

The

OPEN SPACE

magazine

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fall 2004

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Jonathan Kramer, 1942-2004

Kyle Gann

In my early years as a music critic, I found my writing heavily inspired by a 1988 book called **The Time of Music**, sometimes even drawing ideas from it without crediting it. In it, author Jonathan Kramer used then-new research about left-brain/right-brain processing to explore how differently various kinds of music can define and structure (or not structure) time. Jonathan described left-brain listening as analytical, deductive, sequential, objective, and literal; right-brain listening was holistic, imaginative, simultaneous, subjective, and metaphorical. Among other conclusions, he noted that “Studies comparing musically trained and musically illiterate subjects have yielded the significant result that, as musicians are trained, they shift their musical activities to the left, analytic hemisphere.” And that partly explained why classical composers had lost touch with the ineluctable facts of how most people hear music.

A side effect - if not in fact the veiled main point - was to create an intellectual framework in which minimalist music made sense. Jonathan described a phenomenon he called “vertical time,” a simultaneous listening mode in which past and present were not linked causally, but seemed telescoped into one. Hardly new to minimalism, the phenomenon was familiar from several world traditions. Suddenly, the classical paradigm in which music told a cumulative narrative, each new phrase a result of its predecessor, was no longer privileged. It was merely an endpoint on a continuum.

Jonathan even went so far as to say that certain kinds of music involving vertical time can't be analyzed - not that we haven't developed the techniques yet, but that analysis has no purchase in a right-brain process. It was a bold statement, especially coming from a professor at Columbia University and one of the country's best-known program annotators. To this day it can make high-powered classical-music types wince. The Berlin Wall fell about that time, and, in Kramer's book, so did the theoretical wall between sonata form and 12-tone music on one hand, Tibetan chanting and minimalism on the other - even if few people noticed. In that highly polarized era, it was the most important achievement any musician could have accomplished. Kramer tossed it out there as though there was nothing radical about it; I think he knew how radical his ideas were, but was trying to be politic in the world of academia.

Jonathan's talk of left-brain and right-brain processes in music began to have an impact on my composing, too. I grew wary of analyzable structures and techniques, disciplining myself to hear my way through a piece without planning anything in advance. My frequent formulation that composing is something you do with your ears, while telling your brain, “Don't call me, I'll call you” - owes much to Jonathan.

For all this, Jonathan was not an uncritical fan of minimalist music, and his own music was a searching critique of the genre. His grooves, in pieces like *Music for Piano Number 5* (1979-80), ran in uncomfortable meters like 11/16. He'd strip a piece down to only six pitches, a la Steve Reich, but then within those six pitches flit between different tempos and styles; his *Atlanta Licks* (1984) for chamber group is a kaleidoscope of Mahlerian romanticism, Terry Riley-ish

jazz, stark expressionism, and other idioms, all held together by that extreme pitch limitation. Moments in and Out of Time (1981-83) was a large orchestra piece that stubbornly adhered to the E minor scale. What he learned from this ultimately enabled him, in pieces like Notta Sonata and Surreality Check, to break through into a truly postmodern style marked by collage-like fractures. His was a deeply philosophical music that brought together musical attributes in strikingly counterintuitive ways, like simple tonality combined with nervous arrhythmia. As colleague Fred Lerdahl noted, "It was a music that contained its own commentary."

Jonathan died June 3, 2004, of acute leukemia, at only 61. He divorced last year, remarried three weeks before his death. He seems to have told almost no one that, last fall, doctors gave him only six months to live. All semester he insisted on attending concerts and sitting on doctoral boards at Columbia, where he had taught since 1989, at the usual rate: "My students count on me." A friend who went mountain hiking with Jonathan in the last months of his life recounted, "Illness brought Jonathan's energy level down to that of the average person." Composer Rafael Mostel received a long May 28 e-mail from him with no hint that he was ill. Fortunately, Kramer did complete his long-awaited book on postmodernism, which is scheduled to appear. Stories at his June 6 memorial service attested to his penetrating sense of humor. Once when he wrote me one of many job recommendations, I emphasized that it was a music history position, and that he shouldn't make too big a deal about what a good composer I was. He grinned his broadest grin and replied, "Gladly!"

Jonathan combined a roving, curious mind with blunt honesty, incisive opinions, and a genuine desire to make the music world a livelier, freer place. I had long looked forward to his someday receiving his just due as a composer. I hope it happens posthumously.

As fellow professor Elaine Sisman recounted, he told one music theory class, "You've probably all been taught the fiction that there are three kinds of minor scales."

Student: "If that's the fiction, what's the reality?"

Kramer: "There is no reality."

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Martin Scherzinger

I was deeply shocked to hear of Jonathan Kramer's untimely death. Jonathan was a great teacher, guide and mentor to me. Everywhere in my work I find echoes and traces of Jonathan's influence. He taught me to go back over my tracks to explore other directions. Jonathan was supportive of my professional and personal efforts beyond what could reasonably be expected. I could always turn to Jonathan for advice in difficult times. I write these words against the sorrow of not being able to bring back Jonathan's unconditional support, his free imagination, intelligence, and his mischievous bursts of inventive humor. I write to cover the grief with a goodbye wish.

—June 2004

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Fred Lerdahl

We are all in such a state of shock over Jonathan's sudden death that I would like to step away from the present and begin with recollections of earlier days. Jonathan and I met almost 35 years ago, in the Fall of 1969, when I began my first teaching job at the University of California at Berkeley. He had recently completed his doctorate in composition at Berkeley under the guidance of Andrew Imbrie and Joseph Kerman, and he held a lectureship there for a year before moving to his first full academic appointment at Oberlin. Jonathan and I were the two youngsters on the Berkeley composition faculty. We shared interests not only in composition but also in issues of musical structure and aesthetics. So naturally we hit it off, and thus began a life-long friendship.

Jonathan had studied with Karlheinz Stockhausen at UC/Davis a year or so before. This was a seminal experience for him. Stockhausen was a welcome antidote, in those rebellious times, to the mainstream tradition established by Roger Sessions at Berkeley. This episode encouraged Jonathan's experimental side and gave him a cosmopolitan outlook that he never abandoned. At the same time, he started to question musical trends, thinking about them from many points of view; he became, in a word, a critic as well as a creator. Perhaps some of this attitude came from having studied with Kerman, but I think it mostly originated in Jonathan's own nature.

After the shared year at Berkeley, our paths continued to cross intermittently. In the 1970s we both held revolving-door junior professorships in the East, he at Yale and I at Harvard. When he came to Cambridge to visit his old music tutor at Dunster House, where he had lived while a Harvard undergraduate, we would get together and talk musical shop. Independently and simultaneously, we were both becoming actively involved with music theory, especially with how theory might develop so as to be perceptually relevant to composition.

When he moved to Cincinnati in 1978, we fell out of touch for the better part of a decade. I am under the impression that his years at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music were among his happiest and most productive. There he established his reputation as a compelling teacher and mentor. He wrote program notes for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and became its composer-in-residence and new-music advisor. He carried out this role superbly, managing to persuade the orchestra to perform many challenging new pieces.

And these were creative years for Jonathan. He composed a series of highly original works based on six-note sets, exploiting in each case the intervallic possibilities to their fullest. One brilliant example is *Atlanta Licks*, an elegant and witty piece that obliquely evokes elements of jazz while integrating them into his modernist style. He also published two important books, *Listen to the Music* and *The Time of Music*. The former, a compilation of his program notes for the Cincinnati Symphony, showcases his skill with words and his ability to convey complex material in an accessible fashion. Gunther Schuller recently mentioned to me that he thinks this the best book of its kind. *The Time of Music* expresses Jonathan's abiding interest in rhythm and time in a unique amalgam of music theory, perceptual research, imaginative speculation, and insightful analysis of a wide variety of classical and contemporary works. It is a permanent contribution.

The last and longest phase in Jonathan's and my friendship has been at Columbia, to

which he moved in 1988 and I in 1991. The friendship included our wives and children, and we enjoyed doing things together as families. His creative work in the 1990s took a postmodern turn that germinated from his earlier reaction to Stockhausen. He was very aware of the diversity and fragmentation of modern life. Rather than limiting his response by espousing any particular version of musical truth, he chose to embrace this diversity and to make it a part of his aesthetic. In his writings he challenged the conventional virtues of unity and organicism. It is not an exaggeration to say that for Jonathan pluralism became an ethical stance. His compositions now juxtaposed and integrated contrasting musical styles, leading to a kind of music that incorporates its own commentary. A fine example is the piano trio *Surreality Check*, which is so magical and subtle in its stylistic transformations that it achieves, ironically, a meta-level of organic unity. Jonathan recently wrote a book on musical postmodernism that I understand is now complete in revised and publishable form.

It is a rare and wonderful thing to have as a colleague someone whom you have known for much of your life and with whom you share so many interests. You don't have to explain who you are or why you have a particular attitude. Sometimes in such cases there are emotions of envy or rivalry, but in our case that was never an issue. Given the generally anti-intellectual climate in contemporary American music, it was a relief to both of us to have a colleague who was both a composer and a theorist, who saw these two activities as complementary and enhancing of the creative spirit. We worked harmoniously together to revitalize Columbia's programs in composition and theory and to build an atmosphere of open dialogue. Throughout he was a rock of steadiness, rationality, and good counsel. He acted always for the benefit of the greater whole. And he was a supportive and extremely diligent teacher and mentor of countless students in theory and composition. Indeed, this is one of his important legacies. It is hard to imagine life at Columbia without him.

—Remarks at Jonathan Kramer's Memorial Service June 6, 2004

Michel Gondry

in praise of the small form

Russell Richardson

Popular music today is consumed less and less on its own, and more and more as part of an audio-visual mix. The general musical, visual or compositional quality of most of these hybrid objects is poor to dismal, but one or two artists working the vein have produced some efforts worthy of attention.

It is perhaps too much to suggest that some of these *auteurs* of pop videos are in the vanguard of a new art form, but a look at the work of Michel Gondry - lately become a feature film director - brings surprising revelations and pleasures.

Would it be presumptuous to hope that artists like Gondry might not be slipping their audiences *saltpetre* by wrapping their highly accessible content (contemporary pop music hits) in an advanced and sophisticated form?

Elective Synaesthesia

First paradox: it is the less remarkable 'songs' which yield the best images.

The images themselves are nevertheless linked to specific sound environments, i.e. they are not simple illustrations or counterpoints, but are imaginative responses to the musical elements of the song.

The boilerplate approach of most videomakers to song accompaniment is a depressingly straightforward series of responses to the following questions:

- i) is the artiste present in the image?
- ii) is the artiste performing the song?
- iii) is there a narrative?
- iv) does the cutting rhythm mirror the musical rhythm?
- v) does the image content illustrate the lyrical content?
- vi) are special effects used?

The standard answers to the above questions are: yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, and yes, as watching one hour of MTV proves.

While Gondry does like to include the artist inside the video, it is very rarely that a performance is used, and even rarer that elements of the lyrical content are incorporated into the visuals (an exception to both of these being the Rolling Stones version of 'Like A Rolling Stone', which is really a photo-novel of the lyrics intercut with a seamy club performance of the well known Dylan song).

Gondry seems much more interested in composing his images musically, and (perhaps) imposing his own quirky narrative obsessions onto the mood of the song. In particular, Gondry uses synaesthesia within all of his best work, and aims for a lightness of form which is at odds with the considerable technical (and financial) weight of the filmmaking process.

Consider the four artifacts (song-videos) and their use of synaesthetic effects *

Come in To My World - Kylie Minogue

A simple verse - chorus - verse structure has the singer walking around a circular road junction in 'typical' downtown Paris. No monuments, no tourism, but unmistakably Paris.

The singer walks around the junction, mouthing the words of the song, while passers by get on with their daily lives, walking, driving, quarreling... But when Kylie returns to her starting point, another Kylie Minogue (herself, not a body double) steps out of a shop doorway and the pair of them walk off, not duplicating, but complementing the first circuit. We may not notice at once that every single person (there are 25) has been 'doubled' too, and moves in a loosely improvised variation to the first 'verse'. At the end of chorus two, the gimmick begins to become terrifying, as a third Kylie steps out of the same shop, and the passers by have tripled. The song goes on for four verses until there are 100 'extras'.

The song is upbeat, but rather ordinary. The effect of the video is hallucinatory, yet not once is a single image other than quotidian: no flashes, no superimpositions, fades or dissolves. Everything is clear and hard.

The technical means used to achieve this are of secondary importance (computer linked motion control device on the camera to ensure exact repetition of each 360° pan so that the 'four' backgrounds synch up precisely, with only the 'extras' needing layering.)

This might be considered as a visual fugal form, with the second voice entering at the precise point the camera makes its 360th minute of arc.

What is interesting is the lazy contrapuntal effect of the image track, as if twenty five instruments (the extras) were each allowed an improv chart (the boy in the background stands on various bollards and

Michel Gondry

leaps between them, taking great care never to be on the same bollard twice at the same point in the cycle.)

Similarly, as the central figure (melody), Kylie Minogue not only walks four circuits, but also interacts with herself at key points, with the two, three and eventually four paths interweaving; with one Kylie ducking under the arch created by another Kylie leaning on a lamppost, for example.

And there is the repetition device (strophe marker) of Kylie dropping her dry cleaning package onto the floor at the very beginning, a package which is then picked up by the second Kylie.... which serves as not merely a temporal marker, but almost as a musical key signature.

At any rate, it is known that Gondry marks out his worksheets as a score, with different staves for the various instruments, and very precise temporal markers for harmonic intervention.

The Hardest Button to Button - White Stripes

A simple three chord riff from the back-to-basics (with a wicked wink) band. Gondry lines up drum kits for each beat: until there are 36 'walking' through the park, instruments appearing and disappearing on every beat, but only ever one musician, appearing exactly where the current beat is to be found. The technique, which seems to be advanced digital duplication is in fact as old as cinema, and was used by Meliès in the 1890s: simply turn off the camera and have the actor leave frame, then start the camera. Hey presto! the actor disappears, and reappears somewhere else.

But as the rows of identical drums and amps snake through the Brooklyn subway, the impression of multiplicity becomes unnerving. The effect here is not one of digital duplication, where the various instruments were sampled, copied and pasted, but much simpler: the production team went out and bought 36 identical drumkits and 36 identical amplifier stacks. Though notionally identical, therefore, each instrument is subtly different, not a copy at all.

Once again, and very self-evidently, Gondry's use of a precise score can be seen: With only four tracks (drums; vocals; guitar and (offscreen) bass) and a very solid 4/4 backbeat, the images click in with a mechanical cutting rhythm of one cut per quarter second, or every 8 frames (approx). Within this fixed *phrasing*, the 'narrative' (i.e. the physical setting) cuts up the longer piece into irregular sections (the park; the stairs; the subway; the road junction) each of which plays with a different use of the stop frame effect.

It's also clear that Gondry gets bored with any rigid scheme, and dislikes repeating himself, as the song progresses, no effect is repeated without playful variation.

A nice index of this opposition to strict (self-imposed) rules is that the lighting conditions are left ambient, which produces a wonderful flicker in some sections, and a gradual deepening of tone, and reddening, as the day progresses and the sun lowers in the sky. It would have been a relatively simple

matter to color correct for homogeneity in post production, so we have to assume this patina of reality was deliberately included for its (?) beauty.

Star Guitar - Chemical Brothers

A basic dance/trance track, high on rhythmic variation is accompanied only by what seems to be the view from a train window of a passing landscape. Yet soon, the apparently random coincidence of passing objects and the various beats of the song becomes manifest as the explicit and precise design of the video: every object is tied to a beat: the signal posts, bridge supports, passing trains or houses are all timed to fall exactly on the various polyrhythms.

But the images are all photorealistic, i.e. real filmed landscapes (though they have certainly been treated, in an equivalent of photoshop). This painstaking technical trick passes unnoticed, despite the huge amount of work needed to make it appear seamless, and is undercut by moments of playful beauty (such as the breathtaking but wholly unnecessary additions of reflected sunlight inside the carriage, and a brief passage through sunset to night and back to day while passing an oil refinery).

The whole track is pure synaesthesia, and quite giddy making, even though the track itself is, again, rather unremarkable.

Gondry has achieved (unknowingly?) the reverse of random score reading - Charlie Parker apocryphally playing the 'melody' of birds perched on telephone wires; earnest improvising musicians playing the New Jersey telephone book, numbers for notes... and such. Gondry has taken an existing tune, and replaced each single element with a concrete object whose size, shape, color and positioning is determined exactly as though it were a note, rest or chord on a staff.

La Tour de Pise - Jacques Coen

Made earlier, with a lower budget and on celluloid, the inventiveness and lightness of this film shows Gondry at his best. The rather beautiful love ballad has its words decomposed and reconstituted (sometimes entire words, sometimes fragments of words, or even single letters).

We see the words written on screen as we hear them sung.

Except, each word or fragment is taken from a real neon or painted sign in contemporary Paris. The lines are assembled in a variety of split screen patterns, from simple left right split (e.g. the last shot - not in the lyrics - "the / end") to one to image frieze across the center. Again, the playfulness of Gondry shows when the chorus repeats, and Gondry subtly skews the signs he features ("Romeo" becomes 'Romano', 'Juliette' becomes 'Julienne') The interludes and instrumental breaks are filled with haunting montages of Paris skylines, clouds at dusk, passing metros and suchlike. The guitar (lute?) solo is a montage of guitar shop signs and neons. The small graphical and title card tics Godard employed in his 1960s films, are here reprised so swiftly and lovingly that the academic / homage trap is avoided, or, if you prefer, is given its proper, light, weight.

Michel Gondry

(By the way, when Gondry makes extensive use of split screen again, in another video, it's strictly a right/left split and features the identical sequence (one uncut shot) running start to end on the left, and end to start on the right, meeting exactly in the middle of the clip. ('Sugar Water' by Mano Chabo).)

I am not sure how conscious Gondry's knowledge of musical experiment is, but as well as being a percussionist himself, his family biography includes a serious amateur/semi-professional musician father; a music teacher mother; and a musical instrument inventor grandfather; so it's reasonable to assume that Gondry's general, informal musical awareness is rather high.

More

What is true of most video clips - that deprived of their music track, the visuals have neither meaning nor effect - is reversed here. Often, deprived of the visual, the music has little interest. One can well imagine (as is indeed the case) Gondry having a visual idea, and looking for a song which can illustrate it. Anecdotally, he admits as much, often thinking up either a story (or dream) fragment, or a technique he'd like to use, and looking around for a song to carry it.

The paradox here is that while Gondry and his generation remain the most dexterous at handling virtual images, Gondry himself anchors everything he does in a Kracaueran respect for the surface of reality, and as such, achieves the redemption of that reality that Kracauer believed to be the heart of film's power.

(The discussion of celluloid versus videotape can be held at another time... paralleling the arguments and positions of the acoustic versus electronic instrument 'schools')

The most salutary thing about Gondry's work is that despite the huge amount of thought and technical expertise which goes into each piece, the end results are always refreshingly 'amateur' in the best sense of the word, with a lightness of touch and an impishness usually associated with the best improvisers in the music world.

His finished pieces have something of the air of sketches, or *études* - that airiness which prevents them being mere academic exercises.

Gondry plays standards, and the more banal the standard, the more 'Gondry' the result is. Given a decent song, the resulting video artifact can be exalting.

But this is not where Gondry is headed.

To date he has completed just two long form works - the rather scriptbound 'Human Nature', and the far more ambitious and successful recent (2004) 'Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind'.

This latter becomes illuminated by Gondry's working techniques in his videos. Though a very worked out narrative and character development (courtesy of co-writer Charlie Kaufmann's script) is present, the real through lines are given by considering the characters as instrumental parts; the scenes and sequences as mini-movements; and the Rashomon-like variations of 'Truth' in repeated story scenes, as sectional variations of a core melody in a long form musical piece. Even the circularity of the 'plot' can be considered as a surprising (but inevitable...) return to the root key after a deliberately bewildering series of tonality changes (ditto for the mood of the film, which is uncertainly balanced between love story, thriller; psychological drama and comedy).

And

Gondry provides an antidote - one of the 'few, true' who could vindicate an entire art-form - to any automatic lack of respect one might feel for such an abused and abusive medium as the pop video, and his attention to detail and rigor brings him in line with craftsmen and artisans rather than the 'machers' of any commercial art.

In the end, it is only a co-incidence, or better, a convenience, that Gondry has found employment in the music world. His approach to film composition is a way forward from the narrative and verbal (or dramatic) conventions which have straitjacketed film since the emergence of sound, hence of words... He shows that the rhythmic, gestural and melodic compositional techniques traditionally associated with music (or dance?) are more appropriate to film than the verbal meaning-heavy, literary and/or static, visual, conceptual painterly frameworks used in almost all mainstream cinema. Gondry's conception of film as a time based compositional art is very clearly revealed in these miniatures and should bear thinking about by all filmmakers, musicians and writers, not just on its own terms, as a way of considering film composition, but as a fruitful path to follow when butting against compositional and expressive problems in one's own idiom.

As Mahler knew, it's always and only popular culture which can save high art.

- *For ease of access, I am only referring to videos made available on the recent DVD 'Michel Gondry - Directors Label' available from Palm Pictures, and to the two extant feature films which Gondry has directed, 'Human Nature' and 'Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind'.*
- *Incidentally, on the collected videos DVD, there is also a long documentary where Gondry explicitly discusses some of his compositional and scoring techniques, as well as the motivation for some of his video work.*

Judy Klein's *the wolves of Bays Mountain*

(Open Space CD 15, 2004)

Juliana Snapper

The first distinguishable howls we hear emerge from their own spectral fabric of shifting bell-like sighs; a series of measured, speculative scoops stretch and dissemble till a second voice answers, arching close to the first voice but avoiding unison. These voices return in increased numbers and energy about halfway through the second section. Virtuosoic wails surge and overlap in dense untempered layers, like a chorus of wrestling, horny castrati. This (unaltered!) mating chorus, is one of the most memorable moments of the work for both its intricacy and sheer textural beauty. Framing this eruption, are long stretches dominated by grunts and scuffles as the wolves move through the brush. They approach, then retreat from the listener just as they circled Klein and marked her position (now the listener's position) with an "X". The immediacy of this middle section gradually evaporates toward the third section, as if the wolves close-in and withdraw on a structural level as well.

If the familiar relationship between living and canned voice materials relaxes you, this lens is, - I'll warn you now - a trap. The poles of abstraction (highly processed sounds) and immediacy (unaltered "living" sounds) frame a slippery third space that's harder to receive. As the piece nears its end, even hardened listeners might struggle not to anthropomorphize the wolves just a little. Not that the wolves sound human exactly - but their voices invite a kind of kinetic empathy. When the spectrum of the howls punches around the singer's formant you can actually feel their cries shiver in your throat. Knowing (from the liner notes) that two of the wolves have died since the recordings reinforces the distinctly mournful feel of this kinetic rub. This easy pathos crumbles, however, when we read that these last lyrical howls aren't a lament but more of a love song. If we're robbed of a grand communion via some elemental *Ursprache*, perhaps Klein suggests that we listen for an *Urgesang* instead. The doubleness of hearing a "love song" that sounds like grief is incredibly moving; the play of love and loss, (can they really be separated?) in an echo crooned in unknowing anticipation of its object's death, is downright operatic.

Klein has that elusive light touch with sound processing that keeps the tools from upstaging the music. It is simply less interesting to wonder which sounds are cooked than to listen to them unfold. These wolves are not stand-ins for All Wolves, or for Wildness; they are specific players. (Klein even gives us their names and bios in the liner notes.) And this specificity is ultimately what distinguishes "wolves of Bays Mountain" from other naturalist music. Klein opens up a moment of contact between herself and the six wolves she followed, and somehow brings us nose to snout with the exquisite problem of empathy itself.

Before and After Listening to Judy Klein's *the wolves of Bays Mountain*

(OPEN SPACE CD 15)

Katharine Norman

I was asked if I'd like to write about this piece, but reviewing a CD is too hard for me. A simple description would be nothing less than that a written disservice. A critique would be nothing more than a personal opinion. It's finding the space between that's so difficult. And I have only recently begun to realise fully that listening is all there is to music; and that listening extends outwards, either side of listening to the sound that music makes. There's before listening, after listening - and then, there's listening to the music, in between (and perhaps that's the part of listening that is inexpressible, in words at least).

It's a strange and daunting kind of responsibility, being an audience of one on behalf of a readership of...well, however many of you invisible readers there are out there, listening to this voice, now piping up inside your head. But essentially it's just the two of us - you and me - right? So I could try and have a listen for you, share my before and after, and hope you'll be interested enough to venture in between.

BEFORE (listening)

A piece about wolves. Wolves - well, that's just too much information already; or at least so *much* information, in a big jumble of jostling associations and deep anxieties. (I speak for myself, but you'll have your own wolves, I know). Wolves at the door, running with wolves, wolfing down your dinner, Red Riding Hood and her difficult relationship with lupine emotions, 'in bocca al lupo!' - an Italian good luck wish from one exam student to another - into the wolf's mouth! Wolves in documentary programmes, obligingly tearing the flesh off some hapless four-legged victim while, across the screen, you maul your roast beef TV dinner. Jekyll and Hyde, wolf-men, wolf-boys, wolf tones, wolf whistles - wolves surging forward in a baying pack of nocturnal associations... all this before listening.

So although I haven't even torn off the CD shrink-wrap, the title of Klein's work has a firm psychological hold (with teeth). We all know the sound of wolves, howling into the black night, out there beyond sight - somewhere in the distance, but not as far away as you would like. Because wolves are tenebrous presences in the human psyche aren't they? We have made monsters of them, ones that are irreversibly present in what Virginia Woolf (in *Orlando*, her fantasy on equivocal identity) calls that 'dark hollow at the back of the head when the visible world is obscured for the time'. Right now, I've woken my pack from their satiated slumber, and you've got a bunch of them pawing away at some half-buried roots, back there in that dark place. It's too late to get rid of them.

But I've never met a real wolf, *in situ*, have you? Years ago I did once stand outside the fence at London Zoo while a dejected wolf padded mournfully from side to side of its cage, looking at both me and Regents Park with distrustful eyes. Maybe that subjugated wolf was wondering - along with me - how things could have come to this. Does that count as real? In the 1987 cult film *Withnail and I*, a dark comedy set in 1960s London, Richard E. Grant's Withnail rants drunkenly in front of that same fence, watched by that same (I like to imagine) pacing wolf. But while Grant is acting his socks off, the wolf is unaware of the distinction between imagination and reality. Yet we are also unaware of that distinction, because although we don't know anything about wolves, we imagine we do. Howl like a wolf - you think you know that sound, don't you? It shivers through you from some experience you think you've

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had. But we are so distant from the reality of wolves, and so bewildered by our imaginative lupine bestiary, that we have absolutely no idea what they might think or feel, or why they might sing.

So to choose *wolves* as a subject for music – rather than a field-recording – well, that's a tricky one: it's not only inevitable that ears will be pricked for certain associations - and may be deaf to others - but you run the risk of anthropomorphizing. All that before listening. And if you want to change minds – or to invite minds to change - you've got a bit of work to do.

I'm looking forward to listening. I've heard Judy Klein's music before, and liked it. And it does stay in the mind, well, my mind anyway (a reviewer has no right to assume someone else's vision). I remember *From the Journals of Felix Bosonnet* a speech piece that austere grips the heart, with a masterful pacing of spoken recitation and bells. And I've heard her *Elements* pieces, remembering them now as intricate, delicate, suspensions of sound – web like, hanging there in space, shimmering. There's something special about that ability to put sound in physical space, and leave it hanging in another space afterwards. So I'm looking forward to hearing how that sensibility will engage with this rather different subject.

Moving closer, removing the packaging... Over the page, the liner notes describe Klein's project, recording a family of wolves living in Bays Mountain Park, in the mountains of Eastern Tennessee. This park is their natural habitat, a world away from Regents Park, London. Klein's notes are to the point and intelligently unintrusive: she remarks that 'In the piece, the wolves are heard much as I heard them myself, sometimes only footsteps away, and also transformed, such as occurs in the realm of imagination, memory and dream'. There is a lot to be pondered in that one sentence; about what we are hearing – Klein's hearing – and where we are going, - between various states of transformation - and how we will measure space – in footsteps (a human distance, easily outrun). But how to listen? Klein she goes on to describe a little more of how the piece is put together, structurally, and in sonic terms, but there is nothing didactic – and I am so grateful for that – to tell us how to listen. (Many could learn from that, I'll add – didactically...) Klein also provides a brief note on the wolf pack itself, whose evocative human-endowed names – Navarro, Kashtin, Djenoun, Askina, Nayehi and Kanati – provide a way of acknowledging the individuals. Already, I'm longing to hear the results. What a wonderful thing to do! To go out into the mountains, with the wolves, be with them, and share the experience in sound. And Klein's acknowledgements, to the collection of friends and contacts that assisted and supported her along the way, reveal just how willing people are to understand that kind of wonder.

Nearly there...but still some expectations before listening. Electronic music like this (I am assuming I know what this will be like, I may have drawn the wrong conclusions...) thrives on our associative powers for 'real world' sounds. If I *know* that sound, I have all kinds of memories and associations around it. (A door, a sigh, an ice-cream van's chimes, a lover's voice, the howling cry of a wolf in the night...It's kinda obvious, so I won't bore you with dumb-ass theory today...). Documentary field-recordings bring all our knowledge with them, which can be an encumbrance.

