakers is hard work!), I was amazed. I had been cynical about the possibilities of virtual audio before this, but *buzzingreynold'sdreamland*, Gwiazda's speaker-oriented virtual audio piece, convinced me about the compositional possibilities of this technology. This is a piece in which space is used compositionally. The beauty of the collages in the first part of the CD, such as the stunning *MANEATINGCHIPSLISTENINGTOAVIOLIN*, is here greatly augmented and extended by the

ability to place each sound in a 3D world in front of, and, in some cases, behind the listener, and to give each sound its own trajectory in space. And he does it without the need for multi-speaker sound systems. It's true that the effect can only be heard by one person at a time, but that's how most CD listening takes place anyway. The headphones-only virtual audio piece *theFluteintheworldtheFluteistheworld* features the electronic flute playing of Ann LaBerge, and creates a mesmeric textured world of sonic memory. In all the works, in fact, the quality of sound, from incredibly close miked sounds (which remind me of the glow of hyper-realistic airbrush paintings), which almost breathe on you, to almost inaudible distant wisps and shards of sound, does much to create the incredibly attractive surface of this music, and the sense that we're observing a kind of interior world of sound, where someone's psychological state is being delineated. And even though there are plenty of "musical" sounds in this collage-based work, Gwiazda manages to pull off the trick (at least to my ears) of not letting them dominate the texture - they truly do become just other elements in his overall texture, no more or less important than the "environmental" sounds that he also uses. As such, this work poses a challenge, I hope, to those who would create a rigid distinction between the worlds of "music" and "sound" composition. If you're at all attracted to the contemporary extensions of the "musique concrete" aesthetic, you should become acquainted with this CD.

SUSAN FRYKBERG: ASTONISHING SENSE (OF BEING TAKEN OVER BY SOMETHING FAR GREATER THAN ME)

(earsay es 98003 - earsay productions; #308 - 720 Sixth St.; New Westminster, BC Canada V3L 3C5

<http://www.earsay.com>) New Zealander

Susan Frykberg spent many years in Vancouver before returning to New Zealand. Her work includes, in her words, "a number of "environments" in which stories (often mythological) of women's lives are the "context" for her music." This is true of all the works on this CD, and gives it a unique conceptual flavour. That is, this CD can be listened to for its narrative content, or it can be

listened to for its sonic qualities (her command of granular synthesis and other techniques is impressive), or for the interaction of the two. As well, the CD is a showcase for two of the best extended-vocals performers on the North American West Coast - Kare Hammett-Vaughan and DB Boyko. Mother Too, the opening work, is a tour de force for Hammett-Vaughan, whose exceptional multiphonics were the highlight of the piece for me. Insect Life is another piece for voice and tape. In this piece, Frykberg has the vocalist attempt to match environmental sounds. DB Boyko's performance here is riveting. Birth / Rebirth Bearing Me is more of a pure computer piece. Granular synthesis is used to deconstruct Frykberg's own voice speaking the phrase Born in Hastings. The textures are quite engaging - it's clearly granular synthesis being used, but I never got the sense that I was listening to a technological cliché. The most serious parts of the CD are three pieces from Frykberg's ongoing Audio Birth Project, where she interviews her sisters and her mother on the process of giving birth. The pieces on this CD are Margaret, for tape alone; Astonishing Sense of Being Taken Over by Something Far Greater Than Me for violin and tape (Margaret's voice again forms the basis for part of the tape part); and I Didn't Think Much About It for piano and tape, and featuring the voice of Frykberg's mother Pat. The violin part in Astonishing Sense is lovely. Superbly played by Nancy di Novo, it emerges from sonic textures, and soars above them. It's a very Romantic piece - its honestly emotional and heartfelt, without using conservative forms or idioms. Andrew Czink's piano playing in I Didn't Think Much About It is also impressive. He matches the quality of the fragmented granular textures on the tape with the greatest of ease. I found the three pieces from the Audio Birth Project on this CD to be musically intriguing and emotionally satisfying, and I look forward to more. The CD concludes on a lighter note - the trans-continental Sue and Kathy Telecompose Across the Country, a piece composed on, or maybe that should be, in spite of, the Internet with Montreal composer Kathy Kennedy. There are recordings of Frykberg and Kennedy's voices in the piece, as well as them being played (in a radio-drama sense) by DB Boyko and Kare Hammett-Vaughan. Machine sounds, fax

sounds, printer sounds, and texts that lament the technical difficulties of working with the funky and inadequate early Internet form the substance of the piece. I got many a knowing chuckle out of this piece. Frykberg is a talented composer and a great story-teller. I look forward to more of her work.

ANNEA LOCKWOOD: BREAKING THE SURFACE (Lovely Music LCD 2082

<http://www.lovely.com>) Annea Lockwood, originally from New Zealand, but based in the USA since the mid-70s, continues to be one of the most far reaching conceptual thinkers in contemporary music. This is a very profound CD, and it's also one that's extremely hard listening. It demands exact attention if its qualities are to be appreciated. There are only two pieces on the CD, each 25 minutes long, and each for a male voice with accompaniment of environmental sounds. Both pieces concern transformations; in the first, the transformation of consciousness that takes place in shamanism, in the second, the transformation of death. Duende, the first work, is a 1997 collaboration between vocalist / improviser Thomas Buckner and Lockwood. In this work, Lockwood recorded the sounds Buckner had developed for his own use in his improvising, and structured them on tape, making a kind of improvising score for him. Buckner has a fine operatic baritone - he features prominently in many of Robert Ashley's operas - but the extended vocal techniques used in this piece are an much more complex and exciting than anything I've heard him do previously. He says that each run-through of the piece, practice or performance, has been a transforming experience for him, and I can hear, on the basis of this sparse and striking performance, how that must be the case. Delta Run, from 1979-81, is a collaboration between the late sculptor Walter Winch and Lockwood. On the day before his death in 1979, at age 30, Winch talked to Lockwood about his attitudes to his upcoming death. The serenity and acceptance in his voice are extremely moving, as he talks, often with extreme difficulty, about his feelings. Accompanying this are the gentlest of environmental sounds, breath sounds, rain, etc. In another context, these long environmental stretches might be

questioned, but here, they establish the pace of communication, one that is slowing down gradually, to an inevitable ceasing. At the conclusion of this CD, with its voyages into shamanic and the near-death states, I was deeply moved. I still have only one comment on this CD: a soft, hushed, "wow".

PAUL PANHUYSEN and THE GALVANOS: LOST FOR WORDS (Table of the Elements TOE-CD-45 <http://www.tableoftheelements.com>)

Paul Panhuysen is well known as one of Europe's chief sound sculptors and musical installation artists. For 20 years, he also ran Het Apollohuis, a very influential art and music performance space in Eindhoven, The Netherlands. His work is very influenced by both Pythagorean thinking (especially in its use of number proportions in both the visual and sound aspects of his pieces) and also by the Fluxus movement, with its insistence on pared down minimalist structure. The Galvanos in the title of this CD refers to 9 galvanometers normally used in electrocardiographs. Here, the output of a sound amplifier is connected to the inputs of the galvanometer. At the base of the pointer of the galvanometer, Panhuysen attaches a two metre long steel string, which is itself attached to the middle of a long string, effectively dividing the string in half and creating a duochord. There are 9 of these galvanometer - string - long string devices, which are fed by five stereo cassette recorders. Additionally the 9 strings are tuned to a fundamental and a harmonic and a subharmonic pentatonic scale. The overall result is a very elegant series of resonant filters, which transform any sound put into them to a great degree. Unlike much of Panhuysen's music, which can be fairly noisy (as witness his CD *Engines in Power and Love*, which is him performing a whole battery of rock effects pedals which are processing the sounds of a whole fleet of dot-matrix printers), the sound of this device is lush, and gorgeous. The sound is not unlike that of the comb filters in *AudioMulch*, for example, but somehow richer, probably due to the "imperfections" of the physical devices Panhuysen is using. The CD consists of 11 tracks in which various sounds are processed through the galvanometers / strings. Some of these are vocal, some are previous pieces of his, and

some are live performances with his performance ensemble, the Maciunas ensemble (named for Fluxus founder George Maciunas). Although all the pieces have a certain family resemblance (this is a CD devoted to one experimental instrument, after all) the pieces also each have their own distinct character. The first piece, for example, *Stalin*, takes an old 78rpm record of the leader and teacher giving a speech in 1937. Stalin's melodious and persuasive voice becomes absolutely beautiful music here. It's like watching a picture of some fundamental evil being transformed into a gorgeous graphic with Photoshop. *AiDA*, on the other hand, takes a recording of a 30 year old polyrhythmic minimal piano piece of Panhuysen's and processes that. The piece used only the notes A and D, and the rhythms interact with the resonant frequencies to create a drone of great rhythmic life. *Birds* processes the sound of the *KanaryGrandBand*, Panhuysen's aviary full of free-improvising canaries and finches. (He has also made a CD of musical interactions of the Maciunas Ensemble and the KGB. For those who smile indulgently at such an idea, a single hearing of that CD will establish that there IS something remarkable going on between the birds and the musicians. And the knowledge that Panhuysen's father was a renowned ornithologist should show that his work with these birds is no romantic new-age nature-music-with-animals fantasy.) The most surprising track for me is *Clock*. In this, a multi track, polyrhythmic recording of a 1695 clock is processed through the wires. Repeating melodies galore result, ringing the harmonics of the various strings in wonderful ways. As an introduction to the work of someone I consider to be one of the most important (and most overlooked) composers working in Europe today, this CD is great. But even just on its own, its engaging and fascinating listening.

the burning point
of any given
discourse
is site specific

the truth line inside
the good line breaks it
open

Introductions

[for *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity and Music*]

Lydia Hamessley

INTRO 1: FOCAL POINTS

With *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity, and Music*,* we join a diverse company of scholars who have brought together collections of articles that explore the relationship between gender and music.¹ Unquestionably, the field of gender studies in music has blossomed, and we increasingly understand how gender is inflected by race, sexuality, class, age, national and ethnic identity, religion. Perhaps twenty years ago, the concept of gender would have been a narrow enough focus to unify a collection of articles, but not today. Therefore, scholars (and their editors) often bring an additional concept, genre, or field of study to bear on their investigations of gender: voices, opera, queer studies, feminism, difference, ethnomusicology, popular music, the canon. So, why identity in *Audible Traces*? Why such a multivalent concept? Surely identity, like gender, is too broad, too complex to be the focal point of a collection of articles. Nevertheless, as we gathered work that intrigued us, we found that, on some level, each author demonstrated the extent to which music is inextricably linked to identity. Moreover, each essay examined the way music reveals the gendered identity of the performer, composer, listener, character, scholar—thus our title *Audible Traces*.