So now, The Wolves of Bays Mountain are slipping elegantly into my CD player. More, after listening.

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AFTER (listening)

Well, you really must listen to this piece, it's astounding! I can't believe 21 minutes has passed, it seems like they had just began and now, they've gone. Or rather, I'm back here. Wait...a little more distance is required.

These wolves are not as I expected, and this work is so much more than I was hoping for – and the sound of wolves is just so.....strangely familiar. There I was, thinking I'd bring all that fur-lined baggage to listening, and Klein's powerful work let me leave it at the roadside. Who needs to drag a suitcase along a dirt path, when there are unknown wolves, just footsteps away? And of course, that's one of the points she's making. Or rather, they're making – because the wolves communicate a great deal, in their own voice.

I could describe the many wonderful passages in this work – the rending morning chorus of singing wolves; the running and snarling, accompanied by the growing agitation of crows above; the nocturnal sonic landscape, filled with insects and the rising song of the family of wolves, simply being; the haunting duet that ends the work. (Klein calls it a love song, and indeed who is to say that wolves cannot love?) All this extraordinary sound, and with it the extraordinary privilege of eavesdropping on lives that are no doubt aware of, but unconcerned by, human infiltration.

Because she's there: her sources are pristine field-recordings, material that, I think, is both enticing and problematic for music in several respects. As a composer I've found it's not long before someone asks me 'so, just how did you record that sound?', 'where did you have the microphone?', 'where were you?'. Listening, it's difficult not to get hung up on thinking about the microphone, and even more so in such a strange, un-human environment as this. How to get beyond that wanting to envisage how 'there' was, to a point when you *are* there, in listening?

Perhaps you just can't force it. Certainly, as I listen, I'm wondering how she recorded some of these sounds, the yelping, scuffling to and fro of running wolves – a breathless, powerful pounding run, paws springing from dry earth, a prey (in mind or actuality), barking and growling with exhilaration. Perhaps she was hanging from a tree, or hovering near them – heart in mouth - or perhaps the microphones were secreted there and she was safely down the road - but somehow I think not. But then, it doesn't matter, because soon all thoughts of why and when just disappear.

The more problematic disappearing act is to dissolve all those surface associations we have for 'wolves', while simultaneously connecting directly to the related – but more profound - oneiric imagining of wolves that is etched deeper in our psyche. Generally we go back and forth between these, because the former is our only way of articulating the latter. But this is music.

There is very little transformed sound in this piece. I found that intriguing. Here is a composer who, in other works, uses the sound processing environment to produce an abstract digital canvas. Here is a work that could have been a sonic fantasy, sources obscured and acoustically reinvented as abstract music. And then I began to realise that transformation might have a different purpose here. I really think that Klein enables us to access our psychic connection to wolves in a new way, through the transformation of sound. I think she achieves this in a very subtle way that gives transformed sound a psychological role, and transforms listening.

First, before anything other than what the listener brings to the work, there is an extended passage of obviously processed, transformed sound. A slowly twisting web of filtered tones, aimless, almost sine waves, encompassing a minor third, quietly settling and re-settling. This is not vocal timbre – quite - but the register is within the human vocal range. So there are allusions to the inner world here. They are un-explicit, possibly unconscious, but certainly related to allusions we customarily allow music to draw. Out of this sound the howling of wolves emerges, revealed as the source of those filtered resonances.

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Too long to be a simple introduction, too powerful to be a simple frame, the opening sets up an expectation of more of the same - or at least it did for me. I have to admit to surprise when what actually happens is that, rather than integrating transformed and non-transformed wolf cries in a prolonged elegy, Klein appears to abandon one piece in favour of another. Transformed sound dissolves and the major part of this long work is made from recordings of wolves, and their environment. These are - as she states in her liner notes (but my ears had forgotten by now) - largely unedited.

I think this decision is inspired. The work *could* have started with unadulterated recordings of wolves in their environment, that opening could have been omitted without feeling its loss. I for one would still have been gripped by the sounds of wolves, and the drama of their lives. It would have been a satisfying aural documentary, beautifully structured, elegantly conceived. Listening, our previous knowledge of wolves would have been supplemented by an intelligent presentation of the natural world. PBS programming for electroacoustic music majors. But Klein's stroke of genius is to put a barrier between what we thought we knew, and what we are knowing, now. This tangle of slow, undulating processed sounds went on long enough to become an impenetrable fence; not caging us, but shielding the view, and drawing us away from remembering all those associations, all those things about wolves we 'knew'. When the 'real world' emerges after that opening - well, it's just luminous in its presence. There's no going back.

Wolves are here, now, in our ears - and I mean *in our ears*, they're so near. For quite a few minutes I feared for Klein's safety - especially when wolves run back and forth, their breath heavy and laboured, the chase serious, for real. Whoever is listening, they're way too close for comfort. And I'm listening. This is not a comfortable piece - and so many grateful thanks for this. This is a piece that is respectful of a certain kind of power, and lets us know it.

But there remains something strange. The transformed sounds don't entirely disappear. Why not, haven't they done their job by now? Yet, here and there in the natural environment, just occasionally, there is a faint cluster or a distant filtered undulation. It's as if the precarious, shimmering divide between the conscious and oneiric world is quietly, but constantly, acknowledged. Real wolves and dream wolves - one transforms the other, in the space between our ears. And then, near the end, there is another passage of transformed vocal sound - their voices, not ours - reminiscent of the opening. But this time, the sound of wolves is already in our ears. Listening to the wolves of Bays Mountain.

And really, that's all I wanted to talk about, because your listening is more important than words. Leaving aside my complete admiration for someone who records these animals, close up and so beautifully. Leaving aside the fact that the landscape recorded is a joy to experience - not only wolves, but also birds, the sounds of insects, air and earth, the world apparently free of any technology other than the microphone. Leaving aside Klein's customary, but unaffected, sophistication when it comes to her chosen sound processing environment, csound. Leaving aside all that (as if you can) - this piece just dreams reality so well.

The Collected Essays of Milton Babbitt

edited by Stephen Peles with Stephen Dembski, Andrew Mead, and Joseph N. Straus,
Princeton University Press, 2003

Review by John Peel

This remarkable collection of articles by one of our most important modern masters is a lifetime testament to thinking about music. What an achievement! What an accomplishment to have written such an array of finely crafted essays while at the same time writing such an array of music—the innumerable compositions that preceded, accompanied and inspired many of these thoughts. Just as his music is too often characterized as ‘difficult,’ many of Babbitt’s prose writings suffered the same initial reputation of being recondite, impenetrable mazes of music theoretical speculation. Time, along with further developments and refinements of the concepts and language of advanced music theory, spawned in many cases by notions originally presented explicitly, implied or left as open questions in these Babbitt papers, have made these essays easier and flowing to the point of feeling ‘classic.’ Certainly for future generations, many of these papers will be seen to be foundational to an understanding of the deepest artistic and aesthetic issues of the art of tone, whether collection-based as in the system of diatonic tonality or order-based as in the twelve-tone system. Princeton University Press and the editors have produced not only an historically important document but also a beautiful book—handsome to read and to hold. The essays have been extensively edited with commentary. Endnotes include not only Babbitt’s original notes but also historical and bibliographical additions by the editors, occasionally expanding or clarifying Babbitt’s text and identifying the remarkable assemblage of composers, performers, theorists, philosophers, scientists, mathematicians, etc., who appear in these essays and whom Babbitt knew either personally or from their work. Fortunately, by consulting original typescripts and careful re-reading, the editors have also corrected the texts. Many of the niggling errors that “besmirched” originally published versions have been removed. As might be expected with texts that include natural language, music notation, pitch-class numbers, mathematical symbols such as set-theoretic and group-theoretic notation, etc., an error or two persists and will still be there as a ‘gotcha’ for the reader who is systematically following Babbitt’s arguments.

A triad of recurrent themes binds these writings and forms the basis and title for the last but chronologically most recent essay in the collection, “My Vienna Triangle” (1999). At the beginning of this piece, we find a charming and intimate portrait of the artist as a young serialist, the acolyte in early encounters with Schoenberg in New York. Our Jackson, Mississippi via Philadelphia and Washington Square southerner, *kein Wiener doch ohne Geist und Seele*, is not allowed into the Schoenberg circle, in spite of his brilliance and enthusiasm. Although denied the inner sanctum, these remained heady times for Babbitt. Conversations with Steuermann, performances by Kolisch, lectures by Schoenberg, premieres of the Fourth String Quartet and the Violin Concerto—these were momentous encounters and events: history, at least music history, unfolding before his eyes and ears.

With Schoenberg the first leg, Schenker is the second leg of this Vienna Triangle. The direct encounters are with Schenker’s disciples, many, like the Schoenberg circle, arriving in this country fleeing the horrors of Europe in the late 1930’s. Hans Weisse at the Mannes School, Ernst Oster (later to teach at the New England Conservatory), Oswald Jonas, Felix Salzer (later at Queens College), these and others the neophyte Babbitt engages in discussions of *freie Satz* concepts and *Tonwille* analyses. Again denied the inner circle, partly by contamination from having ventured too close to the Schoenberg orbit, Babbitt dares to question the Schenkerians about terminology (the infamous *Übergreifen* passage in *Der freie Satz*), about his favorite

foreground details being glossed over in the analytical graphs, and about the underlying normative and evaluative assumptions—the “should” from the “is” or “was” as Babbitt puts it.

From Schenker back to Schoenberg, Babbitt’s thoughts roam in this and the essays preceding, from the specific prolongation level in a tonal analysis to a general notion of structural level and the interpenetration of structural levels; from the specific theme to the relation of theme to middleground voice-leading or theme to serial unit; from comparisons of structures to formulating questions of hierarchical paths along with criteria and degrees of relatedness. In spite of obvious and formally suggestive parallels—Schenker’s transformational-generative model of tonal structure, progressing from a background tonic triad *Ursatz* to foreground detail through a set of rules of inference (the middle-ground transformational rules derived from species counterpoint); Schoenberg’s (or Babbitt’s extensions of Schoenberg) Basic Set as background reference progressing through various systematic and contextual transformations to a surface of 12 pitch-class aggregates—Babbitt ultimately will find the two systems divergent and incompatible.

For the third leg of his Vienna Triangle, Babbitt traverses the *Ringstrasse* from the musical side to the philosophical side and invokes the ‘Vienna Circle’ of logical positivists: Carnap, Hempel, Feigl. Here the influence is less direct, more elective affinity. Here we find an inspiration for Babbitt’s life-long passion for rigorous thinking and clarity, for stripping away the metaphorical and the confessional in writing about music, and for employing the formal abstract model to elucidate the depth and ramifications of a particular property or relation. Concomitant with these precepts are Babbitt’s concerns about the responsibility of the artist to his public and to the future of music—what the artist says about his work, what is taught and will be taught to subsequent generations of musicians—along with his mistrust of journalistic and jingoistic prose about music (longing perhaps, for the Schoenberg “Society for Private Performance”). Still another idea evolving from the Vienna Circle is the notion of ‘rational reconstruction’ of a piece or passage of music—setting up possible backgrounds and transformations as a model of the composer’s thought and as an antidote to the biographical and ‘intentional’ in music analysis. Those who know Babbitt the inspired and inspiring teacher will find his voice evoked here—*Gedanken* experiments in learning to hear music in new ways and the writing of “as if” passages in order to better understand Bach’s or Chopin’s or Wagner’s voice-leading.

The essays, arranged in ascending order of first publication, may be loosely grouped into the following categories: theoretical, analytical, celebratory, memorial, philosophical/meta-theoretical, *pièces d’occasion*, reminiscences and reviews. The reminiscences are especially vivid and form a wonderful picture of the New York new music scene from the 1930’s on. Babbitt arrives at Washington Square College (later New York University) to work with Marion Bauer whose just-published book, *Twentieth Century Music*, “committed the unheard-of professionalism of containing actual musical examples, including some from Opus 11, *Erwartung*, and *Pierrot Lunaire*.”¹ Then in 1935, carrying sheaves of early scores, Babbitt timidly approaches Roger Sessions to ask for lessons. Sessions inquires of him what he wants to do—“to begin from scratch,” and what he would like to achieve at the end of three years of study—“I knew enough about him not to dare to give what would otherwise have been my first answer: the Schoenberg *Variations for Orchestra*.”² We learn that Sessions, from the first lesson on, focused on the relation of species counterpoint to composition, “not as explicit composition but as the model and framework of tonal structure at various levels.”³ Here also we have a candid glimpse of the life transforming pain endured by Sessions at being labeled a “cerebral” composer, a “composer-

¹ Babbitt, *Collected Essays*, page 336

² pp. 388-389

³ p. 391

theorist,” thus, not really an “artist.” Of course, for all those who know Milton Babbitt, these are the same epithets he has had to endure for a lifetime. How different from the reception of a Johann Sebastian Bach, “The Learned Musician,” celebrated for the compositional virtuosity of the *Kunst der Fuge*, the *Musical Offering* or the *Canonic Variations on “Vom Himmel Hoch”* (circulated among Bach’s friends in the Society of Musical Science⁴), of a Beethoven for the monumental fugues of the *Hammerklavier* Sonata and the String Quartet in C-sharp Minor, or of a Brahms for his mastery of invertible counterpoint in the *Variations on a Theme of Haydn!* From his youth on, Babbitt never capitulated on this issue of complexity and demanded the most from himself and his listeners. A motto for his life and for his music became “making of music all that it can be,” whether this meant having a single pitch endowed with multiple intra-dimensional attributes, or having text and tone interpenetrating and interwoven in the vocal works, or striving for the spiritual and technical qualities of a work to fuse into a single transcendent image. The legacy that Babbitt seems to have taken from those youthful days with Sessions into the present is that of a prodigious worker and courageous artist who found his own path early and who has never wavered.

Among the theoretical essays is the tetralogy: “Some Aspects of Twelve-Tone Composition” (1955), “Twelve-Tone Invariants as Compositional Determinants” (1960), “Set Structure as a Compositional Determinant” (1961), and “Twelve-Tone Rhythmic Structure and the Electronic Medium” (1962). In these four ‘gospels’ Babbitt formulates concepts and language, the kernel as it were, that will greatly influence his own compositional thinking and that will continue profoundly to stimulate and determine the path of a whole community of composers and theorists. “Some Aspects...,” which might be considered the ‘prelude’ of the set, introduces the six all-combinatorial hexachords. “Twelve-Tone Invariants...” demonstrates the fundamental group-theoretic aspects of the twelve-tone system and proceeds to investigate those global properties held fixed under the transformations of the system, in particular under transposition and inversion. In “Set Structure...,” we begin with the particular, the Schoenberg *String Quartet no. 4*, and proceed to a general discussion of hexachordal combinatoriality. Lastly, in “Twelve-Tone Rhythmic Structure...,” the time-point system is modeled—Babbitt’s creation of a rhythmic interpretation of the twelve-tone formal system, an interpretation in time that is isomorphic to that in the more familiar pitch dimension.

Among the papers that may be considered meta-theory, “Contemporary Music Composition and Music Theory as Contemporary Intellectual History” (1972) presents a simple and clear example of the relationship of formal theory to interpreted theory. Babbitt begins with the first presentation of the trichordally-derived row of Webern’s Concerto, opus 21:

11 10 2 3 7 6 8 4 5 0 1 9

He then investigates the relationship of the following row form to the previously presented row:

RI_t2_S⁵: 1 9 10 5 6 2 4 3 7 8 0 11

In particular, Babbitt examines the statement, traditionally offered as an “explanation,” that each trichord of the second row shares at least one pitch-class in common with the first row. By itself, such an observation turns out to be virtually meaningless as a statement of musical relationship since the statement is formally trivial. To demonstrate this, Babbitt states the following “modest theorem:”

if a collection of $n = pq$ elements is partitioned into p classes of q elements each in any two ways, then there is at least one collection of p elements (termed a system of

⁴ Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach, The Learned Musician*, page 422

⁵ Notice that Babbitt’s notation for the transformations of a row is modeled on the mathematical notation for a group of permutations; to derive the second row from the first, perform the operations “inside out,” i.e. like mathematical functions: $fg(x) = f(gx)$.

common representatives) such that in both partitions each of the p classes contains one of the q elements.⁶

In other words, we could simply have substituted not only any {S, I, R, RI} form of the row but any partition of the twelve pitch-classes into four sets of three pitch-classes each and still have satisfied the criterion of sharing one pitch per trichord with the opening row. For example, choosing the ordered chromatic scale:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

one system of common-representatives would be: {2 3 8 9}.

The point of this is to show the kind of issues that can arise in attempting to explain even a simple musical relation and so to examine the very nature of musical explanation. As his analysis continues, Babbitt offers a way in which the earlier analytical statement might eventually prove to be musically meaningful:

further developments in the composition must be awaited to discover, if at all, the “justification” for the transpositional relation determined by the two set forms under discussion, in its integration into and reflection by other aspects of the movement.⁷

Indeed, in examining the next two set forms chosen by Webern,

0 11 3 4 8 7 9 5 6 1 2 10 and
11 3 2 7 6 10 8 9 5 4 0 1

a four pitch-class set of common representatives {11 7 5 1} is discovered that are shared not only by the trichords of these two new set forms but in fact, by the trichords of all four set forms that have appeared to this moment. Now, since the formal theorem asserts nothing about common tones in any more than two partitions, the initial observation, which because of its formal naivete had correspondingly little analytical scope and depth, with further refinement has become a deeper statement that includes subsequent instances, reveals uniqueness, and may even be predictive of later compositional choices in the piece.

Moving to a discussion of representative analytical essays, “Since Schoenberg,”⁸ from 1974, progresses from instances similar to the above, such as Webern’s (1,3) trichord generating a third-order, all-combinatorial hexachord (0 1 4 5 8 9), to the exposition of trichordal combinatoriality, and finally, to the complete theory of generalized aggregate construction based on all the ordered subsets of a twelve-tone row and all the partitions of the number 12. Working through the eleven trichordal generators of the complete set of all-combinatorial hexachords, Babbitt constructs commutative diagrams showing cyclic paths through the set of hexachords, paths created by the generating trichords linking with copies of themselves (under I or t) or with other another trichord to form an all-combinatorial hexachord. The analogies with tonal composition are obvious: paths through a chain of diatonic collections linked by the common chord, {D F A}, for example. Or, a path through a set of harmonic-minor collections linked by the pitch-classes C, E-flat, F-sharp, A. Of course, the difference in the twelve-tone context, and a considerable difference with the potential to be exploited in sound and tone, is that the hexachordal links differ not only in total pitch-class content but will, in general, differ in total interval content as well.

Partitions for piano, the *locus classicus* for derived set construction, is modestly described by Babbitt as a “teaching piece,” although what he really means is a didactic piece in the sense of *Die Kunst der Fuge*. Several four-voice examples from *Partitions* appear in “Since Schoenberg” as lovely illustrations of middle-ground linear and harmonic arrays created by using trichordal generators. With more than a complimentary nod to Berg of the *Lyric Suite*, Babbitt constructs

⁶ Babbitt, p. 278

⁷ p. 279

⁸ Like all Babbitt’s titles, a “catchy” one with at least *double entendre*: referring not only to the André Hodeir quasi-eponymous *Since Debussy*, but also invoking the many senses of “since.”

an all-interval row such that each interval class except 6 is represented by the first five intervals of the row, while the 'missing' interval 6 is present at the conjunction of the two disjunct, R-related hexachords. Out of the eight such all-interval orderings⁹ of the (0 2 3 4 5 7) hexachord, Babbitt selects the ordering

0 7 9 10 2 11.

This ordering is unique in that the first three overlapping trichords of the row, in intervals (2,3), (2,1) and (1,4), are all generators of the hexachord itself, and, the twelve-tone row resulting from the hexachord combined with its complementary inversion may be partitioned into three all-combinatorial tetrachords:

{0 7 9 10} {2 11 5 8} {4 3 1 6}

Progressing through the piece, we hear these trichordal generators in mosaic-like combination with copies of themselves or with the other trichordal generators, combining to form four-voice arrays. The index numbers between inversionally-related lines in these arrays are interpreted as fixed dyad intervals that we hear closely shadowing each other between contrapuntal lines, shades of *dux* and *comes* in the inverted canon at the fifth from the *Goldberg Variations*. What in one part of the *Partitions* we hear as succession, like the opening statement of the hexachord in the lowest register of the piano, we later hear as a simultaneity, a harmony created by the conjunction of two or more lines. The multivalence of the pitch surface in *Partitions* is coupled with a time-point duality wherein repeated notes and chords exchange places: a simultaneous attack of three-pitches on the same time point is later transformed into a sequence of three attack points articulated by the same pitch. The result is a sparkling surface where every single pitch and time point has multiple meanings, multiple references. Certainly, here is what Babbitt refers to as the "efficiency" of this new music, its quest for maximal sonic variety, compared to the reinforcing redundancy and more obvious parallelisms of high classical tonal music. Such perpetual developing and layered enriching, derived from principles and procedures shared with past masters, are part of Babbitt's modernist aesthetic and his core belief in and commitment to the advancement of music.

From the four voice arrays of *Partitions*, exploiting those subsets with cardinalities that are divisors of 12, i.e. 2, 3, 4, 6, to embedding any size of ordered subset into a twelve pitch-class aggregate represented a natural progression for Babbitt, but what a leap! Creation of a 12 x 12 array of pitch-classes is easy: for example, simply pile three of the four-voice *Partitions*-type arrays on top of each other, transposing or inverting each block in order to represent a different transpositional region. However, to construct a succession of twelve pitch-class aggregates through a collection of these arrays such that each of the 77 partitions of the number 12 appears once and only once is a combinatorial and compositional *tour de force* that could only be accomplished by a virtuoso composer. The ability to look and hear beyond the moment (Schenker's *Fernhören*), to foresee global consequences and ramifications of the individual musical event, these are gifts possessed by few. By analogy, one thinks of the ever-expanding time interval between voices in J. S. Bach's canon by augmentation from the *Canonic Variations on Von Himmel Hoch* or of C. P. E. Bach's anecdote about his father, relating his ability while hearing a fugue subject simultaneously to foretell its possibilities for combinations of *stretti*, countersubjects, counterpoints, etc. There is much here in the generalized partitions that is suggestive for future investigation and analysis, in particular, what Babbitt terms the "hierarchical paths" through the various partitions. From the most constrained partition, the 12 x 1 partition, identical with the set itself, to the least constrained or 1 x 12 partition, which may be ordered to reflect anything the composer chooses, the composer moves through a range of partially and totally ordered subsets of the basic row. Relational paths based on pitch-class set intersection as well as order invariants and order inversions can be established as more or less 'thematic.' Meanwhile, the set itself remains a background apparition, present only by implication and

⁹ the number reduces to four under the M transformation

inference, seldom making an appearance on the surface of the piece. Given the enormous demands and filters Babbitt has constructed in the compositional system sketched in “Since Schoenberg,” it is not clear whether this aspect of Babbitt’s work will produce interesting progeny or whether his particular line of development from Schoenberg’s original ideas will be unique to Babbitt’s transcendent talent as well as his special moment in music history.

At the end of “Since Schoenberg” Babbitt hints at the depths yet to be plumbed in examining the 12 x 12 ‘magic square’ array of a twelve-tone set. In particular, the tantalizing symmetries of the diagonals, those “intervals of intervals” would lead to a later essay, “Stravinsky’s Verticals and Schoenberg’s Diagonals: A Twist of Fate” (1987). When he had first written about the Russian master in “Remarks on the Recent Stravinsky” (based on a 1962 lecture at Santa Fe), Babbitt was something of an outsider, only invited over to the other side since Stravinsky had begun to write first serial, then twelve-tone music. The opening of the “Remarks...” echoes the preamble of *Beethoven, 1870*, Wagner’s essay celebrating the centenary of Beethoven’s birth. Wagner’s *paean* was written “as if” he had been asked for his remarks—he was clearly not; things have improved, at least Babbitt was asked! In the “Remarks...” Babbitt traces the paths through Stravinsky’s works that would lead to the late twelve-tone masterpieces such as *Movements for Piano and Orchestra* and the *Variations Aldous Huxley in Memoriam*. Examining the minor-3rds saturated *Symphony of Psalms* as an example of “composing with intervals” and progressing to the five-note canons of *In Memoriam Dylan Thomas*, Babbitt documents Stravinsky’s move toward serialism if not yet dodecaphony. Along the way, the very concept of serialism is clearly defined,¹⁰ along with the distinctions between combinational serialism and permutational serialism, differences that will become critical as Stravinsky moves toward writing that will expand the traditional notions of what constitutes the twelve-tone system.

At the opening of the later essay, “...A Twist of Fate,” we are fêted with a charming reminiscence of Babbitt and Claudio Spies being guided through Stravinsky’s score and precomposition charts for the *Movements* as a winter evening descends on Manhattan. Babbitt confesses to “a spontaneous burst of *détente*” when he “observed that the hexachord of the *Movements* was the same that of Schoenberg’s *De Profundis*.”¹¹ Stravinsky’s talk about following the “logic of his ear” stirs some marvelously suggestive musings by Babbitt on the “mind’s ear” and the “ear’s mind.” Having been prepared by the “Remarks...” to understand Stravinsky’s use of serial units smaller than twelve: the septachord of the *Cantata* and the pentachord of the *Dylan Thomas*, for example, it is a natural progression to understand the discrete hexachords of the twelve-tone row of *Movements*.

Regarding these ‘vertical’ hexachords that Stravinsky produced by rotation, i.e. through successive transpositions of the order numbers, Babbitt derives and demonstrates some of the global, general properties associated with such arrays. Deepest among these concepts is the notion that these are “intervals of intervals.” Each pitch-class number in a ‘vertical’ or column is also an interval number from the succession associated with a fixed order interval¹² with respect to the original set—i.e. the order intervals ranging from 0 (the interval of each pitch class to itself), to 1 (set adjacencies), ...to 5 (intervals between pitch-classes five order positions apart). Thus, except for the second-from-left column, which is identical to the one place order interval succession of the original set, intervals not occurring as adjacent intervals in the original set will be found as adjacencies in the verticals. Many of the symmetries observable in these arrays simply fall out of the general algorithm for constructing such arrays and are independent of set structure. However, set structure will determine the frequency and placement of interval

¹⁰ “an order relation which is irreflexive, nonsymmetric, transitive, and connected over the collection.” p. 151

¹¹ pp. 405-406

¹² p. 116

repetitions, thus the frequency and placement of pitch-class duplications in a single column—the “patterned interval redundancy”¹³ as Babbitt calls it. The irony or “twist” of course, is that these verticals in Stravinsky’s arrays turn out to be the diagonals in the familiar 6 x 6 magic square of a hexachord and its complementary transpositions.

Again in this essay, as in others of the analytical/theoretical variety, some of the most provocative thoughts are Babbitt’s ‘intuitive’ comments as he steps back from the formal derivations and speaks from his instincts and experience about musical interpretations. This ‘diagonal’ essay is particularly rich in connecting the formal with the contextual and historical. Babbitt observes, for example, that the transposed canonic lines of the Stravinsky arrays are prefigured in Wagner and Schoenberg:

the canonic relation which obtains among the transpositionally related lines of the array, the “structural” imitations, were—at least—adumbrated by Wagner and celebrated by Schoenberg, most pertinently in his Op. 16, No. 3...¹⁴

The reference to Wagner, surprisingly associated here with Stravinsky, is no doubt to passages such as in the prelude to *Tristan* or in Act II, Scene 2 where the *Sehnsucht* or *Tag* motives and their transformations partially generate and completely saturate the music. Babbitt further clarifies Stravinsky’s relation to these precursors:

the canonic structure of the array is but a special case of that contextually determined “motivic” voice-leading polyphony in which the constituent lines derive and create their coherence from and by the direct transformational, intervallic dependence upon one another...¹⁵

Another association with these Stravinsky arrays may have been prefigured, at least in “attitude” as Babbitt says, by Russian composers such as Scriabin. In Scriabin’s use of chords as fixed elements, as “things in themselves”—the voicing of the minor-triad + root-related-tritone chord in the Piano Sonata No. 9 comes to mind:

G \flat
B \flat
E \flat
A

we have an early example of the ‘vertical’ as musical object, unchanging in its voicing except through transposition. Still another of Babbitt’s speculations on the historical compositional analogy of these arrays is that they provided for Stravinsky

a basis of differentiation of the vertical and horizontal dimensions comparable, at least in structural force, with the tonal distinction between the triad as the norm of the vertical and the scale as the archetype of the horizontal.¹⁶

Coupled to the tonal analogy is the centricity that naturally arises when the same pitch class begins each of the rotated hexachordal lines. The concept of a centric pitch-class, in Stravinsky’s terms being “on” a pitch class, by analogy with the tonal notion of tonic or ‘keynote,’ leads correspondingly to contextual emphasis and reinforcement of the chosen pitch-class.