In *Audible Traces*, questions about gendered identities vary as authors move between genres, cultures, eras. For this reason, the focal points shift throughout this collection as each author negotiates various intersections of identity and gender. We begin the collection with a series of responses by composers to the question: “How do you go about doing whatever it is you consider to be your work?” Not surprisingly, they often begin by defining who they are, and answers range from the practical: “Being the child of a farmer, I’m familiar with seasonal moods and work schedules. . . . I always fail to get my best work done in the summer” (Mary Lee Roberts) to the conceptual: “So we decided that we needed not only to compose pieces, we needed also to compose their context—particularly the language *around* the music. The contexts and languages audiences have inherited make the registration of their musical experiences a hostile and repressive one” (Susan Parenti). Elaine Barkin responds to this same question, among others, as she muses about “Rules of One’s Own”: “[I am] interested in negotiating and blurring distinctions between real-time process(es) and real-time output—in music-making, writing, conversation, and responding.” Speaking to us through his composition, “music/consciousness/gender” (in CD and script format) Benjamin Boretz suggests “we are going to be thinking about gender consciousness from the perspective of music consciousness, of, that is, someone in particular’s music consciousness.”

Indeed, it is the particularity of her own identity that fuels Susan C. Cook’s essay on the dancer Irene Castle. Cook valorizes the link between personal identity and our scholarly pursuits while exploring “dance as meaningful social experience.” Questioning the split between mind and body in our research, Cook reveals the extent to

* Elaine Barkin and Lydia Hamessley, eds., *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity and Music* (Zürich: Carciofoli Press, 1999). Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

¹Jane Bowers and Judith Tick, eds., *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Ellen Koskoff, ed., *Women and Music in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Marcia Herndon and Susanne Ziegler, eds., *Music, Gender, and Culture* (Wilhelmshaven: F. Noetzel, 1990); Ruth A. Solie, ed., *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Kimberly Marshall, ed., *Rediscovering the Muses: Women’s Musical Traditions* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993); Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood, Gary C. Thomas, eds., *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Susan C. Cook and Judy S. Tsou, eds., *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Leslie C. Dunn and Nancy A. Jones, eds., *Embodied voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Corinne E. Blackmer and Patrician Juliana Smith, eds., *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Sarah Cooper, ed., *Girls! Girls! Girls!: Essays on Women and Music* (NY: New York University Press, 1996).

which musicology and other academic disciplines have insisted that personal identities, of any sort, be kept out of the picture.

Suzanne G. Cusick's essay examines the way that we perform our gender and sex vocally and foregrounds the tenet that music can reveal identity. Interested in how seventeenth-century composer Francesca Caccini might have left traces of her gendered identity and body in her music, Cusick calls on Judith Butler's theories of gender and sex as performative. In an adroit shift of eras, Cusick uses the vocal qualities of the Indigo Girls and Pearl Jam to question the notion that we are "limited by the physical structures of our bodies to have certain kinds of voices." Moving from voices to bodies, Martha Mockus considers *Skin*, a collaborative piece by composer Pauline Oliveros and choreographer Paula Josa-Jones. Mockus studies Oliveros' music through and with images of the dance itself, peeling back layers of white skin and lesbian eroticism. Marianne Kielian-Gilbert's essay presents us with a poetic analysis and interpretation, not only of Rebecca Clarke's *Sonata for Viola and Piano*, but also of her own relationship to Clarke. Kielian-Gilbert attends to interviews and biography, revels in metaphor, and delights in the possibilities of creating and transforming "feminine spaces of negotiation of both the power and illusion of solo expression."

A number of authors examine the formation and representation of gender as it is inflected by the matrix of race, class, sexuality, and national identity. Several of these planes cross in Mitchell Morris' analysis of the disco hit "It's Raining Men" as performed by The Weather Girls. By linking the abjection of gay men and large black women, Morris demonstrates their conjoined on the '70s disco dance floor. In her essay, Renee Coulombe suggests that the white, bisexual blues artist Candye Kane and the punk band Tribe 8 embody musical Third Wave Feminism in the ways they deal with race, class, and sexuality. In her study of Joan Armatrading, Ellie Hisama contemplates Armatrading's unconventional gender representation in fashion and in vocal range, her ambiguous, but lesbian- and bisexual-friendly lyrics, and her indeterminate stance on the way her racial identity inflects her music. "[Her] music resists being contained within traditional sites of gender and sexuality and effectively negotiates her identity as a black British female diasporic." Commenting on the music of Jimi Hendrix and John Coltrane, Benjamin Boretz asks us to hear their voices not as "The sexuality of the oppressed—no, the sexuality image through which the image of oppression is embodied." Su Zheng's essay on gender representation in Chinese opera reveals the narrowness of Western categories of gender. Through her analysis of Peking Operas and *The Butterfly Concerto*, Zheng demonstrates that "gender ideologies of music (re)presentation have changed from late imperial to modern China," and she attests to the need for scholars to resist thinking of non-Western music as ahistorical and apolitical.

Western opera, a powerful locus of gender ideology in music, is the focus of two essays in the collection. In her essay on *Lulu*, Judy Lochhead foregrounds the sound of the music itself, particularly at the deaths of the Countess Geschwitz and Lulu. Identity plays a major role for Lochhead; she suggests that the critical responses to the music of *Lulu*, the focus of her essay, are dependent upon who the critic is, including herself. Conversely, in his essay Rabinowitz is concerned with the identity of the character of Carmen and the extent to which she has control over the representation of her identity. "Trac[ing] out the shaky border between the West and its 'others,'" Rabinowitz reexamines the trope of the Gypsy-as-threat and interprets the way Carmen sings this "exotic" identity for herself.

Sexual, national, ethnic, and racial identity; dance; performativity; opera; popular music; contemporary composers—these are customary categories that constitute familiar patterns of thinking. Nevertheless, I found myself more intrigued by other configurations, other less conventional themes, that these essays began to reveal and suggest. As I contemplated, speculated, and fretted about alternative patterns, I was reminded of one of my own passions: quilting. I hesitate to invoke the quilt as a metaphor—its frequent (over)use by writers of women's lives has rendered the image of patchwork cliché. However, in this instance I call on it not from a sentimental position of reclaiming women's art, but as someone for whom quilt-making is a creative, intellectual, and consuming experience.

INTRO 2: SWING NINE YARDS OF CALICO

After quilting for three years, I found the courage to enter one of my quilts, "Gazing to Africa," in a quilt show. (See Figure 1.) One of the reasons to enter a show, aside from the elusive blue ribbon and prize money, is to get the judge's comments; friends are all too willing to ooh and aah over my quilts. Now, I thought, I would get some "real," "objective" feedback. And this is what I got: "Very nice use of interesting fabrics. Good handling of the quilting stitch. Lacks a central focus point." What!? They had missed the whole point. Didn't the judges realize that the appeal of quilts is the way that the same block, repeated in combination with itself and in various contexts, creates multiple places of focus? With "Gazing to Africa," I had spent many hours quilting shapes, based on the abstract patterns of the different fabrics, that would invite the eye to move from one block to the other, that would unify the quilt not only by the pattern called Attic Windows and by the African fabrics, but also by the movement of various lines across the quilt.

A quilt invites the eye to move over the surface of the fabric, searching for and delighting in hidden shapes and patterns as they emerge from and fade into the background, competing for the foreground, for the viewer's attention and momentary focus. Indeed, quilters frequently use two small mirrors set at right angles alongside a single block to see what it will "really look like" in the quilt, to see what kinds of shapes and points of interest result from different contexts. Similarly, I find myself putting these "mirrors" up to various combinations of the articles in *Audible Traces* to see what kinds of different, perhaps unexpected, patterns emerge.

Acoustic spaces

The physical space of, or within which we hear, music emerges as a motif in several essays. Mockus interrogates Oliveros' fascination with "sounds that are interstitial, defiant, peculiar, at times unconnected to 'real' instruments: *queer*, in the most musical sense of the term." Through digital delay processors, the music travels throughout and even alters the acoustic space. "Encountering various surfaces that reflect and absorb, the sounds articulate a space whose boundaries are permeable. Amid this sonic navigation, the space itself breathes, like porous skin." Similarly, multi-media artists Catherine Schieve writes: "Everything I make seems to be in motion, or perhaps the traces or residue of a motion within and in interaction with a space or environment." She understands "sounds as inscription through the atmosphere." For Morris "disco always worked as a series of songs which together defined a space (the bar/disco) and an amount of time (the evening)," and his conflation of the disco with the bathhouse, "where the spectacle of sex takes on a delightful, terrifying power" is apt: gay identity was formed by the music *within* a certain space. In his "Text of a Witnessing," Boretz describes an event in which two persons are "trying to find the right decor and arrangement of the furniture in the room to make it a suitable environment" for a sound-making session.

Abundant bodies/abundant sexuality

Both Morris and Coulombe critique the way society has pathologized women's "sexual and culinary appetites" by constructing a correlation between large bodies and insatiable sexual desire. Rather than participating in the possibility of abjection, The Weather Girls and Candy Kane assert their size within their music and their live and recorded performances. Attesting that drag queens, as well, must struggle with bodies too large for size 10 dresses, Morris links the marginality of The Weather Girls—women, black, fat—with that of gay men. Likewise, for Coulombe, Candy Kane is particularly appealing due to her size and abundant bisexuality. "Candy refuses to allow us to sidestep her substantial body. We are reminded that her big voice, an extremely powerful and beautiful instrument, emanates from an equally lush and abundant physicality."

Bodies performing music/Music performing bodies

Reflections on embodied research, accounting for the presence and effect of bodies in and on music, pervade various studies. In her essay on Irene Castle, Cook asks "Where and under what conditions does music invite bodily response and, similarly, where is such bodily response ruled inappropriate? How does music police the body in either fashion?" Examining health, homeopathic medicine, birth control, and fashion—right down to

Castle's underwear—Cook reveals how bodies were treated and were changed to accommodate the new dances and music. Similarly, Cusick searches for the historical body of Francesca Caccini, intrigued by the promise that her surviving music might “prescribe certain bodily acts that [Caccini] might have understood as performances of gender and/or sex. . . . I cannot shun the possibility that she left evidence about her experience of embodiment in her music.” Listening to Oliveros' music for *Skin*, Mockus describes skin's inclusion in the sonic experience: “The paper trees, out of which the dancers slowly emerge, are mic'd, thus including the *sounds* of the skin in Oliveros' music.” Boretz confesses, “As music enters me, it touches me in places of gender. touches. probes. opens. explores. sculpts. . .”