As Babbitt’s informal remarks focus on ever smaller surface details in the *Movements* and the *Variations*, his observations along with his interpretations of what he hears in Stravinsky’s music, are nothing short of extraordinary. What captivates his mind and ear is never the abstruse or the pedantic or the literal—you will not find circles with labels drawn around pitch-class collections. The emphasis is always on the totality of the music and the relation of specific events to underlying assumptions and progressions. Babbitt is always seeking what might be from what is,

¹³ p. 419

¹⁴ p. 408

¹⁵ p. 408

¹⁶ p. 411

the “implications for development and progression:”¹⁷ all the ways in which this music, as an instance of highly contextualized twelve-tone music,¹⁸ makes possible new worlds, new ways of thinking. His brief analysis of rhythm in *Movements*, for example, points to the “new modes of temporal organization more or less coordinated with or motivated by the serialism of pitch structure.”¹⁹ The remarks on the “serial” instrumentation of *Movements*, especially the ‘nesting’ of motive and instrument in the voicing and orchestration of the verticals, and the ‘cutting’ and subsequent completion of motives in individual instrumental lines, not only suggest paths for structural orchestration but are also shown to have historical antecedents, again in the work of Wagner as well as in Stravinsky’s earlier instrumental practice. Whether, as here in “A Twist of Fate,” tracing some motivic particle like the embeddings of the pitch dyads G-flat, D-flat in the *Movements*, or interpreting the simultaneous canons in Schoenberg’s Opus 23, No. 3 in “Since Schoenberg,” or discussing neighbor-note relations in Mozart’s G-minor symphony in “The Structure and Function of Music Theory,” what Babbitt notices is inspiring and his descriptive language vividly captures multiple levels of parallelism and musical meaning.

To read some of these essays, especially the more technical papers, no doubt requires a bit of preliminary homework. For Babbitt this was a point of pride as well as a necessity. As he said early on in “The Composer as Specialist,”²⁰ you would not expect to attend a lecture on advanced mathematics or physics and understand the lecture without adequate training and preparation. Why then, should advanced music composition or theory be any different? However, this is not just a parlor game: the use of mathematics as a tool in the creation of a formal, abstract model for music allows us insights into what is universal, what is common to a host of structures, and therefore, allows us better to comprehend that which is unique to a given piece or composer and why is it so.²¹ Babbitt’s work, along with the contributions of a coterie of brilliant students like Boretz, Kessler, Winham and others, in many ways is a continuation of that spirit and technique that drove intellectuals in the early part of the twentieth century to put their fields on the firm foundation of formalism—Hilbert, for example in mathematics and Wittgenstein in philosophy. For his systemization, Babbitt built upon the work of the Second Vienna School and drew from analytic philosophers and from mathematics. The mathematics includes abstract set theory, elementary number theory, combinatorics, and abstract algebra. It might be asked, could someone else have come along and without the formalism explained as well, all that Babbitt has shown so elegantly and eloquently? Perhaps, but no doubt with a much more cumbersome language and clumsy notation that would have been detrimental to further advances. As it stands, Babbitt has not only made significant contributions to the composition, theory and analysis of twelve-tone and serial music but has also formulated many of the concepts and created the language with which most of us think in and about this music.²² Babbitt’s uniqueness stems from an imposing set of attributes: a profound composer with a deep reverence of the past and an unwavering commitment to the future of the art; an analytical thinker with a passion for rigor and clarity who possesses a wide knowledge and understanding of mathematics; an imaginative writer with an ear for a beautifully crafted English phrase.

¹⁷ p. 17

¹⁸ See the end of “Contemporary Intellectual History” (page 293), for a discussion of the ways in which the twelve-tone revolution and the twelve-tone system have made possible the diversity of musics that is our present “musical condition.”

¹⁹ p. 420

²⁰ originally published in *High Fidelity* as “Who Cares If You Listen”

²¹ p. 300

²² Should this seem too restricted, too monolithic, just try and read 1950’s European serial theory, where some writers, without possessing the most elementary distinction between pitch and pitch-class, manage to confuse the simple notion of transposition of a series!

THE PROBLEMATICS OF CLOSURE: ?= [The Collected Essays of Milton Babbitt] and some listening to his Music

Charles Stein

1. Reflections for Piano and Tape

I suppose I would prefer to inhabit a five-dimensional space in order to establish adequate purchase on the distribution of sound events in this deliciously engaging sonic paradise. Five dimensions—four space and one time. Not that four were sufficient to dimensionalize the objects on display here, but it would help. I feel that I need to get out in front of the music, to see it longitudinally, as it were—to get a handle on the way a certain internally elaborate rhythmic figure fractures, its splinters shining now *here*, now *there*, rather than now *now*, now *then*; to test my suspicion that the lower piano registers do form a central column or core, like the Warp Core of the Starship Enterprise—always throbbing and providing motive force, always in danger of a “breach” though never breaching; to see how the timbral analogies splayed over different pitches (not pitch classes, but pitches in register), or sonic gadget-like or widget-like or something-idget-like items do conform...

If I had four spatial dimensions in which to find all these objects, it is not as though time—its actual passing—would have vanished into the fourth of them—but just what would be left to BE time?—that’s the point.

Babbitt says somewhere that a piece of music is *hopefully* not infinite. That’s a joke, no doubt, but what are the terms of that finitude? The piece’s 10’ 16” does provide something like the temporal frame of the work, but there seems to be other audible and inaudible parameters. So just what would the closure of the piece be? It takes a lot of listening to get beyond the mere inkling that it’s there. Yet the inkling is, in its way, quite ravishing. A feast of sonic invention and querulous relation almost overwhelms.

The composer’s trick seems to be to propose such closure as allows an ample multiplicity of elements to work themselves and their relations out without getting in each other’s way, yet also without declaring themselves so blatantly as to allow said closure itself to come into view. One hears that one has entered a very well-determined and superbly managed musical empire, with sufficient character to sustain humor, surprise, drama, conflict, eros, and apparent regional autonomy: all is tinctured with the Emperor’s personality, somehow, yet without his statue having to be erected on every public square. But one still wonders where are the border regions? where the outlands? where the monsters over the edge of the world?

2.

Speaking at Bard College, a few years before his death, Stan Brakhage remarked that his own work was Romantic, dedicated as it was to a practice of open form. Romanticism rejects closure, yearns for that which exceeds its own apprehension and its own means.

Now, the logical concept of closure can make this notion seem unlikely or inept. No work or movement can be open, in the sense of existing without boundary, without knowing what does or does not belong to its universe of expression. The very claim that the Romantic is the open contradicts its own conceit, for we can know that a work which takes pride in its principle of closure is decidedly not Romantic. So open Romanticism remains closed to the values and realities of closure. As democracy remains closed to Royal Majesty, or religious scepticism to the possibilities of belief? Hmm.

However, it is surely not in this logical sense that Brakhage intended his remark. There is a sense of openness in form that is qualitative, not logical—there are works whose very internal activity seethes towards excess—works that drive their own energies beyond the very borders that define them. And today there exist outré formal systems that find ways to express this very paradox of open form, though interestingly and perhaps decidedly, Babbitt does not avail himself of them.

Milton Babbitt's work, both his music and his texts about it, to some extent, seems dedicated to the *problematics* of closure; hence his devotion to defining not only music but the limits of definition itself, in terms of what were, in his hay-day, master theories in mathematics and logic—set theory, group theory, and the philosophical positions of logical empiricism.

In any case, it is clear that Milton Babbitt would not appear to be a Romantic, for in its procedure and in at least one dimension of its effect, the music often seems hallowed by a demand for closure. But at the same time, in experiencing its exhaustive treatment of the closed musical space, we find music whose boundaries both remain comfortably in tact and not *too* transparent to their own definition.

The elusive quality of his music would then seem to be this: that the rules to which the work is obedient recede beyond the ken of the obedient ear. There is a feeling of the *closure of closedness*, delivered through the depiction of a scattered, seemingly random, surface, as if the arbitrary were being represented by the most rigorously organized of technical means. Thus, opposite tendencies cohere this side the wall. *Coniunctio oppositorum* (conjunction of opposites) in a veritable *hortus conclusus* (enclosed, formal garden)—and other reflexes of Romanticism. Hmm again.

In more than one of his complex pieces, as I first became familiar with them, I felt as if I had intruded upon some inchoate social space. Take *the Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, for instance: an ambience of murmuring or chattering, punctuated by explosive tinklings of spoons on crockery, shuffling feet on carpet or wood, papers rattling, unnameable objects ratcheting, incoherent puddles or ponds or seas of noises never rising beyond a certain volume, all of it articulated within a certain gamut of timbres. Upon greater familiarity, the sounds do not sustain such programmatic listening. They are, for one thing, too discrete. They do

not interfere with each other, do not mottle, do not obliterate or obscure. Each has a distinct rhythmic contour, its own kind of jazz and insistence, but the identity of that to which one has just attended stonewalls cognition of the identity of the next. Sound does not yield to sonic inference. One had best relax into the field, as it were, but what is this field? And what is that vast brown belly of an under-horn doing down there, pretending an invitation to mystery and depth? The mysterious vessel does not pass in the night. It simply ceases to be there after its allotted moment has delivered itself. If its horn blows again, it will neither be at midnight, nor accumulate, with its antecedent occurrence, into the evocation of some deep dimension—psychic, cosmic, or spiritual. What is bespoken by such studied inconsequence?

In the essays, it is rather complexly stated that the music both is and is not nested in its technical means; technical presentation is the appropriate language for music theorizing, but, in the apprehension of the music itself, the technical means seem to withdraw through their own adequacy and brilliance. They are an occultation of themselves which itself does not yield to significance. It has not the significance: “occultation.”

One can replace in one’s mind, perhaps, the sonic imagery, with the specification of the sonic properties that generate it: frequency, timbre, envelope, amplitude, spatial distribution, attack, decay—for the electronically generated components. As for the humanly realized performances: virtuosity stretched to the joints. But why would one do *that*?

Try it this way: there is a curious mirroring of a world of sensory phenomena within a world of technical production, a world where every crisis of possibility is gathered beforehand, but the exposure of such possibilities is selected so as to appear spontaneously varied, randomly allotted, not gathered beforehand at all. Baffles of procedure are devised to rigorize aesthetic choices so they seem but a splattering of means against a wall of perceptibility, and yet at the same time the most excruciatingly rigorous appointments with necessity. Such a world is perhaps devised to reflect the randomness of our world within its own fantastic but unfantasmatic orderings; its exalted, strenuous whims; its stentorian constraints and obediences. Necessity has pulled itself out of the mire of mere phenomena only to generate *its* version of mere phenomena for the delectation of its composer’s (and ours, if we dare) extraordinary sensibility.

To awaken in this necessary field is to explore an imagination of a technology that is immune to anxiety about technological culture or suspicion that technology itself might prove the most horrific of utopian delusions. It is resolutely unsentimental and resonant with early modernist, futurist, and positivist dreams; with the “dehumanization of art”; with a creative culture dissolved without dissonance into science and rationalist hope; with the innocence of the idea that mastery is mastery indeed; with the extirpation of mystery and the desire for it, as if to wish to know what perhaps cannot be known were the very plague. These were dreams

of the era just before our own, just before the technical devastation of the earth had begun to show itself, before the unRomantic vision of the reality of the technical had arisen to rattle technology's unRomantic utopia.

To say all this quiets me and tells me why I find the music of Milton Babbitt, of which I remained quite innocent during the years of its being produced, in fact so comforting and attractive. I can entertain my darkest apprehensions in a disinfected sonic laboratory and come out a bit more initiated, more perceptive, more intelligent. The technical domination of my world does not cease to worry me and I am not reconciled, but for the moment I almost feel like I know where I am.

3. Response Event in my *Calculus Reservatus*

This graphic statement (see the last page of this piece) worked out while listening to Milton Babbitt's *My End is My Beginning* for solo clarinet—a composition I would very much liked to have known in my own clarinet playing days—is “written” in a glyphic quasi-language that has been devolving under my attention since some time in February of this year (2004). The part of the language used here consists of:

three quasi-elements:

a glyph for pure being or beingness:

!

a glyph for pure time, undertime, deep time:

↔

a glyph for pure awareness:



three quasi-operators:

a glyph meaning to inquire or inquire into:

?=

a glyph meaning to tincture:



one quasi-field:

a glyph for “the ken,” i.e. the field of consciousness:



Brackets $\langle [] \rangle$ reify, hypostatize, or place positive emphasis upon a variable $\langle a \rangle$ that can stand for anything whatsoever : $\langle [a] \rangle$.

Everted brackets $\langle] [\rangle$ release $\langle a \rangle$ from such reification, hypostatization, or positive emphasis, while retaining *something* of its definition: $\langle]a[\rangle$.

Why the three particular quasi-elements? A parallel problematic controls them. Is there pure being apart from beings? Is there deep time apart from processes or things in time? Is there pure awareness apart from awareness of particular states, objects, processes, etc.?

The practice of the calculus assigns $\langle ! , \leftrightarrow , \odot \rangle$ as conditions of meditation. I have them printed on two by two squares, and place them on symbolic backgrounds or “place mats” in front of me. The meaning of each sign is what one’s practice discovers. If one has not discovered pure being, pure time, pure awareness, they may serve to focus a quest. In any case, to write a quasi-element [to arrange the square on which it is inscribed in front of one] is to commit oneself, for the time during which one contemplates it, to the discovery or inquiry. It is an “index” in the Peircean sense, because its meaning is completed only in the event of its contemplation.

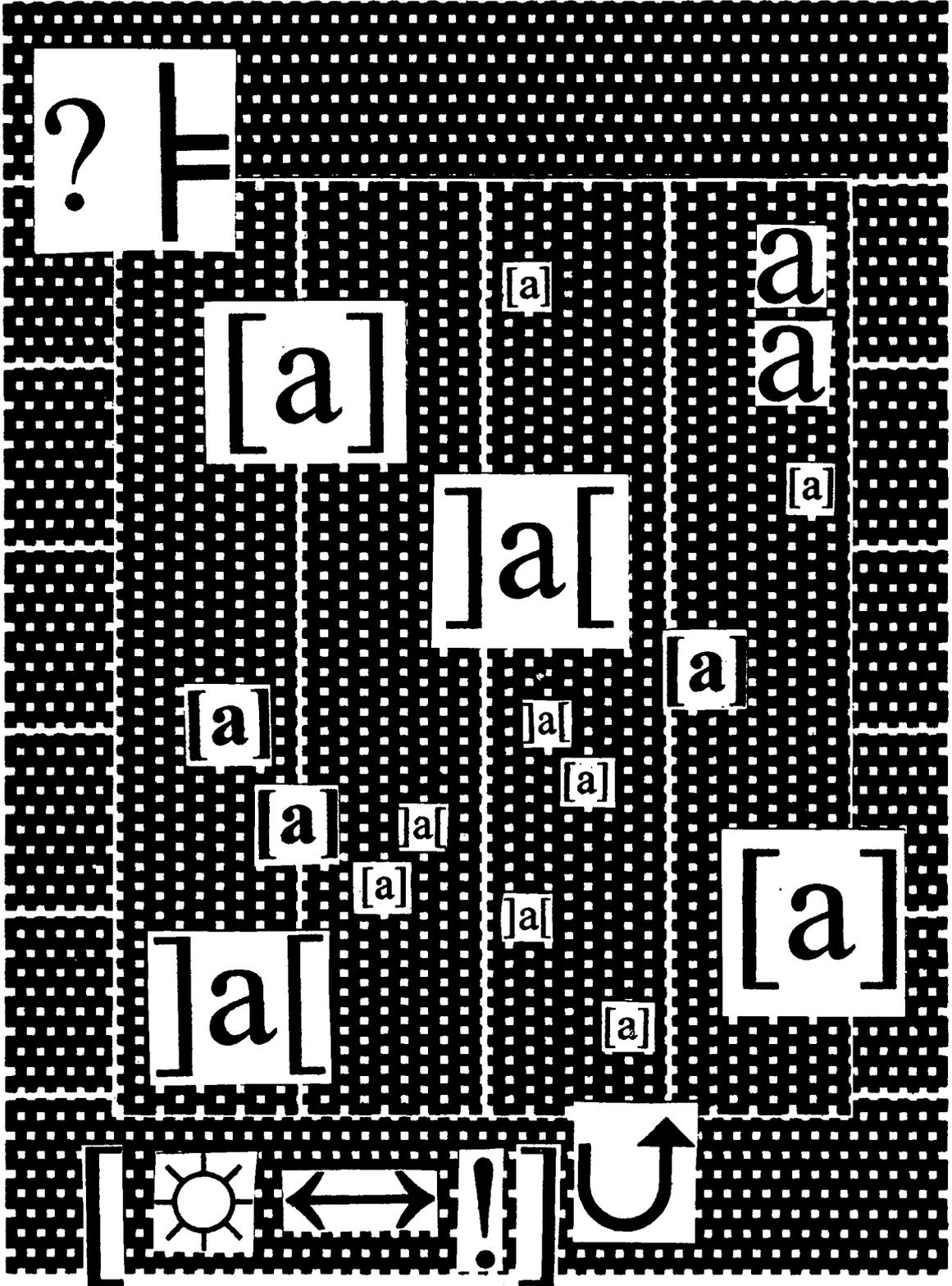
The operator $\langle ? \vDash \rangle$ initiates an inquiry into what follows it.

The operator $\langle \hookrightarrow \rangle$ imbues what follows with a quality. Thus

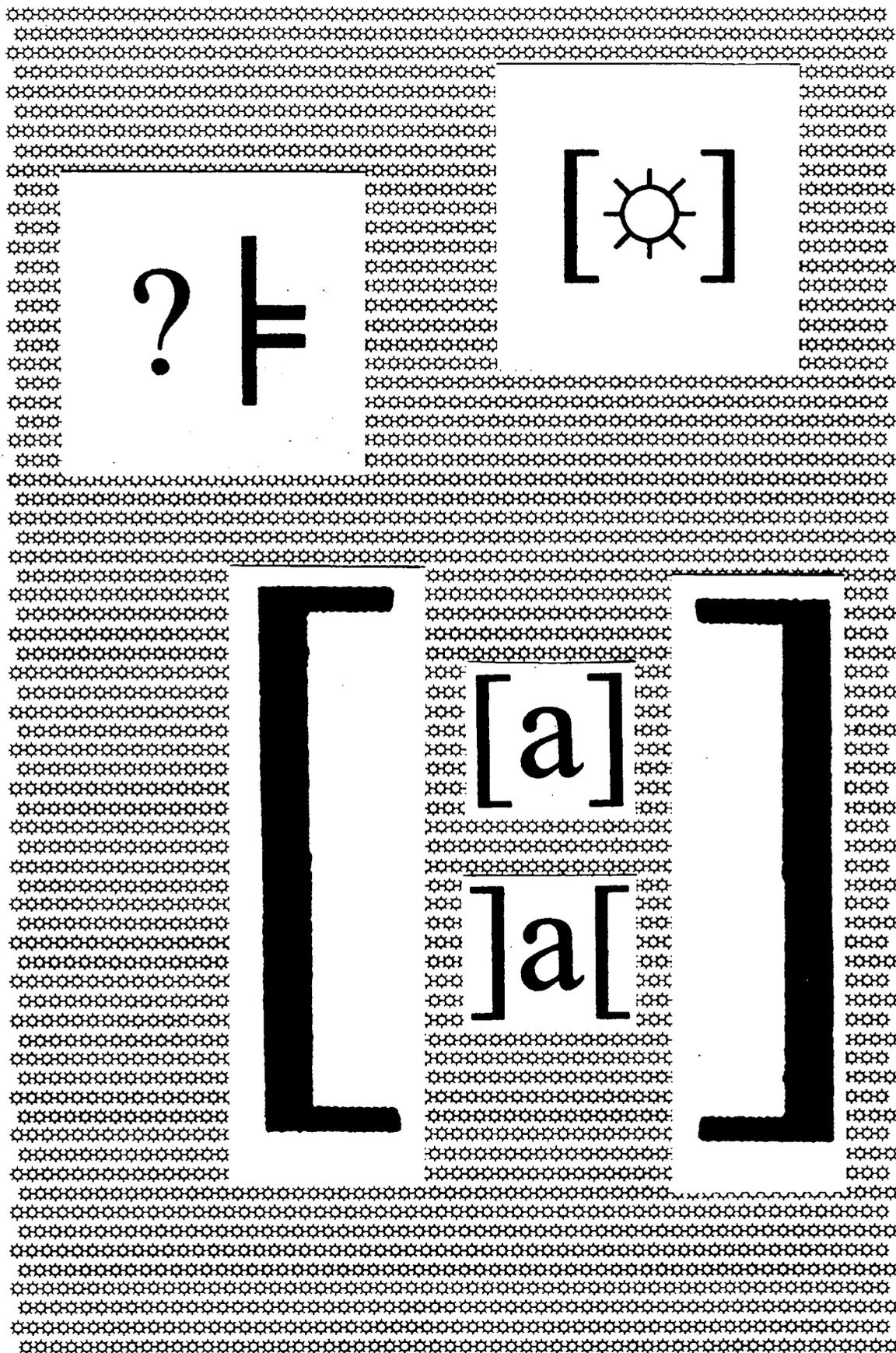
$\langle \odot \hookrightarrow [a] \rangle$ means or might mean, “awareness tinctures the closed object $\langle a \rangle$.”

Music famously carries ontology without words. Events in series or in simultaneity, broad flows or small concatenations, point-like explosions, or sustained expanses can center or release contents, complex and dense with context, nuance, intensity, quality, etc. I thought to pay homage to a few such features by writing a page in my calculus, where each event is a variable, either by itself without bracket, bracketed, or between everted brackets, to evoke a parallel cognitive richness to the music’s own. The use of the language is simplified, since I have not written any of the quasi-elements into the main statement but have placed them innocently in the margin at the bottom, suggesting that they might be introduced to tincture

one’s listening. The inquiry operator $\langle ? \vDash \rangle$ introduces it all. The “place mat” used is built up from the sign for “the ken”—the field of consciousness.



4. Amulet



On Milton's Language

We were talking (1965) about Perspectives (of New Music). He (Aaron Copland) was complaining about the kind of writing we were publishing, because of its incomprehensible style as well as its overintellectual subject matter. He said an article I'd written about him in *The Nation* was really objectionable because it "read like something by Milton Babbitt". So we talked about Milton's writing, and I said that I thought of it as a kind of poetry, and that maybe thinking of it like that would make it more imaginable to read. He said, That's a real strange kind of poetry — in that familiar faux-folksy way of talking he had. But for a lot of us (earnest young composers), it was as much that unique high-tech lyricism of Milton's prose ("...Now that the jagged edges of abruption...") as the exhilaratingly uninhibited pointy-headedness of his chosen musical topics and the bravado of his self-positioning within the farthest-out philosophical and conceptual worlds of the time that riveted and liberated us. I think his writing up through, say, the late 1960s, was as creatively — and, I guess, ontologically — inspiring as was his music; and I'm thinking that a lot of the qualitative substance of that writing, a lot of what transmitted to us, was its linguistic music, a textual sound-texture woven with the sonic and rhythmic ear of a (fast) compositional talker — who could, to be sure, create on demand superabundant simulacra of those same sounds and flows even in the absence of those contents. But that's a whole lot less interesting a story than the residue of the inner subtextual meaningsound which new readers might still be able to hear in the earlier texts of *The Collected Essays of Milton Babbitt*, if they know, or care to learn, how to listen for it.

—Ben Boretz, September 2004

WHEN MUSIC RESISTS MEANING: THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF HERBERT BRÜN

Newton Armstrong

I propose that an international apparatus be defined and initiated which would investigate and analyze submitted ideas, compositions, statements, and general propositions with regard to their function (potential or real) as structural models. The apparatus should be so formed and equipped that it can answer the following questions: What is the composition and the structure of that system in which the submitted item would have the greatest significance? In which system — social, political, physical — would the submitted item be compatible with concepts of truth, reality, practicability, et cetera?*

This is one of those connections that was never made. Brün argued for an instrumentalization of composition, where newly composed systems and ideas would serve as inputs to the society in which they were created through institutional mediation. It's a simple turn from the tacit view of composition as social output towards a pragmatics of composing as social input. But UNESCO was having none of it. The prevailing conservatism — the same conservatism against which Brün's apparatus would have provided a preliminary counter measure — ensured that conservatism ruled the day.

The UNESCO proposal points to something central in Brün's work: an activist poetics directed at the violence of leaving things as they are. The things in question may be many, but there is a singular coherence in the way Brün asks questions of them, and it's in this that his work is properly a poetics. The question is turned on the language in which it is formulated to ask about the working limitations of the language. In asking the question, the language is innovated and lives a little longer. If the question is the right question, the language becomes capable of conveying ideas that it could not have previously conveyed.

Brün discerned at an early stage the usefulness of establishing links between analagous systems, and the potential usefulness of establishing analogies between not-yet-analagous systems. He discerned in music — the trace left by composition — viable models for new social systems. Composing, therefore, could serve as a modeling process for a more desirable society.

Evidently, this would require that the composer of music accepts a not inconsiderable responsibility: compositions are no longer to be considered aesthetic objects, they are the codification of systems that hold the potential to innovate and improve the conditions of life. That the majority of composers would choose not to accept this responsibility, to

ignore it, or to bury it beneath the fiction that music is only ever about itself, does not release those composers from responsibility, or from the reality that their compositions have social implications.

Brün was not arguing that composers, once conscious of the social context of their work, are necessarily obliged to get things right. (The UNESCO proposal includes a safety net that would protect the world from those contributed systems that are less desirable than existing systems.) Rather, he was attempting to improve the conditions and practices of experimental system creation (composition) by asking the creators of experimental systems (composers) to consider the implications of their systems in contexts broader than the systems themselves. If tangible, practicable connections were then to be forged between composers and the world they inhabit, better compositions would make for better living environments. At one level, the UNESCO proposal is asking for nothing less than a materialist reactivation of those world-forming processes of structured expression that, somewhere along the way, went missing in the first world.

But this only touches on one facet of Brün's thought. *When Music Resists Meaning* is vast in scope. Brün's other books — *my words and where i want them*, *Sighs in Disguise* and *Irresistible Observations* — are even more vast. What is consistent throughout his writing is a concern for constructing those arguments, propositions, formulations and observations that would counter the tendency towards stagnation that exists in all languages and systems. That this might also form part of the job description for composers was not immediately apparent to the UNESCO committee, despite the eloquence of Brün's rationale. But bureaucracy is stupid as a matter of principle. It is an always stagnating system, and it increases the tendency to stagnation in all those systems that deal with it on its terms. That's already a good enough reason to read Brün.

* Herbert Brün: a proposal submitted to a committee of experts after reading his paper "Technology and the Composer" at a UNESCO symposium in Stockholm, 1970. Reprinted in *When Music Resists Meaning: The Major Writings of Herbert Brün* / Edited by Arun Chandra (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2004).

A PHILIPPIC

KEITH EISENBREY

Victory!

All is lost. We have met the enemy, and we are his. Ruin, emptiness, annihilation. We are undone. Overrun. Vanquished. Busted. Our defeat is total, ignominious. Flight is impossible. We are exiled in our homeland. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken us? Our temples are sacked. Our earth salted. The enemy dances on the graves of our ancestors, sings triumphant on plundered lyres. None remain to hear our lamentation. The shroud of the dark side has fallen. The jig is up, friends. Game over.

We are free.

On those occasions when the topic of our music – our non-popular, non-commercial, modern American music – seeps into the musings of the popular culture, (nestled among the annotations of a symphony program or comfortably sipping wine amidst the inane prose of a newspaper review), it comes as no surprise that it is met not just with open hostility, but with a reflexive vilification of that discordant music forced upon the innocent public in the not-so-distant past. Their concert halls were filled with agony, with ugliness at every turn. Hours and hours of audience-hating, unabated alienation dinned their ears, worsening and worsening, the spirit of Romanticism banished for aye by the evil American imitators of the bad boys of post-war, post-Webern-Euro-avant-garde, and most especially by the proponents of that horrid, incomprehensible, 12-tone stuff, the public explanations of which only served to obfuscate its emptiness, its morbid sterility, led in dodecaphonic ranks by that nefarious Aquinas of Academic Serialism: Milton Babbitt.

We, all of us, are intimately familiar with the print of this kicking boot. We read again and again, as though it were important and comforting to us that such and such a composer has eschewed all things serial, or atonal, or weird, and embraced once again the holy, the tuneful, and the tonal basis of all that is good, true, and beautiful in music, as God intended. Are these my friends being tortured into such confessions? Is there a nobody-expects-the-Spanish-Inquisition afoot in our fair land? Are they coming after me? Will they throw into my face my own unrepented-of serial dalliances?

Perhaps if it were only the popular press from which this attitude oozes; if it were only another empty symptom of our fatally and contemptuously complacent culture, arrogant and decadent beyond salvation, stoning its prophets, filling our nostrils with putridity – surely then we could placidly ignore it, and let the deaf bury the deaf.

The irk, though, is this: some of us agree: people who should know better that the facts so easily bandied about are the fictoids of propaganda, who gleefully feed the maw of frenzied assail, who give pop-credence thereto by enshrining it in cool academic prose, who spin the issue to come off the good guys. The guys the public should be buying the records of. Modern music even you, the disaffected consumer, can love.

We, the despised and pitied, the insulted and the injured, bleeding and nursing our wounds alone, we are left to forge a musical life for ourselves from the scraps and droppings of the vanquisher. We must learn from past mistakes. We must read history, yea even the history reified by mass consumer culture, laced by the populists among us with shards of malice.

John Warthen Struble, in *The History of American Classical Music: MacDowell to Minimalism* [New York: Facts on File, 1995], has written our portrait from the vantage of one who believes that what we have been and should be about musically is classical, and American. And because (though he has tried to be fair) he has stuck his neck out on the side of the populists, we have an opportunity to study our predicament more closely.