Embodied voices

Several authors examine how the actual timbre of voices projects gender and sexuality. Cusick suggests “voices stand for all the imperatives we might imagine to be already implicit in a sexed body, before culture has its way with it.” Contrasting Eddie Vedder's refusal to accept the disciplinary contingencies of Song, and thus his refusal to accept the demands of Culture, with the in-tune vocal production of the Indigo Girls, Cusick illustrates how the particular vocal performances of Vedder and the Indigo Girls “‘perform’ quite specific subject positions that can be intelligible to their audiences without reference to either their songs' lyrics or to particular formal, harmonic, or tonal gestures.” While the Indigo Girls seemingly accept the discipline of culture, Coulombe demonstrates how “Riot Grrrl musicians are willing to go beyond traditional [musical and] feminist prohibitions (especially self-consciousness regarding ‘man-hating’) to express actively the rage inside us. . . .” Punk music, “unapologetically ugly, . . . screams a politics and spirituality of cynicism, frustration, and dissatisfaction.”

The exploitation of range and register in vocal production also plays a role in defining gender, age, and sexuality. Hisama reveals how Armatrading's unusually wide range transcends the division between male and female voices, thus denying gender stereotypes of voices and “carv[ing] out a musical space for female voices that is infrequently explored in pop music.” In contrast, vocal range and timbre in Chinese opera has much more to do with age than gender. “Even now in *Kunqu* [Kun opera], young male roles are sung by females, and there is no differentiation in timbre, register, or musical characteristics between the young heroine's or the young hero's vocal lines. . . .” Zheng indicates that young and the old characters, rather than male and female ones, are differentiated musically; the head voice is used for the roles of young people, while those for old people call for chest voice. Cusick also aligns vocal production with age as she interrogates certain seventeenth-century medical beliefs that women, who presumably do not experience a change of voice at puberty, are unfinished persons. Reminding us that even today we value a Marilyn Monroe baby-voice as well as shaved underarms and legs—a new fashion dictate of Irene Castle's era—Cusick and Cook suggest that the relative adulthood of women's bodies can sometimes be constructed through music and dance.

White mirrors/Black reflections

Attention to race in our collection is not limited to those essays which place women of color at the center. Several authors problematize whiteness and explore the ways in which African-American identity is hidden, subsumed, or critiqued by white artists. In her study of the blues music of white singer Candye Kane, Coulombe suggests that “Kane challenges the ghosts of racism that inhabit the blues-woman arena.” By calling on this African-American form, Kane ironically interrogates white America's ideas about appropriate sexual and physical expression. Whereas Oliveros and Josa-Jones do not foreground issues of race, Mockus sees the use of white newsprint and pale costumes on white dancers as “a political critique of white skin,” and she “explores a symbolic shedding of white-skin privilege.” Although Cook focuses on the dancing body of Irene Castle, she brings forward the Castles' relationship with James Reese Europe, the African-American band leader who wrote most of their music. She proposes that “the racism of American society,” was played out in the Castles' silence with regard to their indebtedness to Europe, who gave them “direct access to African-American dance culture” which they subsequently exploited for their own ends.

Musicians as others

Cook attributes some of the Castles' silence regarding Europe as reflective of the notion that musicians are outsiders, "nameless and alien." Hisama examines the non-conformity and non-mainstream status of Armatrading as indicative of her desire to remain outside the stringent limitations of gender, sexuality, and race. Foregrounding these issues by asking whether the creators of *Carmen* viewed her as an outsider or insider, Rabinowitz reminds us that "*Carmen* is situated within a long cultural linking of Gypsies and Jews," that Bizet was condemned for his association with Jews, and that in Mérimée's novel "the narrator at first mistakes Carmen for a Jew." Thus, Rabinowitz suggests that "it is not intuitively self-evident that *Carmen*'s creators would position themselves as 'insiders' threatened by the Gypsy 'other.'"

Representation vs. endorsement

Central to Rabinowitz's argument is the tension between representation and endorsement. Responding to Susan McClary's critique of *Carmen*'s "deadly narrative strategies" that cause us to desire her death, Rabinowitz offers "the groundwork for a reading of *Carmen* that recuperates not only her resistance, but also Bizet's willing endorsement of her anti-social acts." Similarly, Lochhead examines the changing critical responses to Lulu over the past 50 years, highlighting "the relation between interpretive strategies and perceptual meaning." Lochhead brings forward several positions: Lulu and Geschwitz as victims, Lulu as a passive character of male projection, the opera as a critique of the myth of Woman as a source of evil, an opera that perpetuates the oppression of women. Aware that criticism may seem "too easily subject to the shifting sands of social values and observational frameworks," Lochhead suggests that we attend to the sound of the music, as many critics do not, since "sound and meaning are in a co-determinative relation." In addition, Zheng reminds us that we cannot sort out issues of representation and endorsement if we continue to apply "hegemonic Western concepts of gender and sexuality in . . . stud[ies] of diversified world music cultures."

Literature and story-telling

To support his position that Carmen does, in fact, have agency even as she sings the "exotic" music Bizet wrote, Rabinowitz applies narrative theory to music. "By exploring a musical analog to the first/third person distinction," Rabinowitz argues that Carmen sings for herself in first person. Insofar as any character in any story has agency, Carmen chooses to present herself through the "Habañera." Other contributors rely on narratives themselves to frame their work. Cook presents her scholarship on the Castles alongside her retelling of the Brothers Grimm fairy tale "The Twelve Dancing Princesses." She also uses the trope of story-telling to interrogate musicological narratives—"academics rarely think of themselves as story-tellers"—that are invested in fact, non-fiction, truth, and "in a closing moral that restores order and decides who lives happily ever after, and why." Kielian-Gilbert and Mockus both position story-tellers as commentators upon their subjects. The poetry of Sylvia Plath and William helps shape Kielian-Gilbert's "allegorical account" of the *Sonata for Viola and Piano*, while the novels and essays of Dorothy Allison, Monique Wittig, and Minnie Bruce Pratt play a prominent role in Mockus' understanding of Oliveros' *Skin*. Certainly, Barkin's diary-like "Rules of One's Own" brings to mind Virginia Woolf and her personal struggle with wanting to be a member of a "club" that wouldn't have her. Barkin's relationship with feminist theory in music seems equally guarded and ambivalent.

Changes in contexts

We have often come to understand a composer, a piece of music, an idea within a particular context whose hold is so pervasive that we no longer question its existence. Reminding us that Oliveros is usually discussed in the context of men—John Cage in particular—Mockus asks: "What gets *lost* when Oliveros and her music are studied in the 'company of men,' and what is *recuperated* when she joins 'the company of women' or 'the company of feminists'? What if those feminists are writers . . . who grapple with the vagaries of lesbian experience?" Indeed, the desire to weave together multiple voices surfaces in Barkin's essay written with her "informants" as well as in Boretz's "*music/consciousness/gender*," which he calls "a conversation among new and previously existent discourses, new and previously existent word- and sound-texts (including new and previously composed music, as well as borrowed episodes from the recorded literature). . . ." Kielian-Gilbert relies on a "conversation of voices"—Rebecca Clarke, her contemporaries, and feminist writers—to uncover multiple meanings of Clarke's

music. As Mockus suggests, “a change in context . . . allow[s] for a more vibrant resonance,” in particular when that context is from the standpoint of women’s lives.

Interpretive communities

For Kielian-Gilbert this multiplicity of women’s voices defines the notion of “musical identity as interactive or conflicting relations of historically situated persons. . . .” Indeed, several authors acknowledge the validity and power of interpretive communities. Lochhead accounts for the shifting sands of criticism by foregrounding the way “semiotic codes in music . . . are subject to historical variability. . . . *What* the music ‘means’ must be qualified by *for whom* and *when*.” Historical and social context is similarly at the crux of Zheng’s work in which “notions of gender and sexuality are not trans-cultural, trans-historical terms equally applicable to every culture and period.” In particular, she reminds us that all too often studies of “difference de-emphasizes time, [while] sameness is contextualized in the postcolonial world.” Likewise, Boretz asks us to “imagine that music touches gender externally and internally, that the qualities arising in those touchings may be best cognized if they speak their own discourses.”

Acoustic spaces; fat bodies and sexuality; embodied research; critiques of whiteness; musicians as others; representation vs. endorsement; story-telling; changing contexts; interpretive communities—these themes, too, are certainly familiar, yet perhaps not evident with a cursory glance at our table of contents. Indeed, individually the essays in *Audible Traces* may not reveal these particular concepts. But in conversation with one another, when our “mirror” moves and shifts between essays, these patterns emerge. You may, for that matter, uncover other themes and shapes as you read these articles up against each other. However, no matter the position of your “mirror,” you will undoubtedly become aware of the deep personal connection to their work that all authors in this collection express.

INTRO 3: AUDIBLE TRACES

A student came to my office to discuss her project for a music class she was taking with me. She wanted to investigate the different musical preferences that “guys” and “girls” listen to; presumably she would use her friends, roommates, and acquaintances from college as informants. As we discussed how she would gather this information, she told me that she couldn’t possibly just personally ask a series of questions because the answers she would get wouldn’t be accurate. She insisted that these college students would “lie,” would give answers according to some strict party line designating which music, bands, and musicians are cool and which aren’t. “They’d be afraid to tell me what they really like to listen to because it would tell me, and whoever heard them, too much about ‘who they are.’” Of course, the implication was that there is a very narrow range of acceptability about who one is. Sighing and trying to remember a time when I too felt that way, I suggested that she could make up an anonymous questionnaire to give to her friends and classmates in some other courses she was in. “No good,” she said. “They would feel like everyone was watching how they filled it out, and so they would still lie. And handwriting is a give-away.” Striving mightily to maintain the appropriate small-liberal-arts-college professorial patience, I made another suggestion. “OK. Take the questionnaire to your classes, and tell the students that they can mail them to you if they would rather.” “Still no good. If people actually took the questionnaire and filled it out privately, instead of just handing it to me there, they would be afraid that other students would assume that they were doing that because their answers were weird.” Needless to say, this project never materialized, not only because it was impossible to negotiate the minefield of self-revelation, but also because this student left campus after being injured in a sorority hazing incident. It seems she had succumbed to the same sort of pressure that she had described in my office, but with more serious results.

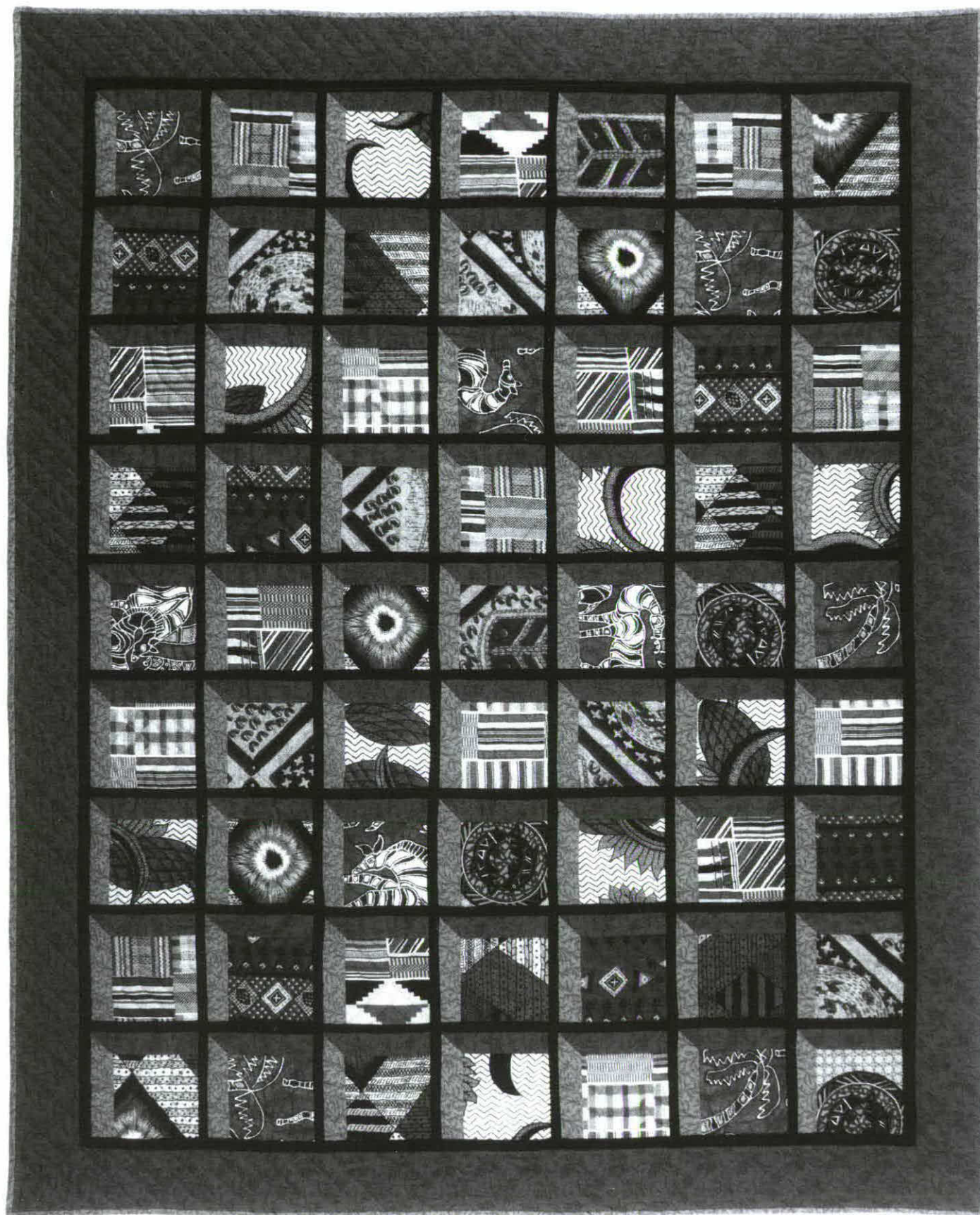
What this student understood is that to reveal our musical preferences is to leave audible traces of our identity. For you to know that I prefer my music modal—Vaughan-Williams, Renaissance, old-time and bluegrass, Irish—identifies me at least as much as, if differently than, those standard identity attributes: white, American, middle-aged, short, transplanted Southerner of Scots-Irish descent, music professor. Although the student of my story objected to “being known,” her fear stemmed from being identified in a one-dimensional sense that allows no movement between identities: “If I tell you I listen to Ani di Franco, you’ll see me as only an angry feminist, and it won’t matter that I also listen to Phish and Mozart.”

Audible traces of identities permeate this collection: that of the performer, the musical/operatic character, the composer. In particular, though, the identity of the contributors themselves plays a role in their scholarship; authors explore the connection that they as listeners have with the music, a connection often based on an element of their identity. “As a female listener-musician-theorist,” Kielian-Gilbert situates herself “in the process of reception” as she seeks “to realize a sense of [her] relationship with . . . Rebecca Clarke as Contemporary.” Morris brings his reading of “It’s Raining Men” to us directly from the disco dance floors of his coming-out years, while Cook reveals that her work on Irene Castle has allowed her to be the dancer she always wanted to be. Of her hearing and critique of *Lulu*, Lochhead writes that it “reflects the critical concerns I define as my own and . . . cannot be separated from the confluence of ideas and concerns that define me as a woman living in the United States during the last two decades of the twentieth century.” Coulombe, a Generation X composer and Third-Wave feminist, finds links between herself and the music of Candy Kane and Tribe 8. Of her experience with Pauline Oliveros’ music, Mockus writes: “I let *Skin* take me to the edge of lesbian audition.” The voices and works of contemporary composers embody a multiplicity of identities: cancer survivor, software designer, a battler of depression, collaborative artist, “techie,” grandmother, performer, music copyist, professor, Yoga practitioner, political activist, fieldworker, writer, thinker, listener. Each composer reveals her or his processes and thoughts from the crux of multifarious identities. Their voices frame the collection, opening the conversation with personal musings and concluding the discussion with written and multi-media works on their personal and interpersonal struggles with and understandings of music, feminist theory, gender studies, politics—academic, sexual, and musical—thought processes, and survival.

EPILOGUE: FRAILING

Today I went to an antique show and found myself, uncharacteristically, looking at the cases of jewelry, some junkie, some not. My eye caught the glint of a small pin in the shape of a banjo, the head made of mother-of-pearl and the strings of delicate individual wires. I bought it for \$9.60, and I may even wear it sometime. My latest musical passion adds another layer to my identity: clawhammer banjo player or frailer. In my attempts over the past several years to become a bluegrass musician I’d tried guitar and mandolin, but they never fit—the neck was too wide or the strings and frets were too close. On a whim I bought a clawhammer banjo book and picked up a friend’s \$25 garage-sale 5-string banjo. I was in love. I now immerse myself in Dorian and Mixolydian, recalling tunes from my mother’s old 78s—those that were left after her brothers used them for shotgun targets during the Depression.

This latest passion of mine, like quilting, invites me to revisit the past. As I spend an evening cutting out fabric and planning how each block should be set, I wish I had paid more attention to my grandmother’s stacks and stacks of quilts, most of which are lost. And now, when I pick up my new banjo, I wish that my mother could see that, after all that graduate work, I’m playing her music. Elaine Barkin, in her “Rules of One’s Own,” suggests: “Rather than noticing how the past has affected your work why not look for ways to see how your work has affected your sense of the past.” Certainly, it is our hope that this collection introduces you to new music, artists/composers, scholars, theories, interpretations, ideas, and visions for the future. But we also hope that it invites you to revisit your own past, to discover how your music—as a composer, listener, scholar, theorist, performer—might leave your own audible traces.



“Not before seeing”

Mark Applebaum’s *S-Tog for Sound-Sculptures**

Tildy Bayar

A multiplicity of resonant spaces, interpenetrating. A polyphony of physicalities and virtualities, interpenetrating. Different times, even.

Interpenetrating.

And instrument building redefined as orchestration;

and instrumental performance redefined as the sensitive evocation, over time, of an instrument’s particular resonances.

In the space of resonance, inseparable from the space inside the instrument, the sensual pairing of small gesture and large amplified sound.

Inside the instrument, which surrounds him physically and acoustically, he becomes a part of its vibration; its sounds pass through him.

Into its tiny spaces (within a forest of gradated metal rods and nails, wires, washers, combs, small percussive toys, piano strings, nails, chopsticks, gears, unidentifiables) he moves, his presence a virtual stroll across its surface.

Agitation trembles in his wake, and takes on volume.

It is static: it sits there being large and small rods, odd pieces and funky attachments; and yet it is quite “interactive”: in the manner of a set of building blocks (or a piano) rather than that of a robot that talks back.

* “An improvisation for mousetrap, mini-mouse, and duplex mausphon with live electronics”, performed in concert at Mississippi State University on October 21, 1997; seen on videotape March 2000

Mentally he must be only a few inches tall, marvelling at this metal forest, touching a stalk here, a stem there, playing in a primal sense (of wonder, not of display). Invoking a sound trail, he follows where it leads.

A scattering of resonant crumbs locates him.

In the virtual space between gestural genesis and heard result, his fingers stand in for the image of a sound gesture made in his mind.

There is another virtual space located between gestural genesis and heard result—the space of electronic processing. Here “gesture” takes on a new presence somewhere between the physical and the ineffable.

In the virtual space of relived time, he turns on the digital delay: an orchestra of echoes, so that he is accompanied by his own past gestures. Now becoming new; still recently heard.

Physical properties (the bodied) are intimately linked with electronic enhancements (the disembodied). We hear neither independently; what we hear is a synthesis of the two.

Electronic instruments’ connection to the physical gives expression to their abstract properties (gives these properties a body); the physical’s connection to the digital allows transformation and diffusion (gives the instrument a new voice).

Here movement is the same as sound; here sound is the result of movement;—

Not that a sound is inseparable from the gesture which invokes it; not that a gesture which invokes sound, rather than the sonic result, is the carrier of expression. Rather there is a gesture with no body, sounding for him, but sounding silently,

then (or concurrently) passing through his fingers

to take on volume.

Gordon Mumma

Eric Lyon

During my education at the Eastman school of Music, I was delighted, but not surprised, to learn that someone had graffiti-ed the men's room with the slogan, "Gordon Mumma is the greatest composer that ever lived". It is not at all difficult to acquire a mania for Mumma's music. First of all, the music sounds gorgeous. Mumma's instincts for electronic music were remarkable considering that as a pioneer in the art of electro-acoustic music in the 1950s, working outside of the (few) established American electronic music studios Mumma not only had to invent his sound and aesthetic, but build his tools as well. While embracing the sensuality of the French *musique concrete* school and the formal complexity of the German *elektronische musik* school, Mumma added a level of social (and often political) engagement largely (and perhaps understandably) missing from the two influential post-WWII European schools. This level of engagement is not always for the faint of heart, in works such as "The Dresden Interleaf 13 February 1945" and "Megaton for Wm. Burroughs".