Classical. Now there's a word to stick in the craw! The term has spread like English ivy from the strict notion of things pertaining to ancient Greece and Rome, through reference to analogous or similar things, to the point where it has been given a back-valuation spin by Madison Avenue, to wit: What is *classical* or *classic* has been certified to be good and worthwhile, so that whatever else is labeled classical acquires by virtue of the label the goodness and worship of its class.

As a technical term in music history it refers narrowly to a span of the European repertoire from the late baroque to the early Romantic. The Madison Avenue semantic extension labels the entire European repertoire, from Gregorian chant forward as classical. But an interesting nuance occurs when we speak of, say, Indian, Japanese, or Chinese, or some such other classical music. This is accomplished by analogy of cultural position with that which (Madison Avenue) classical music occupies in European culture. To refer to this music as classical gives it the same back-valuation spin as the Madison Avenue usage, but also, by reifying the category, a further, and more insidious, double-back valuation is placed upon those cultures that we deem to possess a classical music. These cultures tend to be of suitably ancient provenance, and possess certain attributes, such as “. . . a written language, well developed political, economic and social institutions, and a class of affluent patrons (frequently including royalty or aristocrats) who have the leisure and money necessary to promote the fine arts.” So what does this have to do with America or with our music?

According to Struble, there are three prongs a music must satisfy to be regarded as American classical music. First, it is an art music; that is, it is practiced and enjoyed solely for the skill of it, a pure luxury. Its purpose, as art music, is to be admired, a reflection of what we think ourselves capable of achieving. It is not to be danced to, worshiped to, or to illustrate drama, or film. It is not to sell cola, perfume, or operating systems. It does not elect our leaders. Its possible purposes for societal binding, or for our spiritual edification, or as a safe medium for our intimate inter-communal moments is unmentionable. It is empty of use for us, empty of value, and empty of meaning.

Second, it is expressive of the culture as a whole. Jazz fails (per Struble) on this prong because it doesn't express the whole culture, but only the African-American part. This is hogwash, especially when we find that what is meant by “reflect the characteristic traits of the whole culture” is that the music, to be classical, must spring from an indigenous vernacular tradition; that is, it must make use of that vernacular in the more hallowed activity of producing serious music for serious institutions, sucking the vernacular material into the droidfactory of Western Art music, an activity with a long, revered, and distinctly Eurocentric tradition. It is MacDowell's use of vernacular material soon after Dvorak's famous fatherly advice that led to Struble's titular recognition of MacDowell as the beginning of American classical music, and some forty years later the attitude was still rampant, as recounted by Joe Klein in *Woody Guthrie: A Life* [New York: Delta, 1980] in regard to Guthrie's *Dust Bowl Ballads*: “The Los

Angeles News's classical music critic suggested, in the best 'fine art' tradition, that Woody's songs might prove helpful to serious composers. 'They might make a tone-poem, symphony or suite by some American more American.'"

Third, American classical music is known by its longevity in "purely chronological terms." It possesses longevity in the concert repertoire and in its influence on subsequent and current musical lives and institutions. It has staying power in publisher's catalogs, on library shelves, and in academic curricula. It is music that stands the test of time in the popular imagination, in the regard of the New York Times music critics, and in record sales. But because we are speaking of a culture that is barely poking its tendrils out of the ground, pure chronological persistence is effectively synonymous with mere popularity or high regard in the current repertoire of the orchestras, chamber ensembles, and concert soloists of the Eastern Seaboard and their imitators.

The classical music of America is thus identified as that body of music in this country that uses, for the bulk of its history, the particular social and practical technologies of that body of European music that is regarded by Madison Avenue and the Music Business as classical, thereby imparting upon American classical music the social and intellectual prestige of that European classical music, and at the same time flattering this society of America that it possesses the attributes of a sophisticated culture, like Europe, or Japan, or India.

Now Struble sees a pattern in this music, a pendulum swing of zeitgeist, generation by generation, between the compositional popularity of two factions: On one side the stodgy old academic sticks-in-the-mud, churning out their abstract, theory-driven, soulless head-music, stuck in the hackneyed repertoire of a Europe now dead – Parker, Hanson, Piston, Sessions, Schuman, Babbitt; on the other side, the giddy free-market "real world" populists, springing from the vernacular, embracing Americanism and the diversity of influences that sough against our shores – MacDowell, Griffes, Ives, Gershwin, Copland, Hovhannes, and by their own adamant avowals, the self-proclaimed apostates from the high-serialist religion, the wine-coolers of our present scene: Rochberg, Glass, Albert, Adams.

Academic music in general, and academic serialism in particular, are the populists' favored whipping boys, and take the brunt of the gratuitous and condescending abuse that peppers Struble's tome:

"American composers have often seemed uncomfortable in the role of professor. In the case of men like Piston and Sessions, this discomfort has led to sometimes ponderous forays into the diversionary pathways of theory and esthetic philosophy, demonstrating their musical erudition to one and all, but failing to improve the public acceptance of their music. Others, like Babbitt and Hiller, have sought to reshape their music into an imitation of physical sciences, which could then compete for recognition, funding and publication on supposedly equal ground with more traditional departments of the university."

". . . it is abundantly clear that the rise of American academic music since 1930, despite the good intentions that fostered it, has siphoned off such a large number of young composers into the insulated world of the university that it is unlikely we will ever have an opportunity to discover what most of these people might have contributed to our national music had they been channeled in the direction of dealing with 'real world' audiences. . ."

"Like Marxism, serialism attempted to alter, by executive fiat as it were, fundamental principles of organization established through centuries of usage. And, like Marxism, when its proponents began to discover that the new system did not, in fact, work the way it was supposed to, denial set in with a vengeance – leading them to turn the system into a theology."

“Babbitt, though not a Marxist, became one of the leaders of the serialist religion and, like a latter-day Thomas Aquinas, set about in a systematic way to forge a scientific rationale for it.”

“ . . . it is not unreasonable to assert that some of the reaction against serialism which gave birth to the post-modernist and minimalist styles of composition among the next generation of composers was as much motivated by political thinking as it was by musical thinking. And, while this may not be such an important issue in itself, it does imply that there may be more musical substance lurking in the old rejected serialism than it is currently fashionable to admit.”

But it is clear that, at least for Struble, the political issue is paramount, because no real attempt is made to engage the possible musical issues, aside from a laughably dim-witted explanation of the 12-tone system, in which the unrecognizability of the serial straw-man he constructs is equaled, if not perhaps bettered, by the outright silliness of the tonal straw-bat with which he beats it over the head.

As composers and musicians of putative serious intent, we must decide either where we fit in this paradigm, or how to position ourselves outside. In one corner we see the embittered avant garde, Princetonian formalists, academic serialists, research composers, Devil take the audience, every sample of every Fourier analysis of every wave form of every moment of every pitch of every piece justified up the wazoo for the benefit of the credentials committee. In t’other corner the populists, growing audiences, hobnobbing, shying away from anything troubling, challenging, weird, uncomfortable, or formal, publicly disavowing any sex with “that serialism,” trashing the notion of academic hide-behind-the-tenure music, the faux tonalist, ersatz Romantics. The want-to-succeed folks.

If we look honestly at our own musical activity we have all of us, I hope, indulged both in the uncompromisingly weird and in the straightforwardly lyrical. We have all of us, I think, given a great deal of thought to formal matters, and we have also, (shamelessly, I trust), spoken with varying degrees of recognizably American accents. And, because the notions upon which the battle lines are drawn are polemical rather than useful, there have been times, for all of us, when we would call down a curse upon both our houses. A fine sentiment, considering the pickle the whole enterprise is in.

And so, lest our musical language, and the choices we make as composers, performers, and listeners, become mere political contingencies, and lest our talk about music exhibit a Limbaughian level of wisdom and insight, let us ponder our own choices. Choices of notes and colleagues, of words and discourse, and of societal associations. If we mean, in these choices, to reject the current pop-cultural battlefield winner-take-all paradigm, what other basis might there be?

We can strive for academic success. We can court tenure with ardor. We can wade in treacherous political waters where serialism is a defensible position, a career choice, and where a misstep will pull us and our sense of self under; where the habit of academic justification (we received such and such degrees, publish in so and so journals, read such and so papers at odds and odds conferences any and old where) pervades our public discourse about even our own music, as though we were forever bucking for acceptance of our authority, the authority of certified academic success. Authority is prestige is acceptance is identity. We can find what is worthy in this academic life. And we can find what is onerous in it not so terrible as to outweigh the profit. We can find in this life a fitting challenge that potently addresses our musical concerns.

Or we can escape the death-grip of academic conformism and set our sails for the virtuously market-driven real world, where to admit to having indulged in serialism, weirdness, or elitism, is professional death

unless followed immediately by true repentance and vehement preaching. We can accumulate grants, fish for commissions, hobnob with the industry and the funding organizations, acquire a goodly resume, make a living at it, struggle like the great immortals of the past did for popular acclaim, servile to the popular culture. We can find in this life true fulfillment, discover a rapport with an audience, and put up with the worse part in order to reap the better. We can rely for our musical identity on this real-worldly struggle.

Or we can opt out. Not give up music, or give up on music, but recognize academics as too thin and narrow a stance to be tenable, and the whole “real world” (in which the only possible quantum of success is that elusive, national, 15 minutes of fame), simply too broad and shallow a world to be effectively intimate with – megalomaniac, sure; intimate, no. We can accept, indeed we can willingly choose, a smaller sphere more in keeping with our musical impulse. Get a tolerable day job. Be free to compose as we must without concern for the career injuring possibilities of this note or that one. Accept a smaller status in our respective neighborhoods. Communicate with people we know, not just with those who have heard of us. We can be part of a cultural community, rather than pose as the leader of a cultural movement.

We want to speak clearly, forcefully, eloquently, practicing our discipline among the disciplines in the world. We want our musical activity to be self- and community-empowering. We need fellows with whom to share support, to criticize and to be critiqued by in an environment of collegiality. We want to discover musical professions that fully engage our energies, body, soul, and mind. We hope to be fully involved by the musical milieu in which we exist; in short, we hope to thrive. We must remember our calling.

But must we, at that most intimate impetus behind all our musical activity, pause to consider our music’s future longevity in “purely chronological terms,” or its relationship to indigenous vernaculars, or its purity from, or of, serial procedures? Surely we must strive for the clearest possible apprehension of the impetus of utterance. And if it so befalls that a particular relationship with vernacular traditions, or a particular purity of procedure, partakes essentially, is inseparable from the image of that impetus then, and surely only then, it must demand our most strenuous regard.

The relationship between our music – the serious, subtle, strenuously engaged music with which we strive to work out our existence – and American consumer culture is uneasy at best. And the line that Struble draws in the sand does not seek just to alienate us from our audiences, and our audiences from us, but also us from our calling, and our calling from us. “We’re not like those guys,” the populists say. “We would like to be a part of the real world. We would like to be regarded as both serious and acceptable. Those academics over there, and their benighted followers, they hate the audience, in fact they hate themselves, too. Their deepest desire is for you to hate them even half as much. They write only for their own incestuous pats on the back.”

But alienation is not unique to our music, and what alienation we hear in it might better be considered a defense tactic against our rapacious popular culture. The violent ugliness, the inscrutable difficulty seen as the attributes of our “honk squeak” music are the mirrored images of our own torment and rage at the hands (to paraphrase Ginsberg) of Moloch that entered our souls early. Seen from this standpoint, mass adulation, or even mere tolerance, are incontrovertible evidence of our failure to engage the monster with sufficient force. We must create music so ugly even we don’t like it, else we have not properly purged ourselves of our residual molochic proclivities.

Musical utterance at its most primal is intimately communal, requiring for its fulfillment a full engagement of the social morass within which it exists. But at the same time the slimmest evidence of personal acceptability is the micro-image of mass acceptance, of capitulation, selling out, and commodification, the first intimation

of being swallowed by our culture. By this paradox the composer of serious intent is thrust into a killing feedback loop. We treat even our closest collaborators as test cases, trying to get just beyond the point of their acceptability, to be forever uglier-than-thou. To be acceptably (to us) unacceptable (to them). Beautifully (to us) ugly (to them). Deeply and profoundly (to us) meaningless (to them). To fail is to evaporate. To succeed is to explode.

If there is hope for our musical lives, it must be the faith we possess in our own engagement, our own eloquence, our own incandescence, that we will find a way to flourish. To flourish on a human-to-human scale. On a scale in keeping with the impetuses of our musical thought. It must be the faith that we are, in fact, all in this together, and that a musically intimate community of persons is real and retrievable, in spite of, in the face of, even in the teeth, gullet, belly, into the very bowels of Moloch, our oppressor.

June 1, 2004

The Other Side of Nowhere: Jazz, Improvisation, and Communities in Dialogue.
Daniel Fischlin and Ajay Heble, editors. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2004

David Borgo

The Latin roots of the word “improvisation” refer to the unforeseen or the uncertain. Uncertainties, it would seem, are part and parcel of the process of living. We not only face uncertainty in our daily lives — what will the weather be like this afternoon? Will I get to my destination on time with all of this traffic? Has this food been out of the refrigerator too long? — but uncertainties operate in larger social and historical contexts as well. Is our government pursuing the right domestic and foreign policies? Can our planet withstand the environmental impact of X, Y, or Z? Will my family, community, or culture persevere and prosper in the coming years? How did life evolve on this planet? What kind of person was my great, great grandmother and what kind of cultural milieu did she inhabit? Or what did Buddy Bolden *really* sound like? While uncertainties often provoke doubt or concern, they also provide hope, surprise, and anticipation. For instance, we can look forward to the exciting uncertainties of visiting new places or meeting new people, or to an unexpected twist or surprise ending in a movie, novel, or sporting event. Or we may simply wonder with anticipation over the sounds that we will hear at a concert that evening.

Improvisation as an example of human creativity is somehow at the same time both mundane *and* mysterious. In a musical context this situation is no different. Derek Bailey (1992:ix) begins his important book on the subject by writing: “Improvisation enjoys the curious distinction of being the most widely practiced of all musical activities and the least acknowledged and understood.” David H. Cope (1976: 147) rightly points out that improvisation “must inherently exist in all music in which exact notation of every detail is not possible: therefore in all music.” But, as Fischlin and Heble argue in their introduction to this compelling set of essays on the subject: “Too often, as institutional histories of college and university programs in music across North America amply demonstrate, improvisation is dismissed and devalued (by its detractors) for precisely the same reason that it is said (by its adherents) to exemplify a radical and emancipatory potential” (23). In challenging some of the standard myths about improvisation— that it adheres to neither convention nor protocol and that it is first and foremost about “self-expression”— *The Other Side of Nowhere* contributes to redressing the dearth of scholarly treatment on this important subject and to correcting and counterbalancing the often essentialist work that has already been published.

The greatest strength of *The Other Side of Nowhere* is its multitude of perspectives. The book features contributions from musicians, artists, scholars, critics, and promoters, many of whom are already well known and have produced other important work in the field, and many of whom bridge several of the aforementioned categories with ease. This variety of perspectives— much as in a collective improvisation involving diverse voices— produces moments of great excitement and surprise interspersed with the occasional moment of confusion, contradiction, or simple frustration. While a few essays involve somewhat derivative scholarship and the contributions from the performers occasionally read as autobiographical pieces, the manuscript taken as a whole offers many fresh insights and perspectives on its topic. Despite Nick Couldry’s (1995:31) claim elsewhere that “Improvisation can have no true historian any more than there can be a historian of laughter,” many of the best essays included here do, in fact, just that; they provide the detailed historical documentation and analytical commentary that this music not only needs, but rightfully deserves. Read as its own “community in dialog,” *The Other Side of Nowhere* offers an in-depth treatment of an often-marginalized cultural and musical form— and in particular the frequently ignored contributions of women to the art— and its timely interdisciplinary approach to its subject is a welcome contribution to music and culture studies in general.

Fischlin and Heble begin by offering their own wide-ranging introduction to improvisation studies, referencing everyone from Ellington, Parker (Charlie and William), Coltrane, Braxton, Oliveros, Tapscott, and Ra, to the “improvised” cultural contact between Aztecs and Spaniards and the oppression of Black slaves, Native Americans, French-speaking Canadians, and Latin American revolutionaries. Through these far-ranging (although occasionally tenuous) examples, the authors impart an important and heartfelt message about other types of “knowing,” and the ability of improvised musicking to establish, maintain, contest, and paradoxically to dissolve notions of identity, participation, and belonging. In explaining their provocative title, the editors write, “the here-and-now of conventional knowing is nowhere; while the elsewhere that is the ‘other side’ to this ‘nowhere’ finds refuge in musical and social practices where intuition, experimentation, and expressive transgression sustain an alternative, differential space of human being, creativity, and community” (17). Fischlin and Heble conclude the book with an extensive bibliography and webography compiling the most significant work on improvised music, both as a helpful resource to other researchers, and as an open plea toward further dialogue on the subject.

The various essays from the contributors— many who first presented their work at the annual (and exceptional!) Guelph Jazz Festival put-on by the editors— are organized in both practical and artistic ways. The first essay by Canadian musician, artist, and filmmaker Michael Snow offers a thoughtful, yet intentionally tentative beginning. And the final essay by Chicago-based writer John Corbett provides, in the spirit of ongoing improvised performance, a meditation on the possibility of conclusive non-endings.

Part One of the book foregrounds the voices of performers (Snow, Pauline Oliveros, and Dana Reason). All three offer interesting perspectives and insight based primarily on their own personal and phenomenological experiences spent improvising. Snow grapples with several of the most common and critical issues that surround improvisation discourse, highlighting the individualism *and* collectivism of improvisation— “When I play *my* music with *theirs*, it becomes *ours*”— and the dialogic nature of performance that is both central *and* subverted— “So much of what happens that’s moving, happens simultaneously, in group improvisation” (48-49). Reason invokes David Rokeby’s notion of “navigable structures” and “transforming mirrors” as a useful model to understand the nature of the improvisation process and, perhaps more importantly, the relationship between improvisers, their medium, and their audiences. The reception of, and reaction to, improvisation remains an unfortunately under-theorized dimension in the discipline. Oliveros’ article is the first of several in the volume that offer a “gender challenge” to the improvised status-quo, and perhaps here lies the book’s most important and timely contribution. While Oliveros’ personal anecdotes are always compelling and thought provoking, the more scholarly work later in the volume probes these issues even further and (we can all hope) reflects a welcomed change in the music academy in recent years.

Part Two explores improvisation between and across cultures. Jason Stanyek’s contribution focuses on post-World War II intercultural improvisation in general, “Pan-African” jazz, and the collaboration between Dizzy Gillespie and Chano Pozo in particular. Through detailed discussion and analysis, he argues more generally for the importance of “intercorporeal interaction” over the all-too-frequent “information-driven” approaches to cross-cultural hybridity. While his emphasis on face-to-face contact should resonate with many improvisers and ethnomusicologists, Stanyek at times is forced to gloss over important inter- and intra-continental issues in cross-cultural collaboration in his effort to highlight the affirmative and celebratory nature of Afro-Diasporic music making. Michael Dessen looks to another Afro-Caribbean/Jazz collaboration, Steve Coleman’s work with AfroCuba de Matanzas, to probe the “strategies and strata” of intercultural improvisation. And George Lewis’ seminal article, “Improvised Music after 1950,” is reprinted here along with new commentary by the author bringing his piece up to date. Lewis corrects certain ways in which his original notions of Afro-logical and Euro-logical were subsequently misinterpreted and ways in which others might expand on them. And he intones an optimistic note for the future of this music and its scholarly study, while at the same time he alerts us to the still frequent erasure of African American contributions to experimentalism within the academic and critical discourse.

In Part Three, the editors group together work that reflects on the ways in which social practice and identity are configured and negotiated in improvisation. The essay topics range from bebop and hip-hop (Mark Anthony Neal), to improvised theater (Michael Soules) and record production (Michael Jarrett), and they balance methodological approaches ranging from straight oral history to rather theory-laden academic discourse. The three articles that highlight gender issues in relation to jazz and improvised music provide a coherent thrust to this section and should all be widely cited in future work. Julie Dawn Smith and Sherrie Tucker both offer fascinating historical and ethnographic research and shed considerable light on the benefits, and conflicts, that may emerge from more female participation in the music and an increasingly “feminist” perspective on the field. Smith invokes the “obscene spectacle” of Baubo from Greek mythology, and the improvisational laugh that it engenders, to frame her discussion of the feminist improvising group FIG, one of the first all-female collectives to form in response to the glaring absence of women improvisers on the scene. Tucker’s excellent essay, on the heels of her important book *Swing Shift* (2001), adds considerable depth and subtlety to our understandings of the significant contributions of women in jazz and the at times problematic, at times provocative, categorization of female performers as “women-in-jazz.” Krin Gabbard’s work explores method acting and a few specific performances by Marlon Brando in relation to the formations of jazz and gender that were emerging roughly mid-century. His essay is both thorough and provocative; in a scholarly sense, he “bites small” and “chews big.”

The final section of the book groups together the work of authors who chose to confront somewhat explicitly the theme of the colloquium at Guelph that year, “Collaborative Dissonances.” Nathaniel Mackey takes the opportunity to highlight his practice of writing fiction, out of which he formulated the notion of “discrepant engagement” that also provided a unifying theme to the entire conference. And English drummer, Eddie Prevost, offers a heartfelt discussion of the improvising music community and reflects on the aesthetics and economics of improvisation. As with his other writings on the subject (1995), his views here are both personal and provocative. “I suggest,” he writes, that “the way people make music inevitably tells you something significant about their worldview, consciously and otherwise” (356). While his arguments are oftentimes compelling, he occasionally relies on (as do others in the volume) a rather polemical writing style and counterproductive essentialist descriptions of the merits of improvisation when contrasted with composition or interpretive performance.

Throughout the volume, the editors and many of their contributors admirably struggle with reconciling the notion that “improvisation is the human practice from which all music derives” (20), with a desire to forward a more specific agenda in which improvisation depends on a “dissonant relationship to hegemony” (15) and operates in service of a particular humanitarian ideal. Fischlin and Heble correctly identify the rub between “improvisation understood as a social practice that critiques and opposes convention” and “improvisation as a social practice that adheres to its own conventions” (22), but their enthusiasm for their subject does at times lead them to co-opt the proposed fluid, radical, and disruptive nature of improvisation in support of their own political claims and ideals, however noble and desirable they may seem. Even Heble’s own earlier work (2000) (on saxophonist Charles Gayle) highlighted the fact that, regardless of any individual’s fervently held personal beliefs and intentions, the ethico-political authority of jazz and improvisation is still (and perhaps always will be) “up for grabs.” But work like this is sorely needed, for as the editors eloquently state: “Improvisation, in some profound sense, intensifies humanity,” and it does so “by intensifying acts of communication, by demanding that the choices that go into building communities be confronted” (23).

The work in this volume, and the breadth of experience and perspective represented by its contributors, attests to the fact that with an increasingly intercultural and gender-balanced participation in free improvisation, a broad consensus about its aesthetic direction or a monolithic approach to its analysis and understanding is not only unlikely but also unwarranted. Just as musical devices and relationships are continually negotiated within freely improvised performances and within the community of improvisers, artists and scholars (and increasingly artist/scholars) debate desirable social organization, the politics of representation, the public function of art, and its

possibilities for resistance to embedded cultural and historical constructions. By paying attention to the ways in which artists, listeners, and commentators define, document, perform, experience, and evaluate this music, we may gain insight not only into the process of artistic and cultural innovation, but also into the processes by which we create “communities in dialog.” While the allure of improvisation may continue to be its inherent unpredictability and uncertainties, a better understanding of the dynamics of collaboration, evidenced both on and off the bandstand, will only highlight the subtleties of its form.

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The Other Side of Nowhere: Jazz, Improvisation, and Communities in Dialogue.

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Benjamin Piekut

Everyone who has participated in a conversation, seminar, or debate on the nature and practice of improvisation is probably familiar with a few topics and questions that always seem to come up. These include the matter of freedom, and how it really doesn't exist without some kind of structure; how improvisation is an open process, turning listeners into active participants in the musical moment; how the interactivity of an improvised performance allows for the formation of both individual and collective identities; how real-time composition can perceive and respond to changes in the physical and emotional space of the performance; how improvisers do not actually 'make it up' as they go, but rather draw on a developed syntax of musical gestures; how performers of notated music are dupes of the authority complex of composition; how improvisation challenges the work-concept; how improvisers must be more attuned to their materials and collaborators than other musicians; how risk-taking in improvisation is of a higher degree than in other forms of music-making; how the dialogic nature of improvisative collaboration is based upon a more direct relationship between performers than is possible in music which has been 'mediated' through a score.

These questions are like scripts for conversations — entirely prepared dialogues on the differences between improvisation and composition that we run through like actors on our 35th take. When speaking with a composer, for example, I find myself arguing for the improviser's finely-tuned abilities to adjust to the unique characteristics of a particular space. Just as often, however, I'll point out to an improviser that any good musician will listen to the acoustic contours of the space, regardless of whether she is improvising or playing Beethoven. Or risk-taking: yes, an improviser might walk onto the stage with no pre-conceived idea of what will take place, and so will be at significant risk of falling flat on her face. But is this more dangerous than a sixteen-year-old violinist's performance of Sibelius at Interlochen, in front of an audience of 300 string players, half of whom practiced this very concerto for six hours earlier the same day?

The fact that every one of these well-worn observations — which probably come up most often in discussions of experimental improvisation — can feel both so obviously true and so plainly false is beginning to make me question their usefulness. Discussing them with other academics or musicians can feel like talking politics at a dinner party where everyone agrees; we all nod together. An activist friend once told me that she doesn't even pay attention to our president anymore. "It's too easy to develop tunnel-vision when you spend all your time fixated on the enemy," she remarked. "We prefer to keep an eye on the people who are supposed to be our friends." It seems to me that the long list of platitudes engendered by the improvisation/composition debate has promoted a kind of tunnel-vision in the discourse, and the theory of improvisatory practices has become bogged-down as a result. I'm sure that these observations were once interesting and important, but by now I wonder if we should try to move on to new questions, new topics, new possibilities.

My list of clichés emerges most frequently in dialogues with improvisers who advocate for the common theory of improvisation based on individual freedom and the removal of obstacles to spontaneous personal expression. It should come as no surprise, then, that most of the contributors to *The Other Side of Nowhere* ignore these scripts, for the editors of the volume, Ajay Heble and Daniel Fischlin, do such an excellent job in their

introduction of exploding individualist theories of improvisation. Their concern is not with self-definition, but rather with community-formation.

...our point, then is that practices in which improvisation is a defining characteristic *are* social practices, envisionings of possibilities excluded from conventional systems of thought and thus an important locus of resistance to orthodoxies of the imagination (knowing), of relations with others (community), and of relations to the materials of the world around us (instruments) (11). Their expansive meditation on communities and resistance in improvised music is the most complete treatment I've read on the subject, and is wide-ranging enough to include fascinating passages on the oppositional origins of the term, on its problematic use by cultural historians to discuss imperialism, and on the dangers of post-disciplinary approaches to the subject.

Many of the contributors to *The Other Side of Nowhere* follow their editors' example by going beyond the standard talking points on improvisation. There are a few authors who continue to reiterate the old debates, but the majority of the articles in the volume bring fresh approaches to the topic by drawing on unexpected disciplines and theorists or by proceeding from a unique understanding of what it means to improvise.

For example, Krin Gabbard's chapter, "Improvisation and Imitation: Marlon Brando as Jazz Actor," takes two of the actor's most celebrated scenes (the glove in *On the Waterfront* and the cold plate supper in *A Streetcar Named Desire*) as the focus of an investigation into the points of connection between postwar cinema and jazz improvisation. Gabbard draws out the links between jazz soloing and method acting as two parts of "a modernist mix that also included a romance with psychoanalysis, new forms of racial imitation, the development of postwar masculinities, and a fascination with improvisation" (300). Gabbard's concern with the construction of character is shared by Marshall Soules, who concentrates more on improvising in the world of theatre ("Improvising Character: Jazz, the Actor, and Protocols of Improvisation"). Though Soules states at the outset that he will examine the lines of intersection between improvised music and improvised acting, his discussion spreads out into a more general meditation on the performance of subjectivity itself — at some points by using musical structures as a metaphor for social codes, at others, by employing social codes to articulate points on acting protocols, and so on. In the end, our understanding of all three of these worlds is enriched.

My favorite chapters in the collection deal with women and improvising communities. Julie Dawn Smith's "Playing Like a Girl: The Queer Laughter of the Feminist Improvising Group" gives a history of that ensemble, and — just as important — provides a powerful argument for why their story is so important. The essay does a remarkable job balancing abstract theoretical discussion with musician interviews, history writing, and critical analyses of both the musical world that FIG inhabited *and* its place in broader historical currents of gender, race, and class. I particularly enjoyed her section on "Improvising Freedom," wherein she sharpens a by-now-common discussion by examining how the discourse of freedom has been used after 1960 by different social groups according to their differing relations to power.

Sherrie Tucker continues to be one of my favorite writers on music and culture, and her chapter ("Bordering on Community: Improvising Women Improvising Women-in-Jazz") takes dead aim on the whole idea of community itself: "...I wish to examine seriously a kind of romance and nostalgia for 'jazz community' that I find rather seductive but I also want to punch in the nose." Pointing out that such community narratives always draw a veil over power and resistance, Tucker (miraculously) manages to take her shots at a central concept of *The Other Side of Nowhere* without spoiling the party. She accomplishes this by borrowing a technique from some of the improvisers represented in the volume: she

experiments, allowing the reader to watch her “bust open the definitions of community and women,” and then work her way through the mess. Using debates in feminist theory on difference and women’s experience, Tucker concludes her essay with four “Alternate Takes” on women and jazz communities. Take Two begins, “Replace the term women-in-jazz with ‘improvising women.’ Roll it around in your head until ‘improvising women’ or ‘improvising woman’ is a verb....” This kind of serious playfulness, or sure-footed critical improvisation, is what I find so compelling in her work, and why it fits in so well with the experimental improvisation that is the topic of much of the rest of the volume.