When I regularly saw Gordon Mumma in 1986-87 during his one year appointment at UC San Diego, he considered the Dresden Interleaf 13 February 1945, composed in 1965 for the Once Festival, his favorite and most successful piece. Given that the civilian infrastructure air raid is the centerpiece of modern extreme statecraft, Dresden Interleaf is perhaps Mumma's best chance at an electronic music classic. In the liner notes to the Lovely Music record he states: "Dresden, like Kyoto and Venezia, had been agreed upon as an irreplaceable historic treasure, kept free of military targets, and used as a refuge for war casualties, prisoners, children and elderly civilians. The bombing of Dresden on 13 February 1945, within days of the end of the war, was the last chance to experiment with a firestorm on a previously undamaged city. A firestorm is a meteorological phenomenon which rapidly consumes oxygen over a wide area, suffocating life in the process of incineration".

Mumma's musical reference to military experiment-atrocities reminds us that there is a sharing of tools in the use of electronics and other bleeding edge technology between experimental music and experimental warfare. In military research of the 1990s, one finds frequent reference to complexity theory, chaos theory and genetic algorithms—all mainstays of experimental computer music of the 1990s. We might well wonder if we are sharing more than just tools. Mumma once commented to me about the Dresden atrocity, "on the one hand, the bombing makes you mad enough to want to kick some testicles, but on the other hand, you have to be somewhat in awe of the huge scale of the project—the remarkable coordination on a massive scale." This fascination with scale is clearly articulated in the massive, austere blocks of sound which define the architecture of the Dresden Interleaf, 13 February 1945.

A piano rendition of the "Dresden Amen" is heard at the opening of "Dresden Interleaf". Through frequency modulation and spectrum shifting techniques, this beautiful traditional melody is transformed to a sustained metallic scream. The scream remains beautiful, but with the nihilistic beauty of mass death documentation. Using recordings of model airplanes, Mumma stages an air raid in the middle of Dresden Interleaf which, as he noted, has terrified people who were subject to air raids in WWII. The final section is a quiet, haunting electronic chorale made from masses of subtly frequency modulated oscillators. The final sounds were

recorded to tape just as crucial components of Mumma's specially designed, home-made analog sound-producing circuitry caught fire and burned themselves out.

Gordon Mumma is inspired by big ideas and technical challenge. This tends to give his pieces sharp individual profiles. We hear this in his electronic palindrome pieces using electronic circuits with no signal inputs (all sound deriving from noise in the system and feedback), in Hornpipe, in which the resonances of the performance space are measured and responded to by an analog computer worn by the performer, and in Cybersonic Cantilevers, an installation in which the sources are provided exclusively by public participants who make sounds into microphones, play their own cassette tapes, and repatch the circuits at will.

In addition to his love affair with electronics, Mumma maintains a fascination with acoustic sound sources. He performs a beautiful bowed saw (which may be heard in his segment of Robert Ashley's "Music with Roots in the Aether"), has built his own harpsichord, and was readily persuaded to play wood block and tom tom in my improvisation piece "Budd Blowing His Own Head Off on TV". Mumma has pointed out that if he were born into a different culture he would be working happily with bamboo rather than electronics.

When dealing with Gordon Mumma at a personal or musical level one is constantly reminded of Nietzsche's dictum, "Nothing succeeds without the element of prankishness". Mumma's prankishness surfaces repeatedly in his classes. He once played a video of the ballet, Romeo and Juliet with a different classical score dubbed in, then asked his electronic music class to discuss the choreography as it related to the music. Then he showed the same ballet video with David Tudor's pulsers as the "real" music. During a discussion of his electronic dance score Cirquewaltz, which involves multiple splices of band march "stingers" to the opening chords of Beethoven's Eroica symphony, Mumma held a razor blade high above his head and exclaimed, "this is a Classical music instrument". Mumma claimed that during a security clearance interview for a government consulting job, he was asked if he was now or had ever been a member of the Communist Party to which he responded, "not yet". He recalled that they knew how he had voted in every national election.

In a world where commercial recordings are the currency of music, Gordon Mumma must be judged by the regrettably small fraction of his output which is available on recording. There are two vinyl releases available from Lovely Music, and a smattering of records on other small labels, most if not all out of print. (My personal favorite is "Gordon Mumma", a 7" EP of music from the 1970s-1990s on Stomach Ache records, based in Tamaulipas, Mexico, which I have only seen on sale in Japan.) I have never heard Mumma's music on a CD, and indeed some works such as the gorgeous Mesa (performed by David Tudor on cybersonic organ) have such high frequency content and sharp transients that current digital recording standards (44100 sampling rate and 16 bit word resolution) would fail to reproduce the music as accurately as vinyl. As vinyl playback technology recedes into the distance, Mumma's already difficult to access music will become even more so. But Mumma is an electronic musician's electronic musician, and as long as there exist recordings of his work anywhere, some fraction of his audience will discover him with surprise and gratitude as a genuinely singular voice in electronic music.

fault line
and truth line
align
with difficulty

Strategic Defamiliarization: The Process of Difficulty in Brian Ferneyhough's Music

Ross Feller

"Time is what hinders everything from being given at once. It retards, or rather it is retardation."
—Henri Bergson

The fourteenth century Italian humanist Francesco Petrarch once said, "what we acquire with difficulty and keep with care is always the dearer to us" (Doob 215). This is an early Renaissance way of saying: no pain, no gain. Ostensibly, we appreciate the process of paying dues. But in a world that worships total efficiency and near instant forms of communication, why would anyone intentionally steer clear of the fast, and easy track? The belief prevails that we do what we do so much faster than our predecessors did what they did, even as we spend untold hours teaching our computers to do what we desire. In the work of the expatriate British composer Brian Ferneyhough, difficulty, engaged through processes of delay, is used in order to combat habitual types of compositional, performance, and listening practices. His work develops a consistent, personal style, while critically deconstructing its own performance practice. This essay attempts to describe, in broad terms, Ferneyhough's 'aesthetic,' especially as it relates to the concerns of the so-called 'New Complexity'.

After the hegemony of total serialism waned in the late 1950s, Ferneyhough began composing works which posed extreme, provisional solutions to the compositional *cul de sac* young composers faced at that time. He sought to reinject vitality back into the idea of closed-form composition through the integration of excessive, unstable, and chaotic structures. He took his cue from the early hyperexpressive work of Pierre Boulez (what he's called his "Artaud period"), but also from the static sound blocks of Edgard Varese.

Because Ferneyhough privileges the compositional act of writing and has appropriated some of the accoutrements of serial practice, it is commonly assumed that he is merely a total serialist. The caricature total serial piece, curiously like much process oriented music, begins with the initiation of a process and ends when the process ends, usually after most, if not all, permutations have been used. Ferneyhough's compositional approach is both, much broader in scope, and more narrowly focused on systemic procedure in order to create, or uncover, inherent contradictions in the system itself. As Jonathan Harvey puts it, "Ferneyhough has absorbed the discoveries of total serialism to a profounder degree than almost anyone else of his generation, without actually subscribing to its orthodoxies in his music" (9).

For Ferneyhough, a compositional system is not a means to mechanically produce music. Instead it creates a meaningful context in which compositional decisions are made. He holds that all artistic expression is ultimately derived from restriction, and that expression attains meaning only through contact with a previously mapped-out space. Often in his music one can locate a dichotomy between strict or automatic, and informal or intuitive approaches. Complex webs of polyphony are harnessed by organic, high profile gestures. It is the friction between these approaches that results in the extreme types of musical expression for which he is known.

When first encountering a Ferneyhough score one usually notices the complex notation which seems to minimize interpretation. In fact it is designed to *maximize* ambiguity and imprecision, two components which require interpretation. As everyone realizes, notation never specifies all a musician needs to know in order to perform a given piece. Often what is left unrepresented is determined by larger contextual factors. One could say the less explicit the notation, the more performers must rely upon conventional supplementary texts such as performance practice.

Ferneyhough's name is often associated with the 'New Complexity'. In addition to his work this term was originally applied to U.K. composers such as Michael Finnissy and James Dillon. As with any model powerful enough to attract adherents there are now many younger 'New Complexity' composers, the most noteworthy being Richard Barrett, Liza Lim, Chris Dench, Roger Redgate, and Olga Neuwirth. It must be said here that many of the aforementioned composers would reject the 'New Complexity' label, especially if it is meant to imply some sort of unified style. Yet, it is not an entirely inappropriate description. It is helpful to think of the term, as Richard Toop suggests (1993, 53), not as a box but rather as a frame of reference which includes a number of diverse and perhaps contradictory phenomena. According to Toop, the 'New Complexity' composers are some of the few within new music circles "to retain the idea of art as an endless search for the transcendental, and of music as potential revelation" (1992, 54).

It is instructive to understand the background that initially spawned the use of the term 'New Complexity'. During the late 1960s the postmodern conundrum that it was, in principle, no longer possible to create new music began to be taken seriously. By the late 1970s some composers in Germany, England, and the U.S.A. developed ready-made solutions to this apparent impasse fueled by a dislike of twentieth century practice and heavily indebted to reified notions of history. The press labeled them neo-tonal, neo-Romantic, and in Germany they were known as the Neue Einfachkeit (or New Simplicity). They resurrected forms from the Common Practice Era in an effort to, as Wolfgang Rihm put it, "develop a music which was capable of reaching people" (see Rexroth). Implicit in his comment (and spelled out elsewhere) is the claim that previous, especially modernist compositional trends such as serialism were inaccessible, incomprehensible, and overly self-conscious. Upon hindsight it appears that these 'movements' were not only opposed to serial practice but also to experimental avant-gardists like John Cage, Lamonte Young, and Morton Feldman.

In his essay entitled, "Against Intellectual Complexity in Music," composer Michael Nyman claims to have discovered the most direct route to the listener's brain. He brands other routes as unnatural. For Nyman, the notion of "simplicity is an absolute, a constant, not part of a scale of values" (87). A strange idea coming from someone apparently concerned with experimental music. Simplicity is his panacea for the illness of complexity.

The American composer George Rochberg's arguments against complexity in music are based upon a quasi-scientific view of memory and a roadsign view of communication. This is to say that he confuses musical notation and communication with road signage, which must be immediately and unambiguously legible in order to prevent accidents.

In his book, *The Aesthetics of Survival*, he posits that complex music (e.g. any music which consciously employs systems) overburdens the nervous system resulting in "fatigue, frustration, dissatisfaction, anger, and even rage" (222). While the first two results may be part of a performer's, or listener's, relationship to a complex work, the latter three attributes are examples of Rochberg's attempt to psychologize the encounter with a complex work by imbuing it with reactions that only occur after a person is predisposed to respond in a like manner. In other words these qualities are a result of ideology not science. Also, as Edward Hall has shown, the nervous system is well equipped to respond to complex encounters. Hall demonstrates that people routinely handle informational overload situations by delegating and establishing priorities. This is especially the case in what he

calls “high context” situations like art and music, where most of the ‘information content’ is internalized in the listener or performer. It is not surprising to learn that, for Rochberg, musical communication only takes place when transmission is “uninhibited and undisturbed between the source of the stimulus (the music) and the receiving, responding system (the human nervous system)” (ibid.). Thus, complex music fails to communicate in his view.

Implicit in Rochberg’s assumption is Roman Jakobson’s model of communication. This model contains a sender, receiver, medium, message, code, and context. Successful communication is said to take place when the sender’s signal reaches the receiver undisturbed by any interference in the transmission process. In the case of standard language situations, the sender must rely upon conventionally familiar signs to achieve this. Likewise, a musical composition that largely exists to represent conventional signs can be quickly consumed without extra effort or reflection. Listeners often assume that their recognition of convention is proof that something has been communicated. Additionally, the familiar requires less integrative effort than the unfamiliar and is often mistaken for what is natural.

Although the Jakobsonian model of communication applies perfectly well to linguistic and information theories, it is mostly irrelevant to the study of music or art. The process of musical ‘communication’ operates in fundamentally different ways than that of language or telephone transmission. Briefly put, communication always involves the use of signs. Whether you follow Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Peirce, or the ancient Greeks the definition of a sign will always include the proviso that it represents something else in some way. Short of the *Vulcan Mind Meld* there is no such thing as direct communication. Instead, the process of exchanging signs is grounded in the Derridian play of substitution. Musical signification arises from relations between things, not in the things themselves. And it is co-determined by composers, performers, and listeners. Rochberg is suggesting that musical communication can take place without the aid of signs.

Another American composer, named John Anthony Lennon, has stated that complex music is inhuman because it has “limited its immediacy and accessibility” (23). Like Rochberg he claims that by reappropriating the tonal system we can put ‘humanity’ back into music, and by doing so, the “audience will return in droves” (24). Combined with an argument for the naturalness of the tonal system Lennon’s thrust is nothing short of delusional. And, as far as one can tell, the ‘droves’ don’t go to concerts in concert halls they go to amphitheaters and stadiums. In this regard the difference between the audience for John Lennon and John Anthony Lennon is vast. No doubt the latter composer’s audience is not a mass but a specialized collection of economically privileged, highly educated listeners.

The term ‘New Complexity’ indicates a contrary trend to some of the sentiments just described. It can be viewed as part of a larger cultural move toward radical and extreme types of expression, risk taking, and ever-faster forms of artistic signification. The ‘New Complexity’ is like an etching by Giovanni Piranesi. It approaches infinity but always stops short, throwing its trajectories beyond the frame, boundary, or border of the musical work. It stands in marked contrast to the ‘New Simplicity’ much in the same way that composers from southern France in the late fourteenth-century differed from the composers of the Ars Nova period. And if there is an ‘Old Complexity’ it must surely be like an etching by E. C. Escher. It exhibits the infinite through tricks of the trade like serialism, while appearing falsely autonomous.

Of the standard objections to Ferneyhough’s music and notational usage, perhaps the most common is the vehemently held belief that the whole endeavor is pointless because much of the music is inaudible. As many writers point out (e.g. Dahlhaus and Kramer) what is audible is often illusive and in no way absolute. There are many degrees of audibility, each dependent upon psychological, physiological, and aesthetic factors. It may be very difficult to tell the difference

between what is completely inaudible and what is barely perceptible. Richard Strauss was once asked if he could hear an inner voice in a loud, orchestral tutti that he had composed. His response was no, but he could tell if it were absent. Some sounds are intentionally pushed to the periphery of consciousness to do their work.

There are those who claim that the relationships in Ferneyhough's music are merely conceptual (e.g. Marsh). For the most part they are speaking about the complex rhythms he uses, some containing up to four levels of nested tuplets. Clearly they are impossible to sightread, but are they also impossible to perform or hear? To answer this question one must separate the physically impossible from the merely difficult. According to Henry Cowell, any three-level nested tuplet could be accurately produced if a performer would simply devote fifteen minutes a day, for five months to such matters (64). One might locate similar rhythms in the performances of the finest free improvisers. So it would appear that, although extremely difficult to produce, multilevel, nested tuplets are not impossible to play. Okay they're possible, but (so the argument goes) why bother notating them in detail when, a) they will in all likelihood be performed inexactly, and b) performers could (simply) improvise them without having to do all that mental gesticulation.

In regards to the first issue every performance will differ; indeed, that is entirely the point. No form of notation, from the most complex to the simplest, will ever exactly represent a sonic result. In this sense all scores can be called 'paper' or 'eye' music. The accusation that artworks contained superfluous intentions, it is interesting to note, was originally part of Classicism's polemic against Baroque or mannered art (Dahlhaus 54). Symbols that could simply illustrate were praised, whereas allegory was rejected. For Ferneyhough, an aesthetically adequate performance of his music depends upon, "the extent to which the performer is technically and spiritually able to recognize and embody the demands of fidelity (not 'exactitude!')" (1990, 19).

As for performers being able to improvise the same rhythms - this may be true but only in very rare and exceptional cases. Even then, whether they are truly "the same," or can be produced on demand, are open questions. It is true that some performers of Ferneyhough's music are also accomplished improvisers. Perhaps their improvisatory skills help them deal with the quick changes of material and the cutting edge attitude required. But, as 'cellist Taco Kooistra puts it, when he's asked to improvise (on demand as it were) he "usually ends up doing more or less the same things" (27). It is precisely the pressure to realize a Ferneyhough score that makes Kooistra's performances so intense and alive. "By making even the subtlest musical decisions visible through notation, Ferneyhough renders the unconscious conscious. Once a player is forced to think about everything he or she previously took for granted, a new region for interpretation and virtuosity opens up" (Carl 47).

Ferneyhough's performers face many hurdles. The multilayered, rhythmically complex, and radically unfamiliar gestural profiles do much to slow down the process of decoding. His notation (or overnotation if you will) embodies the notion of "too muchness" (see Ferneyhough 1995). One of its purposes is to entice performers into developing unique strategies as they attempt to overcome their initial disorientation. Besides the use of unconventional rhythms Ferneyhough, like most serial composers, tends to compose by separating out the basic parameters of sound. The performers' reintegration of these parameters presents them with both performance and conceptual difficulties, including at a most basic level: physical coordination. Performance difficulty is an inherent component of Ferneyhough's aesthetic, as it was for many late nineteenth-century composers. The difference is that he doesn't wish to mask the sense of difficulty.

There are many performers who have developed very personal ways of approaching his music. Percussionist Steven Schick and others (e.g. Kooistra) have remarked that the effort to work through and execute Ferneyhough's music results in intense, razor-sharp performances. The gap

between score and result, a fact of all live performance, is up-close and personal in Ferneyhough's music.

In preparing *Bone Alphabet* (1991), a work for solo percussion, Schick went through various intermediate stages before he was able to turn the intellectual energy of the score into "meaningful physicality." For Schick, a positive attribute of learning this piece was that "the extreme complexity and performative difficulty... enforce (d) a slower pace of learning and allow(ed) the natural growth of an interpretive context" (132).

Not surprisingly, performers who rely upon their ability to quickly assimilate a large quantity of pieces in order to pay their bills tend to shy away from Ferneyhough's music. However, there are a growing number of performers who are attracted, as Schick was, to virtuosity which foregrounds their struggle with difficulty. The spectacle involved is markedly different from Paganini-style virtuosity where difficulty is made to look easy.

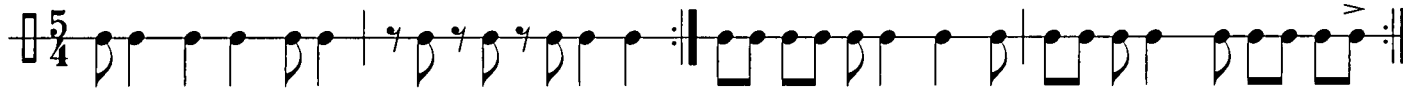
Bone Alphabet has already been performed by at least a dozen percussionists. Ferneyhough's work is receiving more attention and performances than ever before. Perhaps this is because his music foregrounds many important issues of relevance to the contemporary musician, such as: the status of the score, the role of notation, the significance of closed-form composition to performance freedom, and the role of difficulty. The formal principles in his music define an environment in which informal, spontaneous generation can reengage the formal in a meaningful dialogue. His work emphasizes the human agent not only as the generator of systems, but also as the catalyst for the system's demise and subsequent regeneration. This is what Robert Carl was getting at when he wrote that Ferneyhough's music "exudes a human, volatile, surrealistic quality missing from both random and totally rationalized music... his music is an evocation of the cognitive structures we have created for ourselves and with which we now struggle in an increasingly complex world" (47).

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Ensembles of Note

Larry Polansky



The piece begins with one (or more) player(s) playing the ostinato above. This player (or players) plays the ostinato for the whole piece. The ostinato should be quiet, unobtrusive, and absolutely steady. It should be played on something simple such as a pair of sticks, a drum, or clapped. The sound and solid pulse of the ostinato should allow the accumulating melodies to emerge in the foreground.

The other players gradually build a new “melody” over the ostinato by adding one new note or sound anywhere in the 8 measure phrase on each repeat. Once a new note is added, they retain it, repeating the growing melody as exactly as possible on later repeats. Take your time. Stop adding notes when it becomes too difficult to remember your melody. Your melody need have no relationship to the pulse or rhythm of the ostinato, but should be delimited by its time-span.

Players may sit out for any number of repeats at any time. When they start playing again, they should begin accumulating their melody from where they left off. For any repeat(s) players may also, instead of playing their “melody,” join the ostinato (quietly — remember that the ostinato is not the main focus of the piece). The ostinato can be played as is (on one pitch or sound) or with simple patterns of two or three alternating pitches.

At some point, after each of the melodies have grown to around 8-16 notes, on a signal from someone in the ensemble, performers drop out or move to the ostinato, which may be played a few times in unison before the piece ends.

(For a quicker accumulation, the ostinato may be treated as two four measure units, and new notes may be added in these smaller timespans).

Ensembles of Note II: As above, but don't use the ostinato rhythm, just a fixed time-span.