The way Tucker plays with the meaning of “improvising women” points to another notable feature of *The Other Side of Nowhere* — namely, that very few of its authors ever offer a definition of improvisation. Judging by the vibrancy and invention of the work as a whole, this is probably a good thing, as if being freed up from the striated space of strict definition allowed the contributors to move easily across conceptual borders and other obstacles of thought. While Tucker notes that women can improvise their paths in and through jazz communities, Mark Anthony Neal (“‘A Way Out of No Way’: Jazz, Hip-Hop, and Black Social Improvisation”) uses the term “social improvisation” to describe how subcultures of young, urban African-Americans have developed social and artistic practices to build community in difficult and often hostile circumstances since the 1940s. (Pauline Oliveros offers by far the coolest definition of improvisation: “In this universe—and perhaps many others—life forms, matter and energy are constantly interacting to promote flow or movement from one moment to the next. This is improvisation.”)

An admirable quality of the collection is how well it succeeds in one of the stated aims of its title — communities in dialogue. There are innumerable voices here, which in turn represent countless more. In her chapter on women in improvisation (“Harmonic Anatomy”), Pauline Oliveros again demonstrates her generosity by inviting commentary from a long list of musicians she has collaborated with. While the presence of all these personalities (as well as the somewhat oddly-placed sidebar, “Women with Whom I Have Improvised in the 1990s”) sometimes feels like a grab-bag of canon-formation, the overall effect is one of real pluralism, of women’s voices being heard, recognized, and recorded for the future. Michael Jarrett (“Cutting Sides: Jazz Record Producers and Improvisation”) undertakes a similar project in his “montage of comments and narratives” collected from well-known producers of jazz. (By the way, Jarrett’s insightful introductory remarks to these interviews made me wish he had written an entire chapter on the relation between improvisation and recording, which is one of those huge issues begging to be explored. Jarrett’s is an admirable beginning.) Sherrie Tucker, Julie Dawn Smith, and Michael Dessen also rely on interviews to ensure that the voices of their subjects are heard. Rather than simply delivering a critical monologue, each writer uses this ethnographic technique to engage in a conversation with his or her chosen community.

Of course, one feature of many communities in dialogue is disagreement, and there are a few that stand out in this volume. Consider, for example, some passages from Michael Snow’s “A Composition on Improvisation”:

Free ensemble improvisation is possible today because improvising musicians exist in the huge aesthetic area opened up by modern “classical” music: Schoenberg, Ives, Varèse, Cage, Xenakis, and many others, and Futurist, Dada, and Fluxus sound experiments (46). The rediscovery of “improvisation” in music is one of the most important aesthetic events of the last hundred years (48).

Or this one, from Eddie Prévost’s “The Discourse of a Dysfunctional Drummer”:

Much of improvisation owes its origins to free jazz. [...] AMM, by contrast—perhaps because of our

connection to and awareness of experimental musics (Cage, Stockhausen, Wolff, Cardew, et al)—practiced and offered a different musical agenda and experience. (360).

One might wonder how George Lewis would respond to these comments, for in his now-classic “Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives” (reprinted here without any significant changes), he argues that jazz was such a powerful force in improvised music after WWII that European and Euro-American improvisers seeking to maintain their own possessive investment in ethnic solidarity had to distance themselves from it in one way or another. On the other hand, Julie Dawn Smith offers a nuanced corrective to Lewis’s critique: “The suggestion here is that neither free jazz nor free improvisation existed in a vacuum; neither, however, were they completely interchangeable” (228).

Sometimes, the disagreements and contradictions come up in the very same chapter. Pauline Oliveros disapprovingly notes how reviewers write differently about male and female improvisers, emphasizing technique and structure on one hand and sound and feeling on the other. But just a bit later, she writes of her own experience of improvising with women: “The music is about inclusion rather than exclusion. There is less emphasis on technical mastery and more concern for sounds weaving into shared textures” (55). The reader might wonder if Oliveros is including her own writing in the previous critique, or if Julie Dawn Smith and Sherrie Tucker would complicate such notions of unity in women’s communities.

Dissonances like these, however, can be welcomed as the noise that is inevitable when naturalized concepts are getting pulled apart and new ideas are being cooked up. This volume is a testament to how improvisation studies appears to be coming into its own. And perhaps as the field continues to stretch out and embrace new, unexpected approaches to the questions of spontaneity, interaction, and community, we will look back on this collection as a first step toward that expansion (maybe a second and third step, too).

TOM'S THOM

Richard Kostelanetz

Virgil Thomson (1896-1989) became one of the most prominent American composers of his generation less through his music than through his writings and his talking. While the principal music reviewer at the daily *New York Herald Tribune* from 1940 to 1954, he was ranked by common consent the best of this kind. Thomson also published, along with other books, a classic essay on the sociology of musical composition, *The State of Music* (1938), whose remarkably acute perceptions have never been surpassed; recently a colleague and I gladly reprinted the chapter entitled "Why Composers Write How" in our anthology of *Classic Essays on 20th Century Music* (Schirmer, 1996).

Anthony Tommasini was in many ways the ideal choice to write the first Thomson biography, *Composer on the Aisle* (Norton). While teaching at Emerson College in the late 1970s and then as a contributor to the *Boston Globe*, he befriended Thomson, even becoming the subject of a Thomson musical portrait — a short composition that the older composer customarily wrote for (or bestowed upon) favorite people. As an publicly gay man, Tommasini is also predisposed to discuss the homosexuality of Thomson and many of his closest colleagues, which was one subject not acknowledged in Thomson's otherwise courageous writings. Indeed, it is hard for us sophisticates today to believe that the composer successfully kept word of his homosexuality out of print, though not out of gossip, for nearly his entire lifetime.

Tommasini traces this fear of "coming out" not only to general attitudes of pre-Stonewall America but to a specific incident that had been generally forgotten. Back in 1942, just after Thomson had assumed his position at the *Tribune*, he was arrested in a police raid on a Brooklyn gay bordello. Among the regular patrons absent at the time of the bust was a U.S. Senator from Massachusetts named Daniel Ignatius Walsh, perhaps because, Tommasini surmises, the senator had been tipped off in advance by the FBI whose long-time director had comparable anxieties. Since journalists elsewhere were more interested in the prominent politician (who publicly denied visiting Brooklyn), Thomson's name didn't appear in the New York papers. Once Senator Walsh's alibi was accepted, the subject of the bordello raid disappeared from the press, and Thomson kept his newspaper job. So completely was the story suppressed that the composer/writer Eric Salzman, who worked in the music department at the *Tribune* two decades later, told me that he hadn't heard it before.

For reasons mysterious to me, Tommasini minimizes the richest professional passion of Thomson's life — his love-hate relationship with his fellow composer Aaron Copland (1900-90). Both had studied with Nadia Boulanger, the Parisian pedagogue who over four decades taught a pantheon of American composers. The two men were essentially tonal composers, who didn't initially accept the serial revolution initiated by Arnold Schoenberg; they were both closeted homosexuals (though apparently not competitive in love). However, Copland was Brooklyn Jewish; Thomson, a midwesterner with mild anti-Semitic prejudices. Thomson graduated from Harvard, while Copland didn't go to college. Copland wrote music commonly considered masterpieces along with books that were dismissed as evasive popularizations. Less successful as a composer, Thomson wrote essays and books commonly considered masterful. I remember seeing the two men on a stage together, at the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1966, when one presented the other with an award; and even out in the audience, fresh to this world (in my mid-twenties), I could feel sparks flying between them.

Publicly they supported each other, perhaps because they knew what had to be done to keep alive their shared ambitions for serious musical composition in America; but, privately, each deprecated the other.

Tommasini reports only one side — curiously, the other side: "To his intimate friends Copland would confide that he never really felt personally comfortable with Virgil, what with his airs, his cigarette holder, and his effeminate mannerisms. Thomson was too flamboyant for the self-contained, scrupulously closeted Copland." However, Thomson published four essays wholly about Copland over four decades — the first in 1926, the last in 1969; and to read them in sequence is to get a sense of the complex feelings they must have had toward each other. (They appear sequentially in my *Virgil Thomson, A Reader* [Routledge, 2002].)

Though this biography is fat and heavy in the current mode, what is also lacking — surprisingly, since Tommasini is a professional writer as well as a musician — is an appreciation and analysis of Thomson's prose. In my own judgment, aside from whether one accepts particular Thomson critical opinions (and I often don't), no one in America before or since wrote so well about music — sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, essay by essay. How did Thomson develop such strong prose, who were his literary models, what were his characteristic stylistic strategies, where were his words strongest and where weak, did his writing style change over the decades? These are the questions that warrant detailed critical explanations. The only hint about a source for Thomson's style comes in Tommasini's discussion of the composer's reading of Oscar Wilde. In one of those strokes that marks more distinguished research, the biographer notes which passages Thomson marked in his reading of Wilde *De Profundis*. However, Tommasini uses Thomson's copy of Wilde less to reveal his literary intelligence than to document his preoccupation with his homosexuality! Another apparent major influence on Thomson's prose, the British historian Thomas Babington Macaulay, isn't mentioned at all.

What is also missing from Tommasini's biography are those monumental wisecracks for which Thomson was notorious in his time — classic remarks that nowadays appear not in his own writings but in books by or about his friends. At the beginning of *City Poet: The Life and Times of Frank O'Hara* (1993), a popular and promiscuous homosexual, the biographer Brad Gooch writes: "There had indeed been much discussion over who was to speak at the grave. According to the composer Virgil Thomson, 'After his death a dozen of his lovers turned up looking for the glory of being the chief widow.'" Ned Rorem recalls another example in *Other Entertainments* (1996). Thomson in his late eighties emerged from a hospital operation asking the doctor, "Will I live?" Assured that he would survive, he replied, "In that case I'll need my glasses." If only because he befriended his biographical subject, Tommasini could have done better as James Boswell did for Samuel Johnson — at least memorialize his classic conversation.

Though now a staff music critic at the *New York Times*, Tommasini has some recurring troubles with New York City geography. On page 224 he has Harlem beginning "just past [north] at 110th Street" in the 1920s. If only because my middleclass Caucasian parents met around 118th Street and Manhattan Avenue late in that decade, I know that fact is wrong. All of Tommasini's examples of African-American night clubs two paragraphs later were north of 125th Street, which was in fact the southern boundary of Harlem at the time. (Decades later the border moved south.) Similarly, Tommasini describes the bordello on 329 Pacific Street as being "within walking distance of the Brooklyn Navy Yard" and its sailors, while a map of Brooklyn would have told him the places were well over a mile apart. Odder still is the use of only lower-case letters for the name of E. E. Cummings, whose *Complete Poems* (1991), with his name spelled correctly (as I've done), comes from another division of the same publisher!

This biography opens not with details about its subject's early life but with an example from his 90th year of Thomson's unnecessary cruelty toward the black woman who had been the star fifty years before of Thomson's single most famous work, the opera *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1934). As Tommasini tells it, Thomson's principal secretary had considerably invited the woman, then in her 80s and residing in a nursing home, to attend the opening of a semi-professional revival of the work. Hearing about this kindness, Thomson hysterically insisted that the woman be disinvited, because she might steal attention otherwise destined for him. Beginning so critically the initial biography of someone so revered was unusual and courageous, to be sure, and I wondered if Tommasini would continue in this way. However, perhaps because Tommasini had not published a biography before, his tone turns mostly conventionally sympathetic until the book's end.

What appears in this nasty incident and throughout the book is another, related quality of Thomson's character — his need to control, if not bully, those around him. As Tommasini has it, this trait was formed while young, even before Thomson got to Harvard. It influenced, among other decisions, his choice of collaborators, his taste in lovers, and his acceptance of the *Tribune* position, which became a bully's pulpit. Indeed, one theme implicit in the book is that a certain kind of artistic personality seeks the power offered by a prominent position, not only to publicize his or her work but to assuage other emotional needs. What seems apparent to me, though not to Tommasini, was that Thomson's work declined, not only as a composer but as a writer, once he left the *Tribune* in 1954. Though he lived thirty-five more years, everything he did afterwards as both a composer and a writer lacked something that his work had before.

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Soon after an earlier version of this review appeared in the *Boston Globe* Tommasini complained to its publisher about the selection of me as a reviewer, characterizing me as the victim of a conspiracy I'd not known about before, in which he may have participated. (I told my editor there to forget about it.) Tommasini also wrote a quarrelsome letter to the editor of *The New York Times Book Review* protesting Nicholas Fox Weber's review there. Can I be alone in thinking it unseemly for a fulltime reviewer to be so picky, if not vindictive, in protesting reviews of himself?) Only much later did I discover that Tommasini had, in addition to harrasing my editor, contribute to the *Globe's* pages a letter to the editor that has two themes — discrediting me and aggrandizing himself. It is an outrageous document that must be quoted at length to be believed.

First of all, I can scarcely be alone in wondering why the *Globe* didn't submit it to me for an accompanying reply, which is standard procedure, or even sent me a copy after it appeared, I assume because Tommasini must have twisted some administrative arms above the *Globe's* book-review editor (who never gave another assignment either to me or to the previous contributor kindly recommending me).

Consider first Tom's dismissal of me: "Richard Kostelanetz has what could be considered a conflict of interest regarding my work; he is editing for publication a selection of Thomson's writings with his own commentary." However, since Tom wrote a biography, an anthology of Thomson criticism is scarcely a competitive book, Tom's own convoluted phrasing, quoted here, indicating that he knows as well as everyone else that his charge is tenuous. Furthermore, consider that anyone unable to perceive the difference between those kinds of books, between a biography and an anthology, lacks the literacy necessary to be a librarian.

Recalling what he dubs "the dismissive tone of his [my] review," which seems more paranoid invention than fact, Tom apparently mistaking standard professional objectivity for contempt, he then quotes three extended favorable phrases (aka blurbs) from reviews elsewhere. (Since Tom cites only phrases, you wonder if some of these reviews might have been more negative than the excerpts suggests. After all, even in my own notice are favorable phrases, such as the reference to him as the "ideal choice to write the first Virgil Thomson biography" or to "strokes that mark distinguished research.") Were his letter written later, he would have no doubt boasted of receiving a Deems Taylor award from ASCAP for his book.

Nonetheless, in the next paragraph of his letter to the editor, Tom summarizes remarks he said I made in my contribution to a day-long Virgil Thomson celebration at the New School for Social Research in late 1996. Since I still have the prepared text of what I said in praise of Thomson the writer, to an audience so small it didn't prompt extemporizing, I know that Tom's purported summary is a fabrication. Since he cites me saying that my Thomson anthology will be better than a predecessor edited by Thomson himself, my hunch is that he is, instead, recycling remarks I made privately to someone else, Lord knows who. Working at second hand, if not third, rather than checking directly with me, Tom the newspaperman is an unreliable reporter, to put it mildly.

Riding a self-inflated balloon, Tom then finds my summary of his credentials as "an ideal choice" to be insufficient, adding less for my benefit than for everyone else's:

That I took 10 years to research and write the book; had full access to the man and his papers; did original archival work; interviewed over 60 people; as a pianist, recorded two CDs of his music (not to

mention 11 years honing my nose for news and journalistic writing skills) is not mentioned by Kostelanetz.

What's omitted from this recital, inexplicably and perhaps curiously, is an earlier scholarly book written by Tom solely on Thom's musical portraits. A further sin attributed to me, apparently disrespectful of Tom's need for detailed aggrandizing, is "never identifying me as a music critic for *The New York Times*." However, I did, as can be observed above, but that paragraph was cut out by the *Globe* and Tommasini apparently didn't do any research into what happened to my text in the office of the paper where he once worked. And the *Globe* editor apparently didn't tell Tom or edit his letter to acknowledge that fact. His research skills are no more developed than his reportorial.

One difference between my original manuscript and the *Globe* text is a severe concluding sentence, since dropped, that was written, in truth, in response to editorial prompting. (I generally resist such requests; but since this was my first review for the *Globe*, while I wanted to respect the colleague recommending me, I went along.) My sense at that time was that the editor didn't much like Tom, whom he may have known during his days at the *Globe*, whom, incidentally, I've not consciously met, though I too have come to dislike Tom the more I've known (or not known) him.

Even so, how the *Times* affiliation or the writing of reviews bestows any aura on a whopping biography misses me, though Tom's boast prompts me to recall a remark made directly to me by the art critic Hilton Kramer, when he was employed there, that no one ever wrote a good book while working at the *New York Times*. Having followed Tom's complaint so far, you sense that he evidently wanted from the *Globe* (and perhaps elsewhere) not a reviewer but a flack and that, distastefully, he is exploiting me as a platform for his self-publicity. Would he accept my invoice for services implicitly rendered?

What apparently irks Tom most, even more than "what could be considered a conflict of interest," is that I fault his biography for lacking, to quote him quoting me, "appreciation and analysis of Thomson's prose." Tom's rejoinder on this particular issue is so appallingly insufficient it must, forgive me, be quoted in its entirety to be believed:

In fact, my discussion of Thomson's evolution as a writer and critic begins with the letters of his great-grandfather which, I point out, have the same plain-spoken style that his own conversation and writing always had. I also discuss his grade school teacher English teacher[sic], Miss Fox, who taught him rhetoric (the book she used, Crabb's *English Synonymes*, Thomson kept in his library and eventually passed onto me [more self-aggrandizement!]); the authors he devoured at Harvard, including Stein, Nietzsche, and Wilde; the important guidance of Minna Lederman, editor of *Modern Music*, during his early days as a critic; the demanding tutelage of Geoffrey Parsons, his editor at *The New York Herald Tribune* who was determined to teach this fully-formed brilliant, but brash, critic the 'art of gentlemanly discourse.'

The truth apparent to the critical reader is that nothing in this litany of names and facts approaches critical insight into Thom's prose, though blustering Tom appears to think otherwise. Knowing only what he tells, you could conclude that Tommasini as a daily journalist with degrees in musicology has no idea, not a clue, of what might constitute genuine literary criticism. Reconsidering my review along with his reply, a reader could also wonder why humorless Tom didn't deal with my caveat about the absence of Virgil Thom's "monumental wisecracks." On further thought, consider that my most generous move in the original review was not mocking Tom's book, as I shall now, as a classic negative example of a humorless biography of a master comic.

Not yet done with self-advertising, Tommasini can't resist another opportunity to remind readers of his own importance: "Toward the end of my book I even report on Thomson's demanding tutelage of me, which began when I started writing for the *Globe*. His red-penciling of my early reviews revealed much about how he thought as a writer. Few people have had such an inside look as his writerly processes and this has been mentioned by many reviewers, among them poet Richard Howard in the *Los Angeles Times* [with, you guessed it, another blurb]." How the receipt of a red-penciled manuscript, even from a celebrated author, can provide much insight

Tom's Thom

into his copyeditor's own writing is an uncommon conceit available only to certain privileged mentalities. (I'd never seen anyone claim it before, at least in print.) Consider that comparable annotations from a successful composer on an aspiring student's score would not much of a young musician make.

Institutions with reputations to protect usually have policemen to curb such displays of self-promotion on their premises. You rightly wonder how Tom's inflations slipped through the venerable Boston *Globe* or what Tom is doing nowadays in the music department at *The New York Times*. Some might sense that among Tom's motives here is embarrassing his former employer along with his current one, all under the guise of free advertising in their pages?

Powering Up/Powering Down — A Model for Idea Sharing

Chris Tonelli

Begin the quest to, via technology, reintegrate the self with the body on a Friday morning and by early afternoon on the following Sunday you'll feel like you're on the way to being able to give a voice to the voiceless, that your creative production can resist your overwhelming interpellation as a consumer, that your joy could be revolutionary. From Pauline Oliveros' opening keynote to George Lipsitz's closing remarks, and after three days of performances and lectures, a buzz of positivity and community was obvious amongst the attendees of Powering Up/Powering Down: An International Festival of Radical Media Arts.

The festival was put together by Teknika Radica, a University of California at San Diego based group of musicians and visual artists that united around a desire to create a dialogue about issues affecting women's relationship to technology, a dialogue that would spawn events and programs to use technology in the arts to empower women. That a group comprised of a dozen or so, most of whom are graduate students working on dissertations, could put on an event of this magnitude and quality roughly a year after they first united speaks volumes about the necessity and rarity of the conversations that took place throughout the weekend. The issues drove the group to set their ambitions high and produce an event George Lewis said, "hasn't been seen before, not just here, but anywhere."

Powering Up/Powering Down was a conference on technology that didn't forget that microchip production is killing the ocean, that "those who aren't connected are still affected" and that gender hierarchies and reification can be subverted with a laptop and a couple of speakers. It was a performance festival that broke down walls of age, race, prestige, and class, and a chance to see what happens or changes at an interdisciplinary academic gathering where women outnumber men by a ratio of roughly six to one. Entrance fees were by donation, the organizers were all volunteers, and the politics and generosity of the organizers, supporters, and invitees made the festival a model for future events aspiring towards the creation of genuine community.

On panels and over meals technology theorists were in dialogue with musicians, special needs educators in dialogue with torture artists, and musicologists in dialogue with ethnomusicologists, connections were established that seemed deeply and, perhaps, also unexpectedly necessary. This interdisciplinarity created an environment in which individual addresses and performances illuminated and critiqued each other in gracious and productive ways. No one methodology or path of thought could hide in the security of a discipline and I believe it was this aspect of the conference, alongside a generosity of spirit amongst the attendees and hosts, that created the impression that we were all involved in strikingly important endeavor.

Some personal highlights...

An unrehearsed group improvisation between Pamela Z, Pauline Oliveros, and Bevin Blecktrum brought three generations of women together, three commonly reified and bounded artworlds together, three forms of relatively unterritorialized technology together (the body-synth, the personalized lap-top, and Pauline's system for processing accordion). Improvisation you could not fail to read as politicized; music as exciting as any I've heard.

Powering Up / Powering Down

Sharon Daniel speaks about her work as a database curator and the need for every individual to have unmediated access to the means of the creation of permanent and accessible historical archives. We are reminded that history should be understood as a collective responsibility, not a task for an authoritative few.

Adrien Jenek speaks about her experiences in internet theater, exciting those present by articulating our understanding of cyberspace to the network our of associations around public streets, city centers, and other spaces where communicative interchange can occur randomly, en masse, creating chains of messages that have personal, political and social ramifications.

Los Cybrids center attention on the margins of techno-culture with a ritualistic blessing of the four corners of planet global capitalism.

Mitchell Morris opens a panel discussion he chairs with a stark reminder of the environmental consequences of microchip production.

If you didn't make it to this event, it might be valuable for you to talk about it with those who did. Should more events create the kinds of exchanges Powering Up/Powering Down allowed for, we would be the benefactors of a boost in the vitality integral to truly transformative academic work, political activism, and artistry.

We Lose Our Way

A talk for Powering Up/Powering Down, UCSD, 1.04 by Mary Lee Roberts

There were three of us as staff people in the hall at 9:00 AM right before the blizzard. We had driven in to the hall in a 4X4. (Nothing new, even audio happens in Fargo ND)¹. We had everything set up, jobs were distributed and wires were crossed. Wires became uncrossed as soon as we understood what was desired: somebody's scheme (not ours) about how to make the best audio happen. The lights were not right, the lighting guy had left to go do another gig, we had all been double-booked so we were trying to do 2 jobs at once, we struggled with the lights.

*"What of those Godpossibled souls that we nightly impossibilise..."*²

By 1 AM that same day (or I guess what you would call the next day, technically: that same work-day) things were starting to happen. Remembering this story about a cadet at West Point: here was this guy who was on the football team, to paraphrase what he said, "I don't want to complain, or I'll never complain, but if I could just get more sleep, but I can't sleep, I have to be a great athlete, a good soldier, I have to learn complex physics and calculus, I have to be everything all at once, I can't sleep." Thinking this at 2 AM when we were still trying to get good audio to happen.

*"Pray for us. And pray for us. And pray for us. Good idea the repetition. Same thing with ads. Buy from us. And buy from us."*³

There was some knowledge from last experience: something was known about this hall and recording percussion here would always be a mess. There were some solutions. And this is the age-old story: many tiny solutions usually add up to results. There is never one giant answer to anything.

*"Stranger, are you so much the fool, so stripped of wits, or is it that you relish this distress—are you a man who thrives on trial?"*⁴

He learns from the daughter of the sub-God that if he does this, that, and the next thing: hide on the beach with smelly seal skins on top of him and his crew, lure her sea dwelling father (the sub-God) out of the sea and trap this sub-God in order to learn that he has to sail his ship over treacherous waters to get to the mouth of the Nile to offer hecatombs to the meta-God; he'll get good winds to sail home.

¹ We sing-songed under our breath, "Through rain or snow, or dark of night, we will make audio happen".

² James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York: The Modern Library, 1934), 383.

³ *Ibid.*, 371.

⁴ Homer, *The Odyssey of Homer*, translated by Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), 75.

We Lose Our Way

Or this:

“Draw near the spot and, as I tell you, dig a squared-off ditch—along each side, one cubit. Three times pour offerings around that pit for all the dead: pour milk and honey first, then pour sweet wine; let water be the third. And scatter over these white barley meal.”⁵

To record good drums in this hall the engineer has to set up Plexiglas barriers, close-mic all sound sources, try and catch the room sound exactly this far away, at this height, with these mics set at this pattern, with this much stuffing strewn around to suck up the sound. This is known. This is what is known. This was known at least 2 years ago, but it was not figured out how to communicate it until 1 AM, when that Cadet/Football Player came to mind.

We lose our way.

And it is we, there are no individuals allowed, except for the Artist. There is no I, except for the Artist. I is not allowed. The I gets sacrificed to professional behavior. We are not the Artist, we are the servants, and the Artist is probably a Goddess or God, either way, any gender, we can never guess what the Artist is going to do to our halls or us.

“It’s hard for those-who-die to get the better of a deity.”⁶

There are 4 answers:

“Yes, Sir.

No, Sir.

No Excuse, Sir.

Sir, I do not understand.”⁷

And it is not just a matter of knowing how to plug things in, we must know our halls, and try to guess what the Artists/Gods/Goddesses and their entourage will do to our halls. (And these are our halls, the halls belong to us because we make them work, we look after them, we help to recover these halls from the use and abuse of Artists and their patrons.)

“U. p.: Up.”⁸

Again at 9:00 AM the engineer is back at the hall, once again arriving through a blizzard. Is there no justice? No breakfast? No time for morning ablutions? She had sat at her breakfast table some day last month, serving herself: buckwheat pancakes, sausages, orange juice, making sure to prepare the fine tea in the Chinese tea pot according to directions, her bananas and pears ripened to perfection and sliced in a deep bowl with a glob of organic yogurt on top, the yesterday newspaper propped up, eating in a hurry out of habit, but reminding herself that she can linger and drink the tea and read, again reminding herself that she doesn’t have to rush to work, there is time to eat, take that hot bath, sit in warm clothes, in the morning light.

⁵ Ibid., 207.

⁶ Ibid., 76.

⁷ Cpt. Carol Barkalow, *In the Men’s House* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1990), 26.

⁸ *Ulysses*, 438.

“On the boil sure enough: a plume of steam from the spout. He scalded and rinsed out the teapot and put in four full spoons of tea, tilting the kettle then to let water flow in. Having set it to draw, he took off the kettle and crushed the pan flat on the live coals and watched the lump of butter slide and melt.”⁹

*“But let me, even in my sorrow, eat.
There is no thing more shameless than the belly;
however tried we are, whatever pain
assails our heart, the hateful stomach claims
its right to be remembered: it constrains
us always, forcing us to eat and drink,
even as I, though sick at heart, am now
compelled to set aside my long ordeal:
my belly bids me see that it be filled.”¹⁰*

Other engineers ask, “Where were you? We knew you were hiding”, taking 10 minutes to try and eat a sandwich.

“Still, it’s solid food, his good genius urged, I’m a stickler for solid food, his one and only reason being not gormandising in the least but regular meals as the sine qua non for any kind of proper work, mental or manual.”¹¹

Out the window there is a beautiful tree, if we can get enough to drink we can see the tree on our way to the bathroom.

*“And I saw Tantalus in deep torment;
he stood upright within a pool, his chin
just touched by water. But despite his thirst,
he could not drink: as soon as that old man
bent over, seeking water, all that pool—
dried by a demon—shrank; and Tantalus
saw black earth at his feet. Above his head,
trees—leafy, high—bore fruit; from pomegranates
to pears, sweet figs, bright apples, and plump olives.
But just as soon as he reached out to touch,
winds blew that fruit up toward the shadowed clouds.”¹²*

But there was a funeral to go to, somebody sacrificing their staff to the audio God/Goddess. As usual the staff are the first to arrive and wait a number and another number of minutes for the Artists. If she hustles to get everything ready she might have 4 minutes of peace and solitude, sitting in the soft audience chairs, before her life is no longer her own.

The West Point Cadet/Football Player catches a nap at this time → 12:34 PM.

⁹ *Ulysses*, 62.

¹⁰ *The Odyssey of Homer*, 138.

¹¹ *Ulysses*, 619.

¹² *The Odyssey of Homer*, 232.

We Lose Our Way

*“the hour of gentle rest will soon be here,
at least for those who can, despite their cares,
receive sweet sleep.”*¹³

The need to condition oneself to fall asleep on command. This luxury of meandering off to sleep is a real waste of time, efficiency is in order, fall asleep for 4 minutes, at least that can and should be called sleep. Or figure out how to fall asleep so that social demerits are not handed out. The eyes-open type of sleep, somehow getting the human brain to be in sleep mode with no apparent physical indication. This way we can sleep: do that ultimate of self-absorbed activity while simultaneously pretending to meet the needs of the God/Goddess/Artist.

*“each day they crowd into our house. They slaughter
oxen and rams and fat goats; there they guzzle
our glowing wine: their stupid rite, their revel.
They waste our wealth away; there’s no defense.”*¹⁴

Sitting in a sound booth after 100 hours of work in another hall waiting for the famous rock/pop star to finish his stand-up routine (“his set is killing me”) (“*His voice was thunder, and his form a monster’s*”¹⁵) which he has resorted to doing because he really can’t make music any more because:

Here’s his tech rider:

- 1 quart of Dewars,
- 1 case of Mountain Dew (to wash it somewhere, down or up),
- 1 case of Coors (chasing it somewhere, down or up, no good looking females around here to chase, not even a nod to the hobnailed shod, gray templed, mean-as-snot looking sub audio engineer: sneerster),
- 1 garbage bag sized bag of popcorn.¹⁶
*“An obscene meal.”*¹⁷

*“His belly called for glutting, so he ate
and drank without a break. He had no guts
or force, but he did not lack bulk.”*¹⁸

The Artist/God/Goddess rendered:

*“The Cyclops do not need to sow their seeds:
for them all things, untouched, spring up: from wheat
to barley and to vines that yield fine wine.
The rain Zeus sends attends to all their crops.
Nor do they meet in council, those Cyclops,
nor hand down laws; they live on mountaintops,
in deep caves; each one rules his wife and children,
and every family ignores its neighbors.”*¹⁹

¹³ Ibid., 396.

¹⁴ Ibid., 356.

¹⁵ Ibid., 177.

¹⁶ He checked himself in to a fancier Betty Ford club med the very next week.

¹⁷ Ibid., 195.

¹⁸ Ibid., 361.

We are told to make sure to record this mess. The producer stands too close, as if we would even care to bootleg this mess. When it's all over, at least when the Artist on the stage is finished ("the dude never made it through one song, those songs we all grew up with on AAA radio") with his mess:

*"the Cyclops reeled, his hulk collapsed;
he fell upon his back, with his thick neck
aslant; sleep, lord of all, now held him fast.
up from his gullet, bits of human flesh
and wine were gushing: in his drunken sleep,
he'd vomited."*²⁰

And the famous Author, Scholar, who consistently creates a stir in her public appearances. She never announces when she'll mount the stage, instead she may sneakily meander amidst her fandom, then suddenly, without warning, leaving the stage crew and audio engineers in a state of "no notice", as if the Muses just told her by divine guidance: It is, my Dear Famous Person/Artist/Goddess, time to mount the stage, where no mics are on, no proper lighting set. Tap, tap, tap on the mic as we lunge toward the sliders, then she mumbles confusedly in to the mic, something like: "Oh, Dear Me, the mic is not on yet, well if you, Dear Audience, would just lend me your most extreme attention, while the staff scurries around trying to realize lights and audio, we can start my presentation."

*"How can a man detect a god who comes and goes
if gods refuse to have their movements known?"*²¹

Time after time, she pulls this psycho-drama stunt, so that now, the minute we see her entering the hall, readying herself for her presentations, we watch her every movement, the mics are set at full level awaiting her slightest whisper, the lighting guy is at his controls, trigger fingered.

*"Long since, the bitter hate of thundering Zeus
against the sons of Atreus has used
conniving women as its instruments:
how many of us died through Helen's fault..."*²²

No big deal whenever we do kiddy shows in this hall some kid always barfs up a mess.

*"Like a shot off a shovel."*²³

They keep a barrel at the end of the obstacle course at West Point. Here's where everybody can barf his or her guts out after 3.25 minutes of pure hell on the course. This is all fine and thoughtful until you realize that you have to be the sixth person to barf in that barrel.

*"Leadership, unit cohesion, sacrifice, the group goal is always more important than the individual."*²⁴

¹⁹ Ibid., 172.

²⁰ Ibid., 181.

²¹ Ibid., 209.

²² Ibid., 227.

²³ *Ulysses*, 339.

²⁴ David Lipsky, *Absolutely American* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003), 38.

We Lose Our Way

Then the strike, things get weird. One stage hand, this guy, for a whole year, when he gets too tired he starts singing Judas Priest's *Breakin' the Law*. Then, all of a sudden, at these post-exhaustion moments he gives up this song and substitutes a swift, high frequency bark, like one of those floor-mop model dogs. Yap, yap, nobody cares, we're all too tired, she threatens to drive her pickup in to the lake just to break the law. There was this time a long time ago, in Fargo at 1 AM, loading up a pretty big PA, in January during one of those times when it's at least -20 F on the thermometer for at least a 2 week stretch. Standing under the truck bed, unloading a PA, a flight case with all the graphic EQs hits her head. She should have been knocked cold, at least knocked down, taken to the hospital with a concussion. Nobody can believe it, the flight case bounced off her head, hit the ice, and slid, under the truck, not even a bruise.

*"The Summer evening had begun to fold the world in its mysterious embrace."*²⁵

There was the beautiful mid-Fall cold night with a lunar eclipse, we can slip out the sound booth out of the hall, the cold, dry air hitting our sweaty shirts, Yikes! Look at that moon. It's like Beethoven in the desert, inside events so ridiculously compared to the outside events.

We may be losing our way, but Artists always find us.

Too tired to sit up straight he huddled in the corner of the sound booth, trying to sleep (*"knead sweet wax to stop your shipmates' ears"*²⁶) at least the probably 10 more minutes until clapping starts (that pounding of flesh that indicates the need for action). Then in their office, take 10 minutes to lie on the floor to try and stretch the kinks out of her back. Pounding on the door, don't answer, somebody has done something unmentionable to some computer somewhere, needs a button pushed on something somewhere. We can't hear, if we could hear we'd have to fix it, we can't stand something not working. Over the summer months, in those quiet hours, learning that this driver will disable a software language, so move it to another directory, pack that knowledge about where that driver needs to live in to some file somewhere. Then three months later with a hardware failure, reinstall, forget that that driver can't live there, the whole system fails, if we don't answer the call now, when we're supposed to be working another job in another hall, there will be a failure here, what to do, where to fail, make the decision of where to fail, or if we can put our brains in such a mode that there is no failure, the remembrance of things past from the mental file of where that knowledge is supposed to be kept, he says something, she remembers, put that god damned thing in that god damned directory, the problem is solved, but not without the terror, the sweat rising in the back of her shirt, the nervous system hysteria, we can't leave until this system is running perfectly.

*"And in a sad plight he was after his misadventure. His little man-o'-war top and unmentionables were full of sand but Cissy was a past mistress in the art of smoothing over life's tiny troubles and very quickly not one speck of sand was to be seen on his smart little suit."*²⁷

We get all tangled up. We can't emerge, obsessed, we can't let a system sit in dysfunction. No we don't need to eat, no, we don't need to drink, just leave us alone, don't ask us any questions, audio will happen over our bodies.

*"Can't you curb your zeal for torments, war, ordeals—and yield even to the immortal gods?"*²⁸

²⁵ *Ulysses*, 340.

²⁶ *The Odyssey of Homer*, 238.

²⁷ *Ulysses*, 341.

Here's what MacArthur did when he heard that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor: he didn't do anything. Nine hours later the Japanese bombed his airfields in the Philippines, MacArthur couldn't tell the then Air Force to get the god damned planes in the air, he couldn't come up with one constructive measure of action until it was too late. The snipers who are now trained by the Army always know what to do, nerves of something other than flesh, these guys never lose their cool, they can see in 10,000 directions at once, they know what to do and they do it. "If we don't shoot him, he'll shoot us, where is the question here?"

*"This is scandalous: you struck a wretched vagabond.
...you're doomed if he is one who comes from heaven.
For gods may wear the guise of strangers come
from far-off lands; they take on many forms
and roam about the cities; they would see
if men live justly or outrageously."*²⁹

There must be something else going on here about why we feel such a strong sense of almost aggressive self-defense. It must be that we feel defenseless, unable to say no to impossible demands. There are 2 jazz bands on stage at once. Work 16 hours with a 10 minute break put in there with guest Artists that are violent: slugging each other, pacing, racing about the stage screaming profanities in the microphones and calling that a sound check. Oh, Mrs. Audio Lady we don't like our mics. Pounding on the door, let us in so that you have no time to eat, so that you can be at our bidding at every possible minute. No I won't move my equipment approximately 5 feet in any direction to accommodate another Artist. Hey you moved my instruments slightly off from center stage, I won't put up with this and even though the concert starts in 10 minutes you had better do something about it at this moment.

A soldier in the United State Army has Five Rules Governing the Use of Deadly Force, or his or her license to kill:

1. A soldier is empowered to kill in self-defense.
2. A soldier is empowered to kill in defense of another battery member.
3. A soldier is empowered to kill to avoid the potential overthrow of a site.
4. A soldier is empowered to kill to prevent the destruction of equipment.
5. A soldier must kill when ordered to do so by a superior officer.³⁰

There is this code: don't let the Artists see us in any mode other than professional behavior. If Artists can't see us as anything other than the efficient professional work machines that we are then the Artists can't know us, which means that the Artists have very little access to our psyches. This protects us. Then the Artists can't know when they have the pleasure of provoking us, we just don't get provoked. This is our defense.

*"How can people aim guns at each other? Sometimes they go off."*³¹

This aging old 60s folk band came to our hall. These guys were old. The Goodnight-Irene generation. One of them was so sick from pain medication needed for chemotherapy that he collapsed

²⁸ *The Odyssey of Homer*, 240.

²⁹ *The Odyssey of Homer*, 354.

³⁰ *In the Men's House*, 156.

³¹ *Ulysses*, 373.

We Lose Our Way

on the stage: his head hit the music stand, then his head hit the guitar stand, over went the expensive and very old guitar, his chair and him on to the stage. He's bleeding. Band-Aids, soak up the blood from the gash on his forehead. Call the cops just in case he needs an ambulance.

*"But I realized, finally, what it meant to become so deeply involved with some soldiers that my own sense of value became predicated on their accomplishments, my identity justified by their existence. The wall of detachment I'd so carefully constructed was beginning to crumble. No matter what might happen in the future, I vowed I would never let myself get that close to one of my soldiers again."*³²

Our vision of what the Artist/Goddess/God is must have nothing to do with their self-image. It's like what Edward Said said years ago: something like, "Well, we can read Homer, and read literary criticism about Homer where the literary critic goes on and on about what heroic figures Achilles and Odysseus are." These bulked up perfect specimens of manliness who are so brave that they can:

1. Let their comrades get their butts kicked in battle because they need to mope around about having a girlfriend/slave/prize taken away.
2. Lead their men in to dangerous and terrible situations just for kicks, just to be curious, where half of the crew that they are responsible for get killed.

*"My concern, says Colonel Houston, is not that women will get killed. Tough shit. I might get killed. That's the way it goes. I hate to see any soldier hurt. It's my charge to conserve human life...particularly if it's entrusted to my care."*³³

The popular image of the Artist/Goddess/God is still stuck in pre-post-colonialism, the myth the modern critic promotes: the Artist as perfect, the Artist as Achilles where the slings and arrows designed by the Artist in self flagellation are meant to bring the Artist down to the realm of those who do not live forever, the life of we mere mortals. The audience members so eager to cheer on the Bloated-Being on stage, we think: how can they be getting in to this?

*"Happy chairs under them."*³⁴

The West Point cadet/football player says, "I'm part of something so much more here."

*"From everything in the least indelicate her finebred nature instinctively recoiled."*³⁵

That old folk singer. He bled like a mortal. He let us pick him up, plant him back on his chair, prop him up, and he played the concert. He left the hall with brief and dignified thanks when it was all over.

*"Actions that indicate a sensitivity to and regard for the feelings and needs of others [Sir!] and an awareness of the impact of one's own behavior on them [Ma'am!]."*³⁶

³² *In the Men's House*, 234.

³³ *Ibid.*, 260.

³⁴ *Ulysses*, 370.

³⁵ *Ulysses*, 358.

³⁶ *Absolutely American*, 108.

Just the week before we had this Artist with an antifreeze/beer charged circulatory system who stormed out of our hall after shouting an obscene and lengthy commentary that was supposed to be significant because Mr. Rogers had just died.

*“Are you wild with wine
or do you always blab with muddled mind?”³⁷*

We say to ourselves: we don’t have to listen to this guy, we are allowed to call the cops and have him bounced. If we do this we won’t get home before at least 1 AM. What do we want to do: waste at least an hour in dealing with this Artist getting bounced, or ignore him, finish striking, and make it to bed before it gets really late? We’re too tired, let this guy rage his rage by himself.

*“Come on, you winefizzling ginsizzling booseguzzling existences! Come on, you doggone,
bullnecked, beetlebrowed, hogjowled, peanutbrained, weaseleyed fourflushers, false alarms and
excess baggage! Come on, you triple extract of infamy!”³⁸*

“I, for one, certainly believe climate accounts for character.”³⁹

The signal path starts at the stage in to the mics and Direct Injectors down the Extra Long Reaches to the box up the snake, not backwards yet, in to front-of-house desk out of the front-of-house desk and down the snake, backwards now, to the woofer back up the snake, not backwards, to the EQs out of the EQs back down to the mains this way they can’t send us something that can’t be extracted before it irreversibly destroys the system.

“What would render such return irrational?”

An unsatisfactory equation between an exodus and return in time through reversible space and an exodus and return in space through irreversible time.”⁴⁰

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³⁷ *The Odyssey of Homer*, 372.

³⁸ *Ulysses*, 420.

³⁹ *Ulysses*, 621.

⁴⁰ *Ulysses*, 713.

Writings and Reflections

for Elaine Barkin

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Going All the Way

Renee T. Coulombe

Charting one's personal and professional development in/with/of music almost never generates maps of slow and steady accumulation of information. Instead, a few powerful "moments" seem to dominate the cartographic landscape, manufacturing crimson routes and broad green highways which link and fold back in again on themselves. These moments of ground-shift have intellectual gravity: once a new truth comes startlingly into focus, it seems as if everything we have thought or read previously was only necessary preparation. Certainly, these epiphanies cast long shadows on the work we do after, and has lingering effects for the rest of our careers.

Usually, paradigm-shaping moments are personal – we discover a theorist or writer previously unexplored, but who elucidates our own thinking. We make connections previously unheard of, and solve thorny intellectual conundrums. More rare are the moments of disciplinary ground-shift – when a community of scholars must come to grips with the new, the untested, the unsettled. These rare moments can be dangerous and messy. But from the mess, if we proceed carefully, we can create a productive moment that enables us to reaffirm the relevancy of the discipline. Surely the 1992 exchange between Susan McClary, Elaine Barkin and Jann Pasler,¹ over the then recently-published *Feminine Endings*, is one such powerful moment for music scholarship in general, resonating both in the public and the personal. In some ways, the "Feminist Forum" in the pages of *Perspectives of New Music*² was the first important critical public argument in feminist musicology/music theory (and by argument I do mean *argument*). The validity of a feminist perspective was assumed *a priori* on all sides: a revolutionary prospect at that moment. But it was the *meaning* of that feminism, and its potential benefits/costs for musical scholarship, that was heatedly contested. The exchange between Barkin, McClary and Pasler marks a major moment in critical theory's big break into the music scholarship "biz," and was as spontaneous as it was long anticipated.³ It carried with it far-reaching consequences that have deeply changed most scholarly disciplines of music. Yet, oddly, in some ways nothing has changed at all.

While the precise moments of cultural shift are necessarily non-specific, (no one scholar can be entirely responsible for ground-shifts), "Feminist Forum," as a group of articles arguing the implications of the role of analysis in music, feminist or otherwise, is valuable for its context and content. It offered something almost unheard of to readers: the opportunity to participate in a conversation between three enormously important, senior *female* scholars arguing the place of feminist scholarship and female composers/scholars within the disciplines of music. The exchange of female "heavy hitters" was startlingly refreshing for many young scholars who witnessed the melee from the frightening ignominy of graduate school. It was particularly important for those of us whose experience with critical theories of a feminist, queer, postcolonial or postmodern bend begged for

¹ While the Feminist Forum also included a review of the first Feminist Theory in Music Conference by Marianne Killian-Gilbert, it was not directly thematically related to the *Feminine Endings* discussion, and thus is not dealt with here.

² Volume 30, No. 2 (Summer 1992). Both of the Barkin works cited, *either/other* and *Webern, Orchestra Pieces (1913): Movement I ("Bewegt")* are reprinted in *E: An Anthology* (Red Hook, NY: Open Space) 1997.

³ See Pasler's description of recent scholarly meetings and one well-attended "Feminist Theory in Music" Conference as evidence of gathering ground swell in "Some Thoughts on Susan McClary's 'Feminine Endings'." I can also personally attest to the continued success of Feminist Theory in Music as a conference – I like many others attended the seventh meeting last summer in Bowling Green, Ohio.

expression through musical practice, composition and study. Furthermore when reading the works, the reader found more than just argument and debate. The reader found in each essay that each of these women, in their own way, had challenges both in their collegial relationships, and with the questions they wanted to pursue. Pasler describes this as an insider (“Ivy League,” establishment), outsider (woman, feminist) problem. While Pasler credits such insider/outsider status as that which aided McClary’s forging of a new discipline, let us perform a more nuanced reading. For something lurks behind each of these scholar’s perception of their own work, and their expressed relationship to their colleagues and the academy. This subtext hints at possible feminist approaches to one’s professional life, and includes rather direct admonitions, like “rock the boat too hard before tenure and you’re sunk!”⁴

As a particularly junior scholar (read: 1st year doctoral student) at the time of the “Feminist Forum,” this moment marked much of my early training as a academic, and its repercussions⁵ were deep and wide for my generation of music scholars. Like Barkin et al., I was well trained in traditional music theory and analysis, yet also had, like my peers, read enough of critical theory by 1992 to develop recurring migranes. Many of my graduate-student peers were frustrated and often lamented that the wave of new critical discourses in literature and other disciplines seemed to be tacet in music. Certainly, feminism and queer theory, because of music’s particular anxieties, seemed especially irreconcilable in music scholarship until then. While there had been much “recuperative” work done in finding and promoting the work of historical women composers, no one was discussing how, exactly, gender and sexual desire might be mapped onto music *itself*. This was, of course, a far more dangerous prospect for many than recognizing a few historic female composers.

Barkin makes specific reference to scholarly “generations” in her discussion of McClary’s work, identifying her with a younger generation, “whose upbringing, in every significant way imaginable, differed from my own.”⁶ This disclaimer is offered before Barkin cautions that McClary’s new critical musicology might very well spawn a new formalism of its own. Truly forging a new discipline, rather than substituting one formalism for another, is trickier than it seems. Barkin grounds her warning in her own experience and early rejection of the role of “composer” and all that it represented. She feared she might become a “power-idolatry-hungry authoritarian.”⁷ But her attempt *not* to compose failed: Elaine couldn’t simply stop being a Composer. She had been constructing her identity in opposition to the role of composer as she understood it from masculinist sources (and surely a few role models), and found that it was instead possible to liberate previously masculinist musical activities from their masculinity (as many male colleagues now attempt as well). Exactly what that might sound like is hotly contested between the pages of *Feminine Endings* and *Either/Other*. Nonetheless, the argument itself proves fruitful, outlining the ways in which different women communicate their vision of feminist work, and how their feminine perspective makes meaning in their musical activities. Surely, this is a unique process for every woman musician, but public examples remain too few and far between.

In scholarship, new modes of feminist discourse may be highly divergent. Pasler points to the ways in which McClary avoids precise definitions of “feminine” or “masculine” in favor of open-ended questioning, “perhaps hoping to avoid near-sightedness or prevent any accusation of essentialist reasoning.”⁸ In both Pasler and Barkin’s response to *Feminine Endings*, the most successful aspect of the work would appear to be methodological: feminist music scholarship asks more questions than it

⁴ *Either/Other*, reprinted in *E: An Anthology*, pp. 163

⁵ This is of course a reference to the journal of the same name, begun at Berkeley for the “new musicology.”

⁶ *E/O* pp. 158 in *E: An Anthology*

⁷ *E/O* pp. 156 in *E: An Anthology*

⁸ *Some Thoughts*

answers. It is this very resistance to resolution, and the slippery nature of much of feminist inquiry that requires both scholar and reader to embrace uncertainty. Based less on the scientific than literary model, the search for "Truth" is less important in feminist scholarship as is the search for "truths." Often, those truths might be in conflict within various layers of the analysis, but can at deeper "registers" of inquiry integrate elegantly.⁹

McClary further points to generations younger than she as fruitful sources of new modes of discourse and new challenges to historic assumptions. Certainly, contact with up-and-coming scholarly generations can keep one intellectually nimble. Yet younger generations seem to intrinsically need to distinguish themselves from teachers and senior colleagues, often through disagreement and challenge. Such an adversarial relationship does not always foster close collaboration. Barkin notes openly that it has been her experience that younger scholars often achieve a certain level of autonomy by defining themselves in contradistinction to their scholarly "elders."

When I was in graduate school, our critiques usually circulated around how out of touch most of our professors were. We would gather after proseminars, over beer-stained copies of Butler and Bhaba, and bemoan the lack of critical theory in our composition and analytic studies. We read Freudian masculinity-anxiety onto our entire discipline, unearthing the reliance on objectivity in analysis as deep-seated Father-fear. We read our critical theory in order to deconstruct our professors as mercilessly as we deconstructed each other. Needless to say, to be involved in this moment, at such a proximate level, created an almost religious fervor amongst my peers. We truly believed that we were about to change everything. In this climate, McClary's *Feminine Endings* resounded like a gunshot. To us, it made perfect sense to argue that while set theory may offer valuable tools for analysis and composition, it no more speaks to the content of the music than a picture of an apple tastes like an apple. That set theory, combinatoriality, serialism or spectralism is a more "objective" way to structure or analyze a work than any other seemed a fallacy already addressed in other critical discourses. If, after all, Philosophy of Science could discuss the lack of objectivity in the scientific method itself¹⁰ – the great "bringer of the Enlightenment" in the West – what hope could we have of being objective in music?

The above viewpoint now seems naïve to me at best – the early awkward workings-out of a nascent critical consciousness that couldn't "distinguish between my business, my concerns and your business, concerns, and interests..."¹¹ Our frustration with the pursuit of objectivity really had more to do with our need to define ourselves. But when one has outgrown the need to be different from one's predecessors, it becomes much easier to understand their nuances, their idiosyncrasies, how they make meaning. Like Barkin, McClary and Pasler, I have again and again run up against the prickly issue of "appropriate metaphor" for musical discourse. If all speaking (or writing) about music were metaphorical, it would appear to be true that any metaphor could be as effective as the next – as long as the language remained internally consistent. The finer points of "meaning assignment" can only truly be worked through when correspondences between musical elements and their verbal interpretation are doggedly consistent and fall under a uniform metaphor. In that sense, to paraphrase an underlying theme in Barkin's work, we don't so much critique the music itself as we do our ways

⁹ The resistance to completion – of a musical work or creative activity, may be an example of feminist ideology in musical practice. Barkin discusses this eloquently in her "To Whom it May Concern" (also reprinted in *E: An Anthology*). This resistance to the fixed nature of a creative work, once the pen/brush/hammer is put down and the work is finished speaks powerfully to feminism's tendency toward open-ended or multiple interpretations.

¹⁰ Philosophy of Science is engaged in many ways with the question of objectivity and science. A few examples can be found in John Dupre's "The Disorder of Things: metaphysical foundations of the disunity of science" (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press) 1993 and Nancy Cartwright's "How the laws of physics lie" (New York: Oxford University Press) 1983.

¹¹ *E/O* in *E: an Anthology* pp. 157

of understanding it. But the critique can be enormously informative to our experience of the music nonetheless, and this should be considered in mainstream theoretical discourse.

This leads us squarely into the heart of the matter. The issues that Barkin raises about McClary's work and the responses Pasler elucidates are, in many senses, direct responses to problems in feminism and feminist inquiry, and they offer surprising solutions. Second and third-wave feminism share many similarities, but exhibit important differences, and the early 1990s, when these articles were published, saw the painful transition between feminist paradigms. Second wave, or the 1970s women's movement, had a strongly political agenda: the ERA, anti-discrimination legislation, freedom of choice, etc. The second wave also sought to engage mainstream political and societal discourse to create a more gender-equal world. Its blindspots were often to those issues closest to individual women: the overlapping webs of race/gender/class/ability oppression that are woven into daily life, and the pressures to be coded traditionally feminine (skinny, submissive, sexy and sweet). In music, this movement is most closely associated with the re-discovery and promotion of historic women composers, conductors and professional musicians in order to correct inequities both in professional status and remuneration.

Third-wave feminism was already aware of women composers, scientists, mystics, etc., throughout history, and the fact that plenty of women were already performing "masculine" coded work in our culture. Third-wave feminists were more interested in how these women continued to be *personally* oppressed in so many areas of culture. Its primary activity was "re-reading" cultural products and production for latent messages of both oppression and liberation. Third-wave feminist scholarship seamlessly incorporated aspects of other cultural theories (postmodern, queer, race, postcolonial), and a host of other critical theories, benefiting greatly from the critical tools forged in the fires of those disciplines. This has created especially welcome opportunities for cross-theoretical work and fascinating new ways to "read." On the surface, McClary's *Feminine Endings* is a model third-wave feminist work: it attempts to examine the layers of cultural oppression woven within musical expression itself. That cadences or motifs or orchestration could have gendered significance made perfect sense to young third-wavers. For example, riot grrrl punks were already attempting to liberate the power of these things for use by young women.¹² Barkin's article, about the value of more traditional (read: masculine) analysis¹³ was something akin to the recuperation of the role of analyst for women: squarely "second-wave." But a closer examination reveals a far more complex landscape, with both McClary's work and Barkin's response sharing many cross-generational feminist attributes.

One central preoccupation of third-wave feminism is keeping oneself from oppressing others through intense levels of awareness – more difficult than it might seem. Barkin's attempt to reject the role of composer and to reinvest her musical activities with more egalitarian, community-based and non-hierarchic music making is an moving and illuminating attempt at this process. Barkin's ambivalent feelings about the role of "formalist" analytic techniques indicate that techniques are inherently more loaded than McClary's reading might suggest. Nonetheless, McClary's view of traditional analysis, in all fairness, is perhaps less harsh than it might first appear. She urges that theory become grounded in history, cultural theory, etc. – in that sense becoming "situational." She also suggests that we might learn more about ourselves and our culture were we to allow our analyses to change and respond to current cultural conditions, and the personal experiences of the analyst. If we adopt an alternate analytical stance, one more unfixed and dynamic, we are confronted with Barkin's central analytic tenet: that our critique has perhaps as much to do with us as with the piece

¹² For further discussion see, "The Insatiable Banshee: Voracious Vocalizing, Riot Grrrl and the Blues," *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity, Music*. (Zurich: Carciofoli Press, 1999)

¹³ The central argument Barkin makes is not so much on the inherent value of any form of analysis, simply that going deeply into a formalist theoretical model leaves out too much of importance.

itself. Such cultural relativity sits uncomfortably within the systematic emphasis of current music theory. Further, it moves us back into a space in which the true “nature” of a musical work comes into question, where it begins to exist in dialogue between composer/interpreter, score/realization. Perhaps a less comfortable way to analyze, but surely more accurate, more complete, more profound?

But as Pasler notes, “gendered aspects of traditional music theory” extend far beyond the scientific nature of 20th century analysis, to the masculinist nature of “those controlling the discipline.”¹⁴

Personal Aside: After submitting a paper to a regional theory conference I received a personal note from the organizer of the conference. They let me know that despite my failure to have a paper accepted, he wished to let me know that the conference organizers “would greatly value my participation” at the upcoming meeting. While I had never responded to such overtures before (being a woman in music theory means that I am sometimes sought out for my symbolic value), this one stuck in my craw. I wrote back “since I have been unsuccessful in sharing MY ideas at your conference, how, exactly, do you envision my ‘participation’ at this event?” Is it limited to responding to YOUR ideas in the question-and-answer period? Sharing my thoughts one-on-one in hallways and over coffee outside meeting rooms? And finally, has it never occurred to you that the selection process is biased against certain kinds of theoretical discourse?” I received a hasty and reassuring response from the organizer assuring me that the program committee’s selection process was in no way biased because “all papers are selected by blind process – no names are present on abstracts when the committee reviews them.” I responded again: while that process might ensure that there is no bias against *theorists*, it certainly does not address the issue of bias against *theories* and *theoretical paradigms*. How, exactly, should I hide the topic of my paper in the abstract, to ensure that no one will discriminate against my choice of theoretical models?