Commissioned by Gamelan Son of Lion

premiered, 12/31/98, Hartford

thanks to Barbara Benary, Jody Diamond, and Laura Liben for valuable suggestions

Lebanon, NH/London, 1998

(rev. 1/15/99)

Neighborhoods of Note

for 2 or 3 Suzuki pianists

for ann, jack, eleanor and julia wilson

One pianist plays the song “Hot Cross Buns,” repeating it slowly and steadily. The second pianist inserts a new note during each repeat, anywhere in the song. Any note is fine, high or low, loud or soft, anywhere on the piano.

For each repeat, add another note, trying hard to play the previous additions as precisely as possible while the new notes are added. Do this about 8-10 times, until many notes have been added, and it becomes difficult to repeat exactly what has been played. After that, keep repeating the two part tune until it becomes familiar.

The pianist playing the first tune must be very steady and focussed.

Variation 1: Each time through, add one more note, but don’t always keep the old ones the same. It is easier to add many more notes this way, but be careful to keep track of how many are added.

Variation 2: Start with 8-10 notes and subtract one each time, keeping the notes the same.

Variation 2a: Start with 8-10 notes (or more) and subtract one each time, but the notes can be different every time (the reverse of *Variation 1*).

Variation 3: Same as *Variation 1* or *2*, but try to add the new notes as close as possible (in pitch or time, or both) to the melody. *Variation 3b:* ...as far as possible...

Variation 4: Instead of playing the notes (or the melody) on the piano, either part can be sung (or played on some other instrument). Do this in the manner of any of the variations.

Variation 5: A third pianist joins in, playing one of the variations above (which may or may not be the same as the second pianist).

Variation 6: Make your own variations.

Larry Polansky

Lebanon, NH December 24, 1997

1st time 2nd time

Piano I

Piano II

ff *p* *ff*

3rd time

p *ff* *mf*

4th time 5th time

p *ff* *mf* *pp* *p* *ff*

mf *mp* *pp*

and so on...

Reflections on Cardew and Wolpe: Vignettes of Old Masters I

Benjamin Boretz

Cornelius Cardew: *Treatise* (1963-1967)

Jim Baker, Carrie Biolo, Guillermo Gregorio, Fred Lonberg-Holm, Jim O'Rourke (players), Art Lange (conductor), Steve Metzger (recording engineer), Peter Pfister (mastering), John Corbett (liner notes).

A score such as Cornelius Cardew's *Treatise* belongs as much to the education culture as to the compositional. Because its most salient social characteristic is an imperative provocation to composition: if you are drawn to this score, and if you want to engage it, to perform it, whatever, you can only do so by strenuous encounter with more of the fundamental issues of composition than blank-slate composition is likely to enforce. In fact, Cardew's score is inverse to the traditional music score—and irrelevant to the normal avant-garde score—which may be described as confronting a user with a performance situation many of whose terms are pre-delimited, and many of whose parameters are predetermined (under the normal interpretations of such scores). Decisions of all kinds concerning possible sound-making, expressive, and performative behavior are made by someone, and those decisions are encoded in the command-systematic images graphically inscribed in the score. The compositional decision-field, in short, is defined, delimited, and narrowed by each of the scored symbols. In Cardew's score, the graphic images not only don't narrow the range of decisions which have to be confronted in order to 'play', they function precisely to expand them into areas which are likely never to have been considered open to re-examination—or even perceived to exist. So where the program-note writer for the *Treatise* album says that "Cardew's *Treatise* invites fanciful readings. In fact, it invites any kind of reading"* , I think this is true only from an angle of approach which looks to a score for instructions how to play, rather than provocations of what to think about (not what to think), what qualities of experience, time, sound, idea, relationship of persons in a socio-expressive situation need to be accounted for (not how to account for them). This is a radical idea of score-making—one, as I began by suggesting, oriented to learning, to expanding people's own initiative toward their own consciousness-raising and creative development rather than toward exhibition or the fulfillment of agendas of virtue or awareness or expression thought out and codified by a controlling composer; if you work at Kenneth Gaburo's *Ten Sensing Exercises*, or Pauline Oliveros's *Bonn Feier* , or any of her Sonic Meditations, of Christian Wolff's *Sticks and Stones*, Stockhausen's *Seven Days*, or any of the scores in Roger Johnson's anthology *Scores*, you will be aware of—and subject to—the point that all of these scores are designed to make a difference in some particular respect in the experience of players and/or witnesses, or in the sonic or aesthetic result. Or to cultivate specific types of sensitivity training, for interpersonal awareness (Gaburo), aesthetic awareness (Kenneth Maue's *Water in the Lake*) or performance behaviors (Barney Childs's *The Roachville Project*). Many of them are formulated in terms of what outcomes are aimed for, without supplying the resources to get there—a somewhat bizarre reversal of the 'classical' music situation, where a score supplies a wealth of materials with no explicit articulation of what music is supposed to get made with them: here are some music-making materials (notes, etc. in sequence), for you to make whatever music with ('classical'); as against ('avant-garde'): here is what music to make, but you provide the materials (whatever notes in whatever sequences, etc.). My own 'speculative' scores, while they strenuously leave outcomes open to real-time composition, nevertheless are conceived with the idea that their input will 'make a determinate difference' to the sonic/experiential output, though they do not preconceive what that difference will be. All

* John Corbett; other descriptions he offers: "...it is quite literally a map without a key. There are no suggestions for how many instruments should play, whether they should play all the shapes or single ones, how to translate the graphic notation into sound, or, for that matter, whether to read the score from left to right...it comes without a marker of scale...there are none of the duration indications that John Cage used....instead, the score is left to be interpreted not simply in terms of how it sounds but also with respect to how it functions and at an even deeper level, what it is for...*Treatise* is a board game with no instruction book."

of these (and there's no implicit relative valuation in these observations) are variants of the traditional orientation to an outcome, an output, somehow, at whatever distance from explicit predetermination, stimulated or coerced or manipulated by the texts of the scores. But I think Cardew's score is over a radical threshold beyond all of these in being reconceived from the opposite end, the end of radically opening, rather than bounding, the experience- thought- and composition-fields of those who engage them. The sounds heard on these CDs are a very satisfying manifestation of people engaging the kind of activity I've described here (the Sonic Youth version is too much of a snippet to count as more than a symbolic salute to an iconic forebear-figure.).



Stefan Wolpe: Assorted CDs (see below)

Any music which makes it through the channels of public dissemination to your ears is of necessity aggressive; else it doesn't get through those channels. But compositional aggressions are not all alike: there is music which is aggressively coercive, like Beethoven, aggressively neutral, like most jazz and all of Stravinsky, and music which is aggressively manipulative, like Mozart and Wagner. (Of course, there are infinite varieties of composites of these reductively formulated personae: Mahler is often a remarkable loaded hybrid of coercion and manipulation.) Manipulation, in particular, has many faces, not all describable as beguiling or seductive: there is an entire literature of music which seems built to be reverse-manipulative, refractory to reception rather than subversive (Mozart) or insidious (Wagner). I think this mode (refractory manipulation) is a twentieth-century phenomenon—a necessarily democratic manifestation unlikely in a highly hierarchized world where underdogs survive only by the grace of overdogs. So here is Stefan Wolpe, whose music exerts its presence by an extreme of charmlessness and in-your-face opacity, not—like, say, Webern—offering you an intimate engagement with the interplay of structural materials, nor, like Sessions, drawing you in with drama, color, and impressive simulacra of expressive and textural depths while simultaneously immolating you in more polyphony than you can process. Wolpe's surfaces are nothing like these; there is an intense struggle orchestrated into them, a struggle, remarkably, between composer and listener: what keeps you listening, if you do, is the obvious presence of something formidable which cannot be penetrated in any obvious mode of reception. The unbending ruggedness of this music is astounding: at maximum power, it becomes an experience of awesome otherness, accessing an internal landscape spiked, barbed, rejective, snarling with ferocious compositionality—for it is, above all, ferociously compositional—what punk might be were it authentically, complexly, deeply, metaphysically—humorlessly, but with the reality and power of real genius—angry. This is in no way 'outsider' music*, for what it uncannily finds a way to compose is a species of terrifying interior experience which belongs to everyone, though it's doubtful that everyone wants to explore it.

Listening again to this music — which I, like most serious New York musicians, was particularly attentive to during the 60s and 70s — I've been struck by the literalness of Wolpe's compositional credo — "any bunch of notes", etc. — in practice. And, as in his writing, there's an interesting dichotomization, and constant cross-emphasis between the pitch-structural (motivic-set) expository messages of his sounds, and their concentrated gestures of superfocused expressivity:

All is pregnant and charged,
and depth is man's due.

* "The composer [Stefan Wolpe] living in New York today is an outsider in the best sense of the word. It is impossible to subsume him:" — Theodor W. Adorno, 1940.

and man's filter.

and all,

that is,

is what it is

All together.

And without that it is litter,

and if not litter, it's falling apart.

There is no dimension to turn to,

but the dimension of a continual collapse.

There is no door through which to enter,

and no wall to lean on,

And you walk a thousand miles,

and you haven't moved a bit.

You walked your feet bloody stepping on the same spot.

You are without time.

Because you have gambled wrong,

you have even lost the **Blossom of the Moment.**

You are without a moment.

The last thing to do is to kill time.

That is the not-so-witty suicide

in which to survive without getting hurt.

(But you have even killed your sensibilities.)

seek to get all points. They don't come easy.

But you will have learned which to do without

or how to knot them together.

I am concerned with not breaking my nose **on light surfaces.**

I am not the one who's taking risks in shallow waters.

There **are flat surfaces and deep ones.**

I am in praise of the deep ones.

But back to the pitch.

The strangely didactic slant of this writing — more Frantz Fanon than Igor Stravinsky — is mirrored in sound, in a demonstrational kind of unfolding of baldly asserted sequences (the 12-tone theme of the piano Passacaglia is only the most blatant instance; the Symphony and almost every other piece lays its initial material out right up front too) whose straightforwardness is unnerved by the heat of its own assertion and the progressively rougher and denser situations it blunders into. The toughness and strangeness of this music is reason enough to resist the 'classicization' that the frontier creative art of my lifetime undergoes as it becomes historicist iconography; I still bridle at the smooth beauty with which contemporary players spin out the quartets of Bartók whose slashing radicalism — aided and abetted by those astounding program notes by Milton Babbitt — on their original Juilliard Quartet recording — redefined what music might possibly be (and the same for the quartets of Schoenberg and Elliott Carter's of 1951). So I resist Austin

Clarkson's desire to draw Wolpe's music into the canon of presentable masterwork by infusing his mostly lucid, knowing, and illuminating program notes with normal-music-sounding images: as, "the first movement is an essay in intimate lyricism" (about the Symphony) — not that it's inaccurate, or inapplicable, but rather that it doesn't seem the slant that captures what (I think) is really what Wolpe's music is about.

Wolpe CDs I'm listening to:

Symphony No.1 (composed at Black Mountain College during the 1950s; 2nd concert version, 1994). Yigdal Cantata (1934). Chamber Pieces I & II (1965-68). NDR Symphony Orchestra; NDR Choir; Johannes Kalitzke. Arte Nova.

Quartet (Piece) for Oboe, Cello. Piano, Percussion (1954-55); Cantata for Voice, Voices and Instruments (1963). String Quartet (1969). Gruppe Neue Musik "Hanns Eisler", Leipzig; Cornelia Kalisch, mezzo-soprano; Robert Schumann Kammerorchester (Jürgen Kussmaul); Silesian String Quartet. WDR.

"Music for Any Instruments": Quartet for Trumpet, Tenor Saxophone, Percussion, Piano (1950-54). From Here on Farther for violin, clarinet, bass clarinet, piano (1969). Music for *Hamlet*; slow movement for flute, clarinet, cello (1929). Suite im Hexachord for oboe and clarinet (1936). Seven Pieces for Three Pianos (1951). Music for any instruments (1944-49): Three Canons; The Spheres of Fourth; Displaced Spaces. Ensemble Avance. WDR.

Charles Stein

The Hermit

Is it not sufficient ecstasy
to live
on the Rim
or to find oneself
a watcher
on the labyrinthine passageways?

Inside the circle of fire
a black orb
vanishing.

Without
the fire
there is no
fire.

The moon a glass orb'd
 goddess object.

Surds. The clouds.

That change cannot befall
what already is only change—

there is another order under which
what pressure brings to bear
 upon the course the water takes is

 the purchase of the will.

The Artifex is a lantern man
 harnessing his fire
 to focus force
 and force the world to burn
 according to his measure

 —as moon is measured change—

That man at the summit
of the pointed peak
either seen or seeing
is of the Rim—

shrouded, hooded, haloed
by black light
the vanishing orbs of that which the ring encircles
the labyrinthine manner of the passaging
between an absolute harnessing
and the horse itself.

It was a matter of the station of the image.
To say that the harness
were the moon
or that which only, when the orb is full,
declares its cool hegemony
convening an order at the cost of freedom—
as if to budge and twitter
to flow and dance
to give gesture to being
without prevenient harnessing
were
freedom—

Yet the time of dancing is the full of the moon
and in its ordered changes, figures
dancing.

No interdiction of the image will withstand
The Harnessed Horse.

There is a course
before the choice to curb its very flowing.
The business was to find it
and to interdict
not image but false ease—

to find the means by which apparencies
fold up in their possibility
to *be* apparencies—

their links with truth.

Every word a seed
the hazard
of a step
in a labyrinth—
accordingly, you cannot even know, while coursing, if it is
a course
if there *is*
a goddess object
nested in its midst—
a welcoming orb
gnoetic and refreshed
at the end of hazarding—

Every word an image
nested in a thought
every thought
harnessing its image
but giving it rein—
letting it run—
thought running with thought—

And the thought
is the labyrinth
that passes
between not *saying*
but *knowing*
Being
and a dark hegemony
that passes as light
and calls its goose-step
dancing.

**

Horses
burning.

**

There was a knowing
that set a course
of motion
to find the very thought

that set it out—
a motion toward the rim
of an outstretched prairie:
West. A city
of thought: East.

**

The trace of the motion itself
confirms a text—
It shimmers dissipates dispels
its urge
of onset
renewed
at every site within it
since surely every station
is a word
and every word
a seed
and every seed
a coil
wound and waiting
to hazard the moment
of its labyrinthine passaging—

The Self back East: Jerusalem.
Was. The City on the Hill
Is.

The thought of a certain rigor and
the thought of a certain height.
The Artifex, the Hermit, a tall
building. At night.
Or with night
inside it.

An elevator shaft
core shooting from nine sub-basements up
to the rotating tower, dizzy with starnight.

The building harbored a man—
an infinite call—a voiceless howling—
the rushing of the wind void
contained within the hollow

of the shaft
so that a core of tone emerged—
raspy, no longer voiceless,
a twine or c(h)ord of pitches
pithing the void.

That building *loved* us
in spite of its howling,
and we, at the bottom
on the street or sidewalk
from which it heaved its enormous upness—
we were taken up into its sound—

Laughable

Outside of the world
Outside of the void that funds it

Unutterable

Monstrosity

Renewal

The Promise

Better than . . .

COUNTER SEED for Spring from Undertime: Awaiting Awakening

Every utterance
will hold
antithetical letters
excluded before.)

yesterday's voices

being's choices

[]

Spherical objects project Being itself.

All objects
have false faces.
Also they flicker
but you can't perceive
which way they
flicker.

Everything fails existence.
Spherical objects fall.

Even Being
vacillates across
abyss space.

Bottoms
emancipate
nervous people by
providing
finality
while
also giving place--
you can land!

[]

Quiet business reverberates
quietly
across lake-like space

Concepts jump--
they exist before
objects crystallize.

Very old brain sections
give your concepts rise.

Cortical lakes
limbic chasms

Zervan--Zarathustra

Why look elsewhere?

[]

Brainstem lodges earliest proto-concepts:
chronotopy before chronology
chronology before clocks

click
clack

[]

Objectivity? vague.
Concept? vague.

Imaginary universes filling real but unimaginable voids.

[]

Finality objectivizes itself.
Stories be told by wall.

Anything can be anywhere anywhere can
harbor energy

boats sails breezes menacing

deluge
Mozambique
unrealized

[]

Cyclones exacerbate climatological anomalies
zones revert
wild deviations normative everywhere

splenetic bureaucracy lethargy lividly thrives

SEED POEMS

I began writing "seed poems" in 1973. There are perhaps fifteen of them to date. The formal rule for composing a seed poem is identical to the rule for Jackson Mac Low's "Vocabularies." Choose a name or phrase. Every word in the poem must be composed of letters and only letters that belong to that chosen name or phrase. Letters may be used as many times as one wishes. Seed poems, however, differ from Vocabularies in their actual manner of execution. Mac Low, as far as I know, begins by finding all the words that can be drawn from his initial word or words. These are then presented graphically and used as a score for improvised performances. The Vocabulary comprises a saturated field of possible or licit lexical items--a "vocabulary." The process of discovering the words that belong to the field is not a part of the work itself. The vocabulary is given *a priori*, as it were. There is no significant relationship between the letters that comprise the initial name or phrase and the stock of words in the field: the former generates the latter mechanically. Any relationship that may obtain between the initial name/phrase and the final work is discovered in the act of performance, not the act of composition; that is, any sense that the work is "about" the person, say, whose name provides the initial letters, is a function of each performance. In contrast, in a Seed Poem, the field of possible or licit lexical items is never generated beforehand; hence, the process and temporal order in which words are discovered are significant aspects of the act of composition. The initial name or phrase is referred to again and again as the poem develops. The associative field of the words that comprise the initial "seed" is similarly referred to again and again as the source of reference for the content of the poem. Both the vocabulary of the poem and its content "grow" from the seed as do its sound and syntax. It should be noted that the constraint upon the letters available for the poem is simultaneously 1. a constraint upon available words and hence a constraint upon content; 2. a constraint upon sound, limiting the phonemic/phonological matrix of the poem and altering the probable frequencies of occurrence of each phoneme from what would ordinarily be the case in a sample of uttered or written speech. (This is true, certainly, of any poem where the poet's ear is involved in composition, but here the rule itself forces proportions and frequencies unique to each seed); 3. a constraint upon available syntactic formations: the absence of the letter "s" in the seed eliminates most plurals and the third person singular, for example. The characteristics of each Seed Poem are further determined by the number of letters available in the seed. A seed with fewer letters will tighten the sound of the poem by increasing the frequency with which each phoneme is used. Alliteration, rhyme and assonance come for free. A seed with more letters will approach the sound of ordinary speech. But even a seed that authorizes a liberal regime will constrain content and syntax in significant ways.

COUNTER SEED POEMS

The rule for the counter seed poem to any given seed poem is that every word in the counter seed must contain at least one letter excluded by the seed. This rule establishes that the vocabularies contained in the seed and counter seed will be mutually exclusive. This is the first "counter seed poem" I have written.

Note on *The Hermit*

The Hermit was written in July, 1999 in response to a suggestion by Ben Boretz that I attempt to pursue the "thought" of a poem without side-stepping its discursive movement with image-thinking. *The Hermit* is a direct reaction to Ben's suggestion, but it holds in reserve its being conditioned by two masterly texts on different moments in the matter of image: Reiner Schürmann's *Meister Ekkhart: Mystic and Philosophers*, and Elliot R. Wolfson's *Through A Speculum that Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism*.

The Hermit is the Hermit of the Tarot cards: an aged figure on a mountain top holding a lantern. I conflate him with another Hermetic figure, the alchemical Artifex, or Demiurge, the transmuter of substances and energies, the mediator of a cosmically situated creative working. Another source is a pair of passages in Franz Rosenzweig's *The Star of Redemption (Part Two, Book Two)*: paragraphs on *Atonement* and *Acknowledgment*.

Contributors

Tom Baker	tbaker@drizzle.com
Tildy Bayar	tildy@byz.org
Elaine Barkin	elainerb@ucla.edu
Benjamin Boretz	boretz@bard.edu
Warren Burt	waburt@melbourne.dialix.com.au
David Crilly	D.Crilly@anglia.ac.uk
Ross Feller	fellerro@mhd1.moorhead.msus.edu
Kyle Gann	kgann@earthlink.net
Steven D. Goodman	c/o George Quasha <gquasha@stationhill.org>
Lydia Hammessley	lhamessl@hamilton.edu
Leslie Kearney	lkdj@aol.com
Jonathan D. Kramer	jdk4@columbia.edu
Charles Kronengold	Charles.Kronengold@uni.edu
Eric Lyon	eric.lyon@dartmouth.edu
Chris Mann	chrismann@interport.net
Peter Monaghan	monop@compuserve.com
Robert Morris	mris@mail.rochester.edu
Robert Paredes	mscherub@blue.weeg.uiowa.edu
Larry Polansky	larry.polansky@dartmouth.edu
George Quasha	gquasha@stationhill.org
Jon Radwan	RadwanJ@montevallo.edu
Mary Lee Roberts	marylee.a.roberts@dartmouth.edu
Charles Stein	cstein@webjogger.net