As a confessed “former (albeit untidy) addictive practitioner of formalist and autonomous analytic techniques,”¹⁵ Elaine Barkin may not actively lay claim these days to the common activities that jostle for dominance under the contemporary umbrella of “music theory” or “music-theoretical practice.” If we are to read the term “addictive” in its literal sense – to take, as it were, her addiction seriously – its modifier of “former” takes on intense significance. For some time now in America to be a former addict (rather than a current addict) carries with it a certain authority, a weight when it comes to making public declarations.¹⁶ With confession most often comes absolution (at least the first few times) and the possibility of regained status with sufficient good behavior. After all, George Bush is an admitted alcoholic and drug abuser, but we clearly forgave him! However, in this *always-already dealt with* aspect of public confessions of addiction, revelations by addicts who claim positive aspects or elements of their addictions are often met with scorn or pity. Obviously, it is essential for the unfortunate soul to “work more steps.” While this overdetermined concept’s polyvalency is fascinating, I will press on to the point. What is most fascinating to me is the idea that Barkin had a difficult time kicking her old habits, and that she gained a certain amount of pleasure and was actually compelled to engage in these practices. What she does then is effectively fill the act of analysis with a definite level of pleasure and desire, regardless of whether its an old habit or a new one. What, then,

¹⁴ “Some Thoughts...”

¹⁵ Barkin's subtitle for the final section of her essay, written after the previous sections on *Feminine Endings*.

¹⁶ Few public figures make such pronouncements before the steps of the Betty Ford Clinic. Certainly, had Rush Limbaugh confessed he was addicted to prescription painkillers and NOT been on his way to Rehab, his radio network might have been less inclined to support him fully, and his listening public, rather than ascribing his recent public rhetoric to “the pills” would have been faced at last with a fundamental contradiction between ‘walk’ and ‘talk.’

can one make of the confession “formerly (albeit untidy) addictive practitioner of formalist and autonomous analytic techniques?” Does formalism always oppress? Is the motivation behind analysis to satisfy certain desires? How then can their ever be an objective analysis?

Some disclaimers: First, like Barkin, I am a theorist, composer and improviser (not necessarily in that order). This combination of praxis presents vexing problems to the practitioner. As Barkin points out again and again in her work, formalist analysis is little equipped to handle even such basic musical elements as rhythm, orchestration or timbre. One is confronted immediately by this methodological problem: pitch analysis favors pieces with scores whose fundamental structural elements are created through pitch relationships. For a composer of new music, or worse, an improviser, such limits of discourse in much of published music theory prevent us from communicating through writing the most important elements of the consumption, or experiencing, of music.

These problems are evident in Barkin’s early (1975) essay on Webern’s Orchestra Pieces (1913), Movement I (*Bewegt*).¹⁷ She notes that her impetus to find appropriate analytic metaphors for this work stemmed from her dissatisfaction with the analyses of the same work by Travis and Forte in an earlier volume of the journal.¹⁸ In the opening sentences she presents analyses as something to be “heard” – yet offers only a small argument for the validity of such a position, revealing her implicit belief in this new approach. She takes from the outset the position that any successful analysis of Webern’s pieces needs to deal not solely with pitch, but that which she terms “sound events.” Attempting analysis of “rhythms of pitches” seems to contradict Forte’s assertion (quoted in the piece) that “in the absence of a general model for rhythm that is appropriate for atonal music, it seems futile to make an extended contextual analysis...” Barkin counters by noting that “for just as each pitch, each sound, have their own time-and-place, so has each time-and-place a particular (and no other) “sounding-ness” to it, rests included.” Such a radical, and indeed revolutionary, stance vis-à-vis the inseparability of the sonic artifact of a work from its identity (i.e., the score is not the piece) lays the foundation for much critical (especially feminist and queer) musical scholarship to follow. Interestingly, McClary envisions a music theory very close to that which I learned as a graduate student from Jonathan Kramer¹⁹ – the idea of *ad hoc* analysis, drawing from a variety of theoretical models and paradigms, allows the piece of music under consideration to dictate the way we analyze it. Kramer’s strong engagement with postmodern theory surely played no small part in shaping his analytic focus. Barkin’s analysis of Webern, written more than a decade before *Feminine Endings*, exemplifies much of McClary’s vision for a new music theory. Barkin dismisses the appropriateness of any analyses, however brilliant, which does not illuminate a more personal, less quantifiable experience of the piece. Pasler describes this exact process when discussing the successes of McClary’s *Feminine Endings* in which “her interest in a specific piece of music begins with love for it, not primarily intellectual fascination” and that “her goal is to understand how and why it affects her, and she trusts her reactions to be legitimate.” While Barkin may or may not be grounded in the historic context of these works, her analysis comes very close to capturing this spirit nonetheless. The uneasy feeling in many of Webern’s atonal works is productively connected to their historic period, and Webern’s own personal “context.” But as Barkin probes the works, accumulating information in additive layers based on her aural experience of their “sound-ness,” she builds a systematic model for

¹⁷ “Analysis Symposium: Webern, orchestra pieces, 1913: Movement I (“Bewegt”) *Journal of Music Theory*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Spring 1975). Pp. 47-64

¹⁸ Vol. 18, No. 1 1974.

¹⁹ Jonathan Kramer, my teacher, mentor and friend passed away during the time I was writing this essay. He was almost single handedly responsible (for better or worse) for my deep love of music theory, and my ongoing commitment to the discipline. As this essay explores, in some ways, my personal relationship to the discipline, and the work of senior scholars therein, I must acknowledge my deep gratitude to my teachers (even those I disagree with), and dedicate this essay to Jonathan.

an unsystematic piece – but one which respects the loose ends, the disjunctures, and does not rely upon “completed-ness” for a successful analysis. As Jonathan Kramer pointed out in “Beyond Unity: Postmodern Concepts of Musical Time,” we are often unable to cope in analysis with structures which do not lend themselves to neat graphs and tables. This is not to say that such complex structures can’t be quantified, but simply that our modes of analysis require that we be systematic about unsystematic phenomena, and thus hamper us from making all but the most clearly relational levels of meaning. Barkin avoids the problem completely by allowing her experience of the aural phenomena of the work to be her guide, permitting levels or registers of analysis to coexist without reconciliation. By opening up and giving questions life, by dealing with phenomena resistant to analysis (like timbre and orchestration) she answers Pasler’s call for scholars to “seek in music and their lives new and deeper significance”²⁰ beyond that which is easily quantifiable. In her insistence in keeping the analysis deeply personal, Barkin also heeds McClary’s (subsequent) call to address “the most important aspects of the music - how it functions in the lives of human beings.”

It has been my intention in this essay on the “Feminist Forum” to ponder the issues that it raised, acknowledged and presaged in music scholarship. There was certainly a time in my own development as a scholar when I found it necessary to define myself in contradistinction to each of these women, and many others as well. But at this moment when I look back, I am extremely gratified to find that over a decade since publication these articles continue to exert enormous influence over my and others’ work. The questions that these women ask, argue, but never definitively answer, still reverberate and are being pondered with more and more frequency in all music scholarship. The process of “reevaluating the questions we ask, the subject matter we address, the meanings we seek, for those trying to come to grips with traditions, conventions, and values that have lost their validity”²¹ is a never-ending one, and has benefits which reach far beyond the scope of feminist analysis.

While the three articles in the “Feminist Forum” are set up as an argument, Barkin’s work had already (for some time) addressed Pasler and McClary’s concerns and visions, and in actuality, the three of them elucidate far more than oppose each other. This in turn is significant because only by moving toward coalescence can we escape a new formalism, this time a formalism under the flag of feminism. Music as a discipline must operate in this political manner in order to continue to thrive, and feminism offers the possibility of a vibrant, engaging and intensely relevant theory and methodology, in which all our passions (professional and personal) have voice. Finally, while music may have seemed to have fallen behind other disciplines in its adoption of new cultural theories, its unique nature will undoubtedly add considerably to critical discourse in general, and could possibly serve as *the* model for new forms of meaning and systems of thought.

If the “personal is political” as 1970s feminism professed, then the more we personalize this process of reevaluation, returning again and again to the source of our personal intellectual values, the more relevant our work will be. But in that returning, let us not indulge in the type of nostalgia that these three theorists would eschew. Let us celebrate the type of discomfort they created. Let us perpetuate their kind of uncertainty. Let us indulge in that and this moment of elision. Thankfully, the questions which Elaine, Susan and Jann asked still haven’t been definitively answered.

²⁰ *Some Thoughts* p. 202

²¹ *ibid.*

for Elaine Barkin
 “I Am Not Making This Up!”—Part 1:
 A Gender Identity Remix in the Form of
 Some Appropriations, Avowals, Denials, and Inquiries
 (Or, On Second Thought, a Palimpsest or Two)

Barbara White

May 2001. Overheard at a contemporary music concert:
 “Well, that was something, wasn’t it?!”
 “Yes . . . I’d say it was very theatrical . . . without being
 dramatic.”
 “Exactly.”
 “There sure are a lot of Asian women on this program, aren’t
 there?”

Reception, Oblivion.

“Reintegrate the primal form!” she urged me.
 “Reintegrate the primal form!” shrieked Mother.

Beneath the gazes, beneath the hands, beneath the sexes that defiled her, the whips that rent her, she lost herself in a delirious absence from herself which restored her to love and, perhaps, brought her to the edge of death.¹

Her flesh seemed
 to me molten,
 burning. I
 caught one
 glimpse of her
 gaping vagina
 as I went
 down;
 it looked
 like the
 crater of a
 volcano on the
 point of
 eruption. Her
 head reared up
 to kiss me
 and, for a
 hallucinatory
 instant, I thought
 I saw the sun
 in her mouth,
 so that I was
 momentarily
 blinded and
 retain no
 memory of the
 texture of her
 tongue, although
 it seemed to me
 the size
 of a sodden
 bath-towel.

Martha Graham choreographed *Night Journey* in 1947, during the decade of her most productive years as an artist and some of the most turbulent years in her private life. In the year *Night Journey* was made, it seemed her already rocky relationship with Erick Hawkins might break up over his infidelity and their artistic competition.²

Graham retells the myth from the woman’s point of view.³ [Oedipus] is a completely domineering, even brutal, suitor, and she passively receives him, becoming excited almost despite herself.⁴ Given the alternation of this invitation [into the privacy of her body] with the gestures and postures of prostration, Jocasta seems to be seducing Oedipus in the most self-abasing, submissive way imaginable.⁵ He seems to be housebreaking her; she is literally brought low by her new husband, as part of the marriage ceremony itself.⁶ Jocasta lies passive and inert in her bed, waiting for Oedipus to rouse her.⁷

That the middle-aged, independent Graham—who until the 1940s had always been primarily devoted to her work—was now in love and contemplating marriage to a man fifteen years her junior influenced many of her dances during this period. But her personal situation must especially have shaped her interpretation of the Oedipus myth in *Night Journey*. She created the role of the tortured, remorseful Jocasta for herself and that of Oedipus, Jocasta’s husband-son, for Hawkins, her own young husband-to-be.⁸

Then her Virginia-smoked ham of a fist grasped my shrinking sex; when it went all the way in, Mother howled and so did I.⁹

It is this that defines the . . . the what? — the woman precisely, except that *The* woman can only be written with *The* crossed through. There is no such thing as *The* woman, where the definite article stands for the universal. There is no such thing as *The* woman since of her essence — having already risked the term, why think twice about it? — of her essence, she is not all.¹⁰

*Must
 vulnerability be construed
 as
 weakness?*

*Must
 passivity be understood as
 powerlessness?*

*Must
 openness be considered
 self-abasing?*

May 2002. vgmix.com, a site where members of the "remixer" subculture post their acoustic arrangements of video-game themes. Typical titles are "Castlevania" and "Blaster Master." The arrangers post comments on their techniques and aesthetic principles. One states proudly, "I raped that song."¹¹

Submission, Dissolution.

*It is necessary to abandon yourself completely,
and let the music do as it will with you"*¹²

For I have been
horrified and
interested to notice
that the way I teach
puts the listener flat
on her back. Yes,
rising to meet the
offered caresses, and
thus interacting in a
way analogous to the
way one can choose to
accept 'sexual'
caresses or not.¹³

"It was then that the eye was like the ear,
and the ear like the nose,
and the nose like the mouth;
for they were all one and the same.
The mind was in rapture,
the form dissolved,
and the bones and flesh all thawed away;
and I did not know how the frame supported
itself and what the feet were treading upon.
I gave myself away to the wind,
eastward or westward,
like the leaves of a tree."¹⁶

All of these words say that performers
can't really say who they are.
Unique among animals, humans carry and
express multiple and ambivalent identities
simultaneously.¹⁵

In his book, *Musical
Elaborations*, Edward Said
(1991) argues that musical
performances are extreme
occasions, where virtuosic
soloists intimidate a
submissive crowd into a state
of angst at knowing their
performative inferiority. In
many phases of my life,
playing the violin has been
an extreme occasion
—but not of this kind.¹⁴

Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions.

*Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death,
to being in the womb,
to invisibility,
to darkness,
to bisexuality,
to the wilderness,
and to an eclipse of the sun or moon.*

Liminal entities, such as neophytes in initiation or puberty rites, may be represented as possessing nothing. [. . .] Their behavior is normally passive or humble; they must obey their instructors implicitly, and accept arbitrary punishment without complaint. It is as though they are being reduced or ground down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new stations in life.¹⁷

March 1989. I begin a residency at the MacDowell Colony. The "tombstone" on the wall of my studio shows that the last resident was Meredith Monk. Having heard her name but not her work, I go to the colony library and grab an LP called *Dolmen Music*. I am stunned by this music: so clear and diatonic, so rooted in the body, so uninterested in proving itself. It is the freshest thing I have heard.

Fourteen years later, I listen to *Dolmen Music* again. After the ethereal introduction of cello harmonics Monk's rising fourth (A below middle C to the D above) is as familiar as an ancestral melody, and I anticipate the second part before it enters. This work is indelible. It is also holistic, collaborative, intimate, yielding, homely, embodied, earnest, humble.

The Lure of Identity Politics . . . and Utopianism . . .

In her beautiful theatre work "The Education of the Girlchild," director/composer/choreographer Meredith Monk cast women who were all longtime friends, real-life companions. Together they created a vision of womanhood that is powerful, clear, capable. Monk chose the women in the cast for who they already were and for the archetypal qualities they evoked in real life.¹⁸

The feminine mode is inclusive; it is no accident that Meredith Monk, a woman, is working to integrate the flow of feeling with the new vocabulary of theater.¹⁹

"I become more and more aware as performance being a place of transformation. In *Volcano Songs* I was trying neither to pull in the attention of an audience nor to project out at it. I wanted to see if I could, in a sense, be open and vulnerable enough for the currents, energies, or personas to emerge. . . .²¹

Her utopian societies are not traditional; they are not nuclear families, nor clans, but groups of strong individuals—often solely or predominantly women—whose social ties are unclear but whose emotional connections are obvious. Perhaps they could serve as models for feminist utopias, but they are not offered as political tracts or patent moral tales. They are descriptions of things as they could be.²²

The mythic iconography of *Girlchild*, unlike that of ritual, does not reflect collectively assumed traditional meaning. Monk's myths do not reinforce the predominant models of her culture. A women's puberty ritual is conventionally a rite of passage that transforms young girls into their society's model of womanhood. *Girlchild*, by juxtaposing cultural symbols in new ways, reshapes traditional identities of women.²⁰

. . . And a Rebuttal

"People ask me, 'How do you feel as a woman onstage?' and I say, 'A *what?*'"²³

February 1985. I am an undergraduate enrolled in Music Theory II. The professor is talking about "masculine" and "feminine" themes in sonata form. A student asks for an explanation of that terminology, and the faculty member hedges, improvises a bit, then stops short and says "Well, like it or not, women are more attractive than men, and that is why the themes are called feminine." I point out that the feminine theme is also the one that comes second.

March 1985. Another professor says, "Oh, we can't use those terms anymore."

Opening the Door: A Provisional Pantheon of Women Composers

Including but not limited to those who possess a vagina; or who repeat or sustain; or who play well with others; or who allow their own distinct voices to be penetrated by other sounds; or who value intimacy and domesticity; or who are modest and self-effacing; or who are fierce, irreverent, skeptical, or confrontational; or who are not afraid of pretty or conventional sounds; or who object to being described by any of the foregoing traits; or who embrace the privilege of changing their minds:

Laurie Anderson
 Elaine Barkin
 Benjamin Britten*
 Chen Yi
 Aaron Copland*
 John Corigliano*
 Donald Crockett*
 Claude Debussy*
 Morton Feldman*
 Diamanda Galás
 Jennifer Higdon
 Elizabeth Hoffman
 Sarah Hopkins
 Teiji Ito*
 Charles Ives*
 Paul Lansky*
 Annea Lockwood
 Lydia Lunch
 Steven Mackey*
 Bohuslav Martinu*
 Meredith Monk
 Jeffrey Mumford*
 Pauline Oliveros
 Shulamit Ran
 Maurice Ravel*
 Steve Reich*
 Elliott Schwartz*
 Stephen Scott*
 Alvin Singeton*
 Toru Takemitsu*
 Ivan Tcherepnin*
 Joan Tower
 Anna Weesner
 Judith Weir
 Hildegard Westerkamp
 Charles Wuorinen*
 La Monte Young*
 John Zorn*

deliberately excluded Crawford "to avoid the incipient criticism that musicology was 'woman's work.'"²⁴

Although she had not been told so at the time, the meeting from which Ruth

Crawford was excluded was the meeting at which the New York Musicological Society was founded.

The musicologists meet. It is decided that I may sit in the next room and hear [Joseph] Yasser about his new supra scale. Then when I come out for this purpose, I find someone has closed the doors.

Many years later, Charles Seeger . . . confessed to an interviewer that he had

*Honorary Members

May 1999. *the mind's fear, the heart's delight* is on a program in New York City. The leader of the ensemble tells me that all the other composers on the program are women, and then hastily adds that programming an all-female concert was not the group's intention; rather, "it just worked out that way." A week later I receive a stack of postcards advertising the concert, which has been christened "Such Interesting Women."

Being a Woman Is Enough—Except When it Is Not.

Like her records, videotapes, and writings, Lydia Lunch's performance monologue [*The Gun [is Loaded]*] tried to fall off the edge of the rational world with its relentless obscenities, unrelieved negativity, and flat-footed presentation. What was revealed, however, was not a devastating glimpse of the abyss, but the almost total failure of the clichés of classic blasphemy to shock. . . . Lunch's *Gun* was, by any logical standard of performance, a fizzling misfire, a blank-shooting popgun rather than a searing, murderous superweapon. Without any potent ammunition, she resorted to overkill, perhaps in the belief that "too much" can never be enough.²⁵

*Megalomaniacal,
power-hungry,
egotistical
men.
Ignorant,
incompetent,
and elected to
the highest offices
of the
United States
of America.*

Women's performance art has a particular disruptive potential because it poses an actual woman as a speaking subject, throwing that position into process, into doubt, opposing the traditional conception of the single, unified (male) subject. The female body as subject clashes in dissonance with its patriarchal text, challenging the very fabric of representation by refusing that text and posing new, multiple texts grounded in real women's experience and sexuality. This strategy is understood particularly in relation to Lacanian psychoanalysis which "reads" the female body as Lack, or Other, existing only to reflect male subjectivity and male desire.²⁶

*Would they notice any difference
if a hair of that power,
just a tad of that power,
was directed to the
emotionally more sympathetic,
to the infinitely more tolerant,
to the biologically superior hands of women?*

To hear ad nauseam that life is 'all about getting fucked' gained only a small lively spin coming from a female source, as the Céline-Burroughs world-sick trip has been worked over by a line of female writer-performers stretching from Patti Smith to Kathy Acker.²⁷

*... I don't want you
to get the wrong idea.
You see, I'm not sexist.
Or racist.
Or violent.
Or bigoted.
Or prejudiced.
Or pretentious.
At least not any more than
the rest of you assholes.²⁸*

This "position of intimacy" is one of the most noteworthy characteristics of women's performance, and one of the primary appeals of the genre for women. . . . In a Lacanian context, women performance artists thus challenge the symbolic order by asserting themselves as "speaking subjects," in direct defiance of the patriarchal construction of discourse.²⁹

July 2002. *Learning to See* is being considered by an ensemble at a Midwestern university. One of the two leaders of the group admires the piece but tells me that his colleague does not want to program it because it is "not outside enough." I recount this to my spouse, amused because the score calls for a muffler, a bicycle wheel and a tin can: "Not outside enough? What do they want, two mufflers?" He replies, "'Not outside enough' means that you don't have a penis."

Dissolving Those Binaries, Once (or Twice) Again.

Anderson refers to her male voice as "the Voice of Authority"; as I have already indicated . . . she generally uses that voice for self-deflating pontification that points up the puffed-up absurdity of male authority.³⁰

Anderson's version of gender politics incorporates a critique of phallic authority and its connections in our culture with war and technology but refuses any set of stable and reified conceptions of "masculine" and "feminine."³¹

Her own position as a woman who controls a great deal of sophisticated technology in any case undermines the identification of technology as a male domain that emerges from her performance imagery.³²

The symbols 0 and 1, which suggest the binary system of digital technology, ultimately fuse into one another. So along with the particular associations of these signs, the notion of any concrete signification dissolves. Similarly, Anderson's performing gestures in "O Superman" call upon icons, but they blend into one another. An arm reflected against the moon becomes "the hand that takes," the moon fuses into the earth, her outstretched arms become the Buddha, the silhouette of the hand against the moon evokes sign language and shadow animals, the two arms outstretched on either side imply both justice (balance) and force.³³

What separates your performances from an assemblage of dreamlike images that really don't add up to anything?³⁴

It's interesting to note, in light of your abhorrence of the ingrained maleness in our culture, that phallogocentricity, that you often adopt a male narratorial voice. It seems rare that you address your audience in a feminine guise that isn't a caricature of femininity. . . .³⁵

Laurie Anderson's art is information anxiety incarnate, fashioned from the white noise of postmodernity—sound bites, photo ops, advertising jingles, TV themes, pop songs, slang, and doublespeak. Implying everything, signifying nothing, it generates much heat, little light.³⁶

Director: "Laurie, act as if you're writing down a melody."

Anderson: "In fact, I don't work that way."

Director: "That's all right. We'll explain that in a voice-over later."³⁷

And I see

Angels Angels: Devils!

Angels Angels: Devils!

Angels Angels: Devils!

Coming for to carry me home.³⁸

June 2003. We are walking along Central Park after a performance by Jill Sigman.

"What a flat ass." "Oh, look at that one." "Ooh, baby! Wanna come home with me?" "Check out those titties!" "Take off your shirt!"

At 92d St., the road is blocked. The police tell us we'll be able to pass through at 86th St. When we get there, there are crowds milling about, but the police will not let us into the park. Yet men enter unchallenged. It is Puerto Rico Day.

Confronting Male Misogyny.

At the Tate Modern, I look at an image from a tabloid newspaper—or a copy of a tabloid newspaper—in which a nude woman presents herself for the delectation of the viewer. This is the work of visual artist Sarah Lucas.

I am told that Lucas's form of address raises unsettling questions about gender, by appropriating the mechanisms of objectification and challenging the spectator to confront his/her own response to the nude female body:

Sarah Lucas's work explores issues of gender—
not in an aggressively feminist manner
but from a yobbish, tabloid, 'ladette' perspective. . . .³⁹

Inspired by reading books on feminism, pornography and sexuality [Lucas] turned to a cheaper and more immediate source of imagery that she felt was more relevant to her: the tabloid press. Here she began to explore the representation of and attitudes towards the female body in popular culture. She realised she had conflicting feelings about this, since she identified herself as a viewer with the traditionally male desiring eye and as a woman being objectified and dehumanized through her cultural representation. She began to use the imagery of popular culture's attitudes to women as the material and subject of her work. Her art functions as a mirror which reflects back unconscious and pervasive attitudes by highlighting their manifestation, usually through literal representation.⁴⁰

I gaze at the images.

On either

side of me

is a man,

each gazing

at the

same images.

Are they

uncomfortable?

Do they feel

provoked?

Castrated?

Ridiculed?

"I use sexist attitudes because they are there to be used. I get strength from them ... With only minor adjustments, a provocative image can become confrontational - converted from an offer of sexual service into a castration image ... I'm dipping into the culture, pointing a finger: directing attention to what's there." Lucas's selection of pages from tabloids exposes and ridicules the voice of male misogyny by allowing it to speak without mediation.

She has picked particularly extreme and ridiculous examples of working-class male attitudes towards women, albeit entirely in character with the overall tone of the newspapers.⁴¹

Pauline Oliveros: "Toward the end of the talk on aesthetics—and this was an all-male panel—there was the mention on Britney Spears. . . . and it seemed that the attitude toward Britney Spears was one of condescension . . . and that her music was pretty lightweight. . . . So I suggested, what would it be like if you had Britney Spears here on the panel? What do you think she would have to say? Because I felt like she wasn't there to defend herself. So I'm defending her. . . .

How many of you do 250 push-ups a day, or sit-ups a day? Well, Britney Spears keeps herself in great shape. . . . So what she is doing is expressing the precision of the body through dance in the entertainment field. If you trace it back, entertainment today is somewhat lightweight, but on the other hand, it has roots in shamanism—feats of physicality and endurance. So this is what is missing—this is one of the keys and this is one of the themes that has been talked about throughout the conference: where is the body, and what has happened to physicality? . . . Madonna and Britney Spears are expressing what is missing (also Michael Jackson) from our culture—which is sensuality, respect for the body, and they are using their bodies to express it as precisely as they possibly can, through training and discipline.⁴²

Rubbing People Against Their Grain.

There is nothing erotic about the way I look at women. I play on the girls' sexuality to offend the audience. I don't mind being irritating—rubbing people against their grain.⁴³

Vanessa Beecroft's "spectacles . . . have been widely admired by curators and critics (but also frequently condemned as voyeuristic and exploitative). They featured large groupings of nude or undressed 'girls' who stand mutely for several hours in a gallery or museum, occasionally breaking ranks to stretch or sprawl, but remaining, in principle, strictly impassive to an audience that is, of course, fully clothed. In the earliest works, Beecroft assembled an eloquently motley collection of fleshy and slim bodies. Emboldened and enriched by her success, she hired scores of uniformly thin, depilated beauties and arranged them as human colonnades. ('I think of them as architecture,' she says.)"⁴⁴

"hooters for intellectuals"⁴⁵

*Can one expose
the objectification of
women,
by presenting
the objectification of
women,
without
objectifying women?*

Much of Andrea Fraser's conceptual work in the past has been about the libidinous relationship between artists, art institutions and the marketplace. She gives the idea an explicitly camal twist in this show, which consists of a 60-minute video of herself having sex with an unnamed art collector.

. . . Some viewers will find here evidence of post-feminist thinking, with women taking charge of their sexuality. But there is certainly nothing inherently new or radical about strategic art world "power" couplings and the corruptions they invite. They're practically institutional.

Ms. Fraser's career has been built on asking tough, potentially embarrassing questions of institutions, and that is surely her intention in this piece about the alliance of art, sex, money and fame. But when all the presumed targets of inquiry, along with the artist herself, stand to win big-time from such a grilling, what's the point? The art in question remains just part of a problem, not part of a solution; a porn film is just a porn film; and the Achilles' Heel of institutional critique is, yet again, exposed.⁴⁶

April 2000. I submit a bio to a presenting organization. Without my knowledge, my words are changed, so that my writings about gender issues are presented as being about "women composers."

The Curator and the Spectator, or Annie Sprinkle's Public Cervix

This is a moment I won't easily forget in the theatre: Sprinkle's smiling face and robust, cooing voice, her very white and soft body largely exposed, encouraging a spectator to scrutinize and describe her labia.

I shrink
back from the
spectacle
in my seat,
filled with rage
at Schechner,

who is submitting
me and other women
to this assault on
our bodies
via this alien
medium, this . . .
who is she?
Is she a woman like
me? Does she smile
because she enjoys
this or because she
is encoded by
pornography to
convince men she
"enjoys" this?⁴⁹

▶ ▶ I also did a piece illustrated with statistical graphs called "Amount of Cock Sucked." I figured that all the cocks I'd sucked, if laid end

▶ And the other little thing is: in a way I wanna say, "Fuck you guys— you wanna see pussy, *I* show you pussy!"⁴⁷

▶ I think it's important to demystify women's bodies. It wasn't until recently that anyone was allowed to *look* at pussy—really get down and look at them. A lot of women have never even seen their own!

▶ to end, would equal the height of the Empire State Building! Plus, I show my cervix to the audience. And that's a really fun piece— it

▶ In fact, it is the very choice of the performance art context which denies the accepted path for voyeurism, which subverts the male gaze and the fetishism of the female body.⁴⁸

▶ that the reason I show my cervix is: 1) because it's fun—and I think fun is really important, and 2) because the cervix is so beautiful that I really want to share that with people. There are other reasons:

▶ sounds sleazy and shocking, but it's very sweet and innocent. People are shocked that they aren't shocked!

▶ If you hear about it, you might go, "Oh, that's gross, that's disgusting; how can she do that?"

▶ I show a chart of the female reproductive system (now I can say "cervix" and "fallopian tube" in four languages) and I show what to look for: my cervix. Why do I show my cervix? I tell the audience

The male director here controlled the theatrical experience, and male pleasure had governed Sprinkle's creation of her work in the first place.

And yet, I was not prepared to take away Annie Sprinkle's voice and

deny her female authorship, for this was her material.⁵⁰

October 1992. The distinguished literary scholar, in response to a question about Cecily Chaumpaigne's accusation of rape, responds, "Well, I think we all know Chaucer couldn't possibly have done a thing like that."⁵¹

Authority, Instruction.

A child will do anything to win his mother's love because he cannot live without that love.⁵²

<p>It was then that I met Claude Dunand. Or rather, I <i>heard</i> him first. A robustly sarcastic and nasal laugh emanated from the stairs, as I stood trembling in the audition room. When its owner walked in, I was startled by his appearance and tried to hold back tears of fright as I delivered a Handel sonata, with minimal sound. His whole demeanor was frightening and bizarre to me: emotional, intense, demanding, expressive. The affront he gave me was such indeed that, for a year, I could not speak in his presence, though he became my teacher during that time.⁵³</p>	<p>Because children are helpless and utterly dependent on those who care for them, they feel safe, loved, and worthwhile when they are able to conform to the subtle and not so subtle indoctrinations into the gender role stereotypes that their well-meaning parents assume will produce well-adjusted, normal children.⁵⁴</p>	<p>I've noticed that there are plenty of people who long to turn themselves over to a teacher. They want to find someone they can trust unreservedly, who will tell them how to act and what to think—someone who can remove any responsibility for decision-making on every level, from the mundane to the spiritual. This is laziness. No amount of self-denial or effort in its pursuit can make it anything else. It's also very dangerous. Someone who is regarded as a "master" and whose words sound enlightened can be very seductive. But if their enlightenment doesn't extend to their own concrete actions, then there are all sorts of possibilities for abuse of the student. Some of the more spectacular instances hit the newspapers now and then. Never should a person suspend her or his critical judgment, especially when someone asks them to by demanding complete faith and trust.⁵⁵</p>
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With these little touches of soul murder,

a child is cut off from

some part of his or her personal identity that might have flourished

or an emotional response that might have blossomed into joy, nostalgia, concern, gratitude, mercy, compassion, erotic pleasure, passivity, mastery, voluptuousness, sadness, or a capacity to empathize with a person of the opposite sex.⁵⁶

<p>It becomes increasingly obvious that to these fellows, music is <i>not</i> an art. It is a process of teaching teachers to teach teachers. In this process it is only natural that the music of the teacher will be no different from that of the teacher he's teaching. Academic freedom seems to be the comfort of knowing one is free to be an academic.⁵⁷</p>	<p>One day there was a rehearsal which I attended. Feldman complained about the lack of lighting. I decided to help out and got up the turn on the lights. He caught me on stage, came up to me and launched into "who the hell do you think you are, you're nothin', you're garbage, you're shit from the gutter."⁵⁸</p>
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*Metaphor, we are told simplistically, makes things visible.
But can the unbearable, death and the sun, or incest, be made visible?
How might one make visible that which is not visible
because no code, convention, contract, or identity holds it up?
Besides, is it really a matter of making visible the unrepresentable,
which here seems to be the unleashed passion of a mother who knows no taboo?⁵⁹*

February 2002. I have composed a set of musical homages and memorials called *Reliquary*. A colleague points out that the two movements of the piece written in memory of women form the "scherzi." Another notes out that the portrait of my teacher Luise Vosgerchian is "not entirely flattering," and yet another that there is some anger in the piece about my mother. I hadn't really thought of this while composing the piece, but the music that concerns male figures is certainly more reverent and less conflicted. Is this explained by the fact that I knew the female figures personally, while the male referents are public figures, distant exemplars? I am not sure.

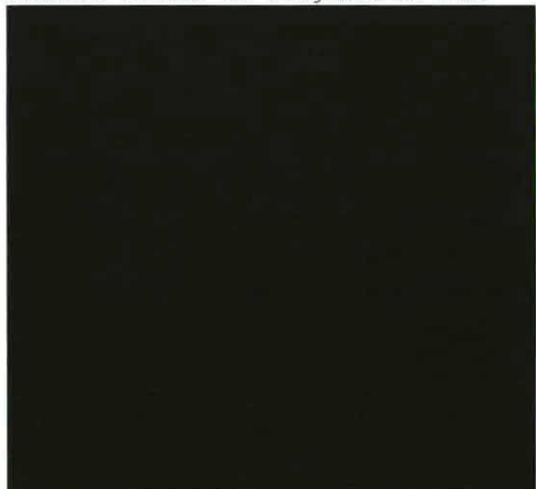
Refuse to be a victim!

[Virginia] Woolf, known to many women not only as a writer but as a proponent of women's rights, was subject to schizophrenic episodes beginning at the age of twelve and took her own life in 1941 at the age of fifty-nine, although she had no apparent grounds for doing so. From **truce signed, and the dead buried,** the time she was four until she reached puberty she was sexually molested by her much older half-brother, virtually on a daily basis, **he had, especially in the evening,** without being able to tell anyone about it. The appearance of her later delusions of persecution is without a doubt a logical consequence **these sudden thunder-claps of fear.** [Quentin] Bell, for example, writes that he doesn't know whether this

He could not feel.⁶¹ trauma had any permanent effect on Virginia or not!⁶²

Yes, I am a woman; and I am a composer. But rarely at the same time.

Q. Have you ever experienced prejudice as a woman in a field dominated by men?



A. This question and all questions about discrimination are very difficult to answer because so much of anyone's interpretation of events is based on personal attitude and personal experience. Becoming a conductor is an extremely competitive ambition to begin with; but I would attribute some of my success to the fact that I never interpreted any rejections as gender based, even if I could have done so! This enabled me to use each rejection as an opportunity to improve myself by working harder, listening to criticism and developing even more perseverance! I personally feel that accepting the role of powerless victim can become a self-fulfilling prophecy and I am unwilling to even entertain that concept!⁶⁴

There is a school of thought that argues that her life is dominated by childhood sexual abuse. I am not of that opinion, because I don't read her life as that of a victim.⁶⁵

*I don't have the word "woman" in any biography. I consider myself a composer.*⁶³

What then has remained interesting?
Again those moments of being. . . .
 There was the moment
 of the puddle in the path;
when for no reason I could discover,
everything suddenly became unreal;
 I was suspended;
I could not step across the puddle;
I tried to touch something . . .
 the whole world became unreal.⁶⁶

“How has being a woman, being female, affected your work and the way in which you go about doing whatever it is you consider to be your work”—a question I have been asked and have asked others, a question that stumps me, the more so since I truly don’t and can’t *know* how different my life might have been—aside from the obvious—if I was male. Although I don’t doubt for a second that “it” would have been different, the pertinence of the question no longer seems as obvious. Within the context of worldwide oppression, to complain about the absence of opportunities seems impertinent.

During the past several decades, I have endeavored to: advocate and nurture the virtues of inventing, conceiving, contriving, improvising, imagining, and revolutionizing one’s own, my own, your own world; along with the question, what do I want my music—in the deepest conceptual, intellectual, expressive, and interpersonal manifestations and senses—to be and do for me, for you, for us. Nor do I believe that these quests pertain exclusively to one or the other sex. On the other hand, my entire life has been profoundly colored with constantly changing realities—from within and without—of having been born, raised, educated, accepted, rejected, encouraged, loved, appreciated, dismissed, most often identified and perceived as: female, girl, woman.

—Elaine Barkin⁶⁷

Writing, Unwriting, Rewriting

In an essay called “Rules of One’s Own,” Elaine Barkin’s weaves together personal experience, intellectual observations, and the voices of others into a web of associations, contradictions and insights. The piece shows a marked modesty, inquisitiveness, openness, generosity, independence, and a willingness to leave the question undecided—which is not to be confused with dismissing the question entirely. Barkin takes nothing for granted, least of all her own conclusions.

Especially intriguing is Barkin’s revelation of her own reflection and production as she guides the reader through a succession of thoughts, second thoughts, and super-thoughts. The writing, nimble and flexible, honors the fleeting instant within the borders of the more durable text:

In ethnomusicological and anthropological circles, people speak of their informant (in pre-“p.c.” days; nowadays they speak of their consultants.) Digression: even as I was jotting down that sentence about informants, I hadn’t consciously been thinking of, in euphemistic lingo, our law enforcement personnel. (Actually blather rather than lingo was the word I began writing. So why did I cross it out and write lingo? An intuition by my reckoning, although hardcore Freudians—are there any other kind?—would have a different perspective concerning my conjuring the word lingo, and they’re probably right.) Yet as I wrote the word informants, police imagery just cropped up, unbidden, associative, not irrelevant, part of the thinking process, not to be banished or ignored because it doesn’t fit.⁶⁸

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and re-comp-O-si-tions.

Told, Untold and Retold

Barkin writes, “Within the context of worldwide oppression, to complain about the absence of opportunities seems impertinent.” But the question she begins by posing, to which this only one of her answers, is a wider one: “How has being a woman, being female, affected your work and the way in

Overheard at a concert: “Well, I wrote her off when she composed that ‘Fanfare for the Common [sic] Woman.’”

which you go about doing whatever it is you consider to be your work?” And her eventual—not to say fixed—response, too, has a wider grasp, recognizing both the allure and the danger of interpreting experience according to gender.

Indeed, such gendered sensations can be intuited and claimed in myriad ways, as in the temptation to view Meredith Monk’s practice as an expression of a woman-centered sensibility. Back in 1989, as I began to explore what my own work might be, the identification I felt with Monk’s work may well have had to with—and I’ll say this carefully—traits that might be perceived by some individuals in some instances, during certain phases of the moon, having some tentative and tenuous relationship to some provisional notions of gender. But ultimately, the faith that embodiment, or diatonicism, or collaboration, or earnestness, maps neatly onto femaleness reveals how woefully restrictive our ideas about femaleness *and* maleness continue to be—and how the desire to understand such received notions may also serve to perpetuate them.

Monk’s performances tend to explore gender implicitly if at all. When performers (and critics) address gender more explicitly, less benevolent gender constructs notions often rise to the surface, as in Thomas Howell’s smug dismissal of Lydia Lunch’s *The Gun is Loaded*. Willing to consider the value only of the “spin” of Lunch’s adoption of ostensibly masculine traits, Howell concludes that, since other women have done so already (yawn), there is no need for Lunch. We already have Patti Smith and Kathy Acker, so there is no need to plumb the depths of Lunch’s performance. Is this presumption of irrelevance and redundancy equally likely to be applied to a male performer? Consider the following recomposition:

To hear ad nauseam that life is ‘all about getting fucked’ gained only a small lively spin coming from a female source, as the Céline Burroughs [~~Patti Smith-Kathy Acker~~] world-sick trip has been worked over by a line of female writer-performers stretching from ~~Patti Smith to Kathy Acker~~ [Jim Carroll to Henry Rollins].⁶⁹

Returning to Barkin’s question about the “absence of opportunities,” might we twist that phrase a bit too and consider also the *presence* of opportunities? Specifically, what sorts of opportunities are absent *or present* when gender is the topic? Revolutionary performers have created space for their voices, their

Harpist: “Whenever I get my parts for a performance like this and there is one by a woman, I always say, ‘uh-oh,’ and wonder who she slept with to get the gig.”

stories, often incorporating their own bodies and autobiographical commentary into performance. In presenting her own nude self on stage, Carolee Schneemann revealed her interest in “vulvic space” and “the symbology of the female body.”⁷⁰ Her groundbreaking work speaks certain truths. Others offer additional truths, as in Lydia Lunch’s outrageous rants (she once proposed that “abortion should be mandatory”⁷¹), or Diamanda Galás’s vocal gymnastics and expulsion of “kill energy.”⁷² Laurie Anderson’s wry and witty performance work considers the ramifications of technology and artificiality, for example, as well as the complexities and contradictions that issue from the confluence of gender, sexuality and commerce:

I was a marshal at the a Playboy demonstration at a Playboy Club in New York. We were protesting the exploitation of women and the treatment of women like animals. And my job was to explain to the press what it was we were doing there. So I’d drawn up little pamphlets, with pictures of chicks and bunnies and foxes, and other animals that had come to represent women. And someone who worked at the club came to work and she was saying, “Oh, all these people, what are they doing here?” And I said, “Well, we’re protesting the treatment of women like animals.” She said, “Look, *honey*. I make eight hundred dollars week at this job. I have three kids. This is the best job I’ve ever had. If you want to talk about women and money, why don’t you go down to the garment district where women make seventy-five cents an hour?” And I said, “HMMMMMM. . . .”⁷³

Indeed, the relationship between sex and currency is a recurring theme in performance. Consider Annie Sprinkle, a sex worker and porn actor turned performance artist and Ph.D., and her jubilant reworking of sexually explicit imagery.⁷⁴ This type of maneuver has often been construed as a form of reclaiming or defusing, through which an artist takes on conventional sexual (or sexist) representations and, by virtue of her gender, neutralizes their power:

As a deconstructive strategy, women's performance art is a discourse of the objectified other, within a context which foregrounds the conventions and expectations of modernism. This deconstruction hinges on the awareness that 'Woman,' as object, as a culturally constructed category, is actually the basis of the Western system of representation. Woman constitutes the position of object, a position of other in relation to a socially-dominant male subject; it is that 'otherness' which makes representation possible (the personification of male desire). Precisely because of the operation of representation, actual women are rendered an absence within the dominant culture, and in order to speak, must either take on a mask (masculinity, falsity, simulation, seduction) or take on the unmasking of the very opposition in which they are the opposed, the Other.⁷⁵

Sprinkle puts it equally eloquently: "Fuck you guys—you wanna see pussy, I'll show you pussy!" But as Elinor Fuchs's conflicted and agonizing response to Sprinkle shows ("Does she smile because she enjoys this or because she is encoded by pornography to convince men she 'enjoys' this?"), there is no guarantee that this sort of display, whatever its intent, will be received as "a deconstructive strategy." Sprinkle's performance in the film *The Sluts and Goddesses Video Workshop, or How to be a Sex Goddess in 101 Easy Steps* (1992) also plays with the conventions of pornography, giving them a campy

Student: "Jolas's music sounds pretty good when she writes
in a feminine way, but when she tries to sound like a man
. . . ."

twist.⁷⁶ Over a decade ago, my own experience of watching this film was confusing, profoundly disturbing, hysterically funny, and empowering. Fuchs's concern about whether Sprinkle exhibits agency raises the crucial and complex question of how to situate such repo-pornography with regard to hegemonic constructions of identity and power. But what interests me here is the power—and persistence—of those constructions themselves, both in the creation and in the reception of artworks.⁷⁷

On to Sarah Lucas, who claims that her appropriation of sexist imagery transforms the original "from an offer of sexual service into a castration image." Images that would be offensive were they created and disseminated by a man are said to become, when replicated (without mediation) by a woman, defiant. This is the treacherous flip side of Howell's rebuke: it is *only* her gender, not her insight or skill, that transforms the appropriated imagery. This is one reason why the overbearing conceptual packaging surrounding Lucas rings so hollow to me. In fact, the promotion of Lucas's work exposes its own secret, for while she is invariably described as a confrontational bad girl, she is simultaneously lauded for eschewing "an aggressively feminist manner" and instead embracing a "yobbish, tabloid, 'ladette' perspective. . . ." Notice the eagerness to deny that Lucas is "aggressively feminist"—this reveals perhaps more than it intends by exposing the fear that underlies such fashionable "confrontation." How castrating is *that*?⁷⁸ Lucas photographs herself sitting on the toilet, but this display unwittingly exposes just how housebroken she really is.

The disavowal of "aggressive" or ostensibly outdated feminism in favor of something more stylish and, um, confrontational has come to seem like a plague. Under the guise of hip, edgy self-expression, women are seduced into orchestrating their own humiliation. This maneuver requires a certain complicity and complacency, a willingness to denigrate others in the service of one's own ostensible liberation. As Angela Carter describes Sade's Juliette, "She is a woman who acts according to the precepts and also the practice of a man's world and so she does not suffer. Instead, she causes suffering."⁷⁹ This statement from *Female Persuasion*, a website "founded for upcoming and provocative female artists," makes a concerted effort to adopt a "yobbish" attitude, but its closing questions reveal a bit of hesitancy:

[The site] aims to address the current state of feminism—a word which surprisingly to many still evokes the mythology of 70s granola-crunchy radicalism with a strangely persistently nagging fear.

The theme "female persuasion" was born simply as a response to what it means to be a woman today. There's no denying that post-post/3rd-wave feminism is currently a hot topic, and it's hard

to ignore the strange mixed messages of sexy/intelligent a la Pamela Anderson, or even say, Vanessa Beecroft. Many of the artists participating in female persuasion explore a certain narcissism that is especially prevalent on the web—an attempt to forsake isolationism and explore sexuality through exhibitionism and objectification. If feminism originally was born as a rejection of the objectification of women, what does it mean for us to objectify ourselves? Is it ok as long as we're in control of it, and what are the long-term consequences?⁸⁰

Gee whiz, I'm not sure; *is* it “ok?” And what does it mean to be “in control of it?” Lucas is “in control” of her “ladette” pose, isn't she? Well, it depends on many factors, including what her audience makes of it. Here is what I *make* of it, in the form of an appropriation and transformation of my own:

Lucas's selection of pages from tabloids ~~exposes and ridicules~~ **[adopts and promotes]** the voice of male misogyny by **[cynically]** allowing it to speak without mediation **[while the art itself relies upon abundant mediation to deliver its “confrontation”]**.

And an intervention in Beecroft's fantasy:

I ~~play on~~ **[exploit]** the girls' sexuality to ~~offend~~ **[titillate]** the audience. I don't mind being ~~irritating~~ **[placating]**—rubbing people ~~against their grain.~~”

This unadulterated review of Beecroft acknowledges the implausibility of the story even as it delivers it:

The standard line on these now-familiar performances seems to be that Beecroft confronts viewers with their role as prurient spectators, flaunting the voyeurism that has sustained the traditional depiction of the female nude.

But how many variations can be squeezed out of this simple theatrical conceit?⁸¹

Thus, Vanessa Beecroft enjoys the pleasure of serving simultaneously as rebellious heroine and forsaken scapegoat: “She is said to be confrontational, but we know she is just rehearsing the same formula over and over. (Yawn.)”

What story is being told here? To summarize, it goes something like this:

Unlike those aggressive or crunchy granola feminists, whose forms of expression were earnest and quaint, these artists dismantle misogyny by replicating it and offering it back to us in a confrontational way. The postmodern duplication of unadulterated sexist imagery bravely original exposes its mechanisms, while the presence of a female hand renders its misogyny mute, ineffectual.

Or, might be *retold* this way:

Girls! Titillate us; we'll reward you. Abase yourself; we'll display you. Swallow; we'll say you have subverted misogynist conventions.

And the *untold* portion might go something like this:

The positive response you'll receive for your “provocations” will readily give way to contempt and ennui. The very vacuity of your enterprise, said at first to be “exposing” the emptiness of the culture it mirrors, will soon enough be understood as the major flaw of your own work. You'll be tolerated, even shown, but with a veneer of disdain, and will serve as the ever-present model of the mediocre and irrelevant woman artist.

What do we get? The double thrill of consuming your misogyny while we reject your art.

Of course, I am not suggesting that there is a real conspiracy afoot, in which curators and critics cunningly trick women into working against their own best interests. There doesn't have to be.⁸² The

Mentor: "I listened to your orchestra piece, and don't worry. You are much better than that other young woman composer we talked about."

question is, what kind of culture—aesthetic, social, and psychological—does one foster by creating and disseminating such work? The work itself is enervating, the commentary equally so. No matter what the stance of the artist, real human being or beings are *used* to make these images. One feels the need to comment on it, and yet doing so allots even more space to it: it feels like planting a weed in one's own garden. Returning to my gloss on Barkin, what sorts of opportunities are absent *or present*? *Which stories are told, and retold, and which remain untold?*

January 2003. I am reading Alice Sebold's memoir *Lucky*, which recounts her experience of being raped as well as its aftermath. The book includes the usual notice that some individuals' names have been changed to protect their privacy. Midway through the book, I wonder whether she changed the name of the rapist: is Gregory Madison his real name? I think how strange it seems to put the rapist's name in print. I then stop and ask myself why I think so.

Into the Maze

The shunning of "aggressive feminism" or "the mythology of 70s granola-crunchy radicalism" finds an echo in innumerable, and apparently better behaved, comments on the relationship between gender and artmaking. Witness Augusta Read Thomas's perplexing repudiation—"I don't market myself as a woman composer"—incorporated into a radio program that aims to do just that. Or observe the trailblazing conductor Marin Alsop's readiness to scapegoat anyone who has been wounded, and the

Student: "Beware: that faculty member really likes his young female students, if you know what I mean."

vicious denial in her words: "I personally feel that accepting the role of powerless victim can become a self-fulfilling prophecy and I am unwilling to even entertain that concept!" Or Hermione Lee's strenuous effort to gloss over the reality of Virginia Woolf's life experience, *not* reading her life as "that of a victim": to be sure, she is not *only* "a victim," but just as reducing her to victimhood denies the fullness of her humanity, so does ignoring her injuries.⁸³

(Aside and insertions: Lest it be thought that I am denying the truth of these women's experiences and beliefs, I'll add that the fatigue of being grilled about one's gender suggests one reason why individuals might speak in this way. In fact, these questions—for example, "Have you experienced prejudice as a woman in a field dominated by men?"—are by no means innocent. On the contrary, their yes-or-no, black-or-white, all-or-nothing leadingness is a script masquerading as a question. [Might Barkin's more inquiring, open-ended invitation—"how has being a woman . . . affected your work . . . ?"—encourage a different response?] Interrogated in this way, one knows that one will be rewarded for one answer and not another. Who wants to be thought a whiner, a sour-graper? Who wants to be derided for "accepting the role of powerless victim" and thus welcoming its "self-fulfilling prophecy"? So such questions offer certain opportunities and not others: specifically, the opportunity to negate, deny, exclude: "I *don't* market myself as a woman composer." "I *don't* read [Virginia Woolf's] life as that of a victim." "I

Student to student: "Don't study with a woman; it'll hurt your career."

never interpreted any rejections as gender based." There is much more *no* than *yes* in these responses: a perverse, disheartening display of Lacanian lack, a glaring absence of content, a big black blot of non-being. [As I write that last sentence, poetic justice appears as my spell-checker suggests substituting "lacuna" for "Lacan."] Agreed; let's *not* read Woolf's life as "that of a victim"; how then *do* we read it? A hasty opposition between victim and victor sacrifices understanding and compassion in the pursuit of empty triumph: "I am *not* a victim." [Again, what *are* you then? {Hermione Lee's invocation of traditionally male-identified traits to glorify Woolf shows just how persistent these gendered divisions, and the values assigned to them, can be. In expressing her appreciation for the renewed attention to Woolf's posthumous works, Lee remarks that "this has meant that we see her as a much more muscular, prolific, energetic, strong, *big* writer than I think she was thought of at the time."⁸⁴ This statement hints that qualities such as delicacy, subtlety, and insight are somehow *lacking*, that they are a form of "non-bigness."}] Again, the either-or proposition is unhelpful here, for the projection outward of victimhood requires the misuse of others and the silencing of certain aspects of oneself as well. The self-anointed non-victim perilously excises a significant aspect of human experience, and one to which no individual is immune. [And finally, note how the polarity of -ness and not-ness haunts any effort to revise the story, how a rejection of denial reads as avowal.]

Addressing a lacuna: At Linda Montano's invitation to make a performance about "the worst thing that ever happened to you in your life,"⁸⁵ Annie Sprinkle opted to work with the "judgmental or abusive or angry or greedy" treatment she occasionally encountered while working in the sex trade:

So I did a performance called "A Hundred Blow Jobs," because out of two or three thousand blow jobs I'd given, a hundred had been really lousy—really horrible experiences where I'd cry afterwards. I made a tape of all these abusive remarks I'd heard, like, "Suck it, you bitch!" or "Yeah, I bought you dinner—you *should* suck my cock!" or "You're going to hell for this!" or a

woman saying “I hope she gets AIDS!” or “She’s such a *slut!*” I filled a cassette with angry, judgmental, or exploitative remarks like, “Come on, Annie, we’ll pay you an extra ten dollars if you do that anal sex scene!”

Then I did a performance where I played the tape, gagged on this huge dildo, and just got in touch with the pain of those hundred blow jobs. I really cried and it came from my gut; it was very visceral. All the sexual abuse I’d ever suffered came out of my throat; I gagged—really gagged. After I did that for awhile and the tape stopped, I did a healing ceremony for myself. . . . And that was my performance—I felt really good afterwards.

This got worked into more performances, and Emilio Cubeiro (who was my director) came up with a good idea: make a board with lots of dildoes attached, so that I suck all these different dildoes of all sizes and colors. I did that; I’d cry and gag and get in touch with the pain each time. . . . And after a dozen times I would no longer cry or gag—because I’d transformed and exorcised that demon.⁸⁶

Certainly this enterprise presents certain dangers, among them the possibility of arousing the very urges it aims to expose, or more generally, the omnipresent hazard of turning pain—especially a woman’s pain—into a domesticated product for voyeuristic consumption. But what interests me here is the process Sprinkle underwent in the conception and execution of the piece. The interviewer in this

Student evaluation: “I liked this class, especially when the professor brought her strap-on dildo to class and touched me in bad places.”

conversation, Andrea Juno, refers to the performance as a type of “shamanistic therapy,” and indeed, it seems to have enabled Sprinkle to process and transform—not just re-present or exploit—her experience.⁸⁷ Above all, unlike the slick products of artists like Lucas and Beecroft, “A Hundred Blow Jobs” grapples with a difficult reality and does deep inner work, figuratively as well as literally, to *make* sense of it. Indeed, words like “deep” and “inner” suggest a courageous act, as Sprinkle unblinkingly holds and honors disturbing memories. It’s a descent into the psyche, a journey, a metamorphosis—as if she had heeded the words of Angela Carter: “Descend lower. You have not reached the end of the maze, yet.”⁸⁸

And the spectator enters the maze as well. I haven’t seen Sprinkle perform live, but in reading about this work, I am reminded of my own feeling, on a couple of occasions, of *bearing witness* to a live performance, and it seems that there is something of that here: Sprinkle reenacts the experience of degradation, and the spectator is implicated. The element of live performance, the presence of performer and observer in the same space is crucial: it is Sprinkle who was entered by those one hundred penises, and by the abusive remarks that accompanied them, but in observing Sprinkle’s re-presentation, the spectator takes them in as well. The witness receives both victimizer and victim.

What do we witness? What can we receive? What do we honor?

And back to the opening: Martha Graham’s *Night Journey*.

Night Journey, Dark Play

I begin with an ending, the final passage of Sally Banes’s discussion of Martha Graham’s *Night Journey*, her reworking of the story of Oedipus and Jocasta:

Its frank female eroticism is one step forward for womankind—acknowledging women’s libidinal desires (including their taboo sexual feelings toward their children) and exalting their amatory education. But nevertheless, the dance also takes two steps backwards, undermining its sexual liberatory aspect with its gender hierarchy and its emotional extremes. And ultimately its message is conservative: Jocasta’s erotic enthusiasm was a tragic mistake, for it only signaled her doom.⁸⁹

This conclusion is bewildering, for it is difficult to imagine a retelling of the Oedipus myth in which eroticism does not signal doom—for either of the lovers. (I am reminded of the cheesy film of *The Scarlet Letter* released a few years back, in which Hester Prynne [Demi Moore] and Arthur Dimmesdale [Gary Oldman], instead of being punished, evade culture, escaping their puritanical town for a future of guilt-free and deliriously gratifying lovemaking.⁹⁰) So in one deft move, Banes replaces the morality inherent in the appropriated tale with her own, pseudo-feminist ethical

scorecard. At one point she asks, “Was Graham a feminist?”—and then entertains the notion that may have been “a feminist who lapsed.”⁹¹

It is no surprise that she finds Graham lacking. Like anyone, Banes is interested in some stories more than others; but what is interesting is the way that those “other stories” leak out of the seams her argument. *Night Journey* begins at the end of the story, with Jocasta holding a rope, imagining her suicide. After the entrance of the blind seer Tiresias, Graham begins the embedded narrative—in other words, she portrays the events that led up to this moment. They are a flashback, or as Banes points out, an “interior drama,” told from Jocasta’s point of view.⁹² This offers a clue to what Banes calls the “conservative” nature of the choreography. To begin with, the received story concerns sin, guilt and shame; and Graham’s approach emphasizes this, in part because she chooses to *re-tell* rather than *tell* the story. The flashback is crucial: Jocasta’s reliving of her events is colored by her knowledge that she has committed incest. We do not witness the breathless pursuit and the moment of ecstatic union; rather, we observe the aftermath, Jocasta’s guilt-ridden and anguished recollection of those events. The moment of ecstasy remains unseen. In its place we are presented with what Graham called “an instant of agony,” a telescoped and anguished recollection, a long, suspended, painful moment.

Banes’s determination to unravel the sexual politics of Graham’s choreography inspires some damning judgments. She acknowledges that Jocasta shows an independent streak but concludes that “she is not a rebel in one important realm—for she is totally submissive to her husband.”⁹³ She also laments that “Jocasta’s pathetic sexual dependency certainly makes her servile.”⁹⁴ And she seems most disappointed when she mourns “the shift in Graham’s female characters from the autonomous females of the 1920s and 1930s to the domesticated women of the late 1940s,” revealing that she finds more encouraging images elsewhere in Graham’s *oeuvre*.⁹⁵ Banes accepts without question the conventional association of femininity with passivity, compliance, and vulnerability, and she reassigns the traditional negative valence to these traits.⁹⁶ (While she discredits the dance’s “conservative” attitude, this aspect of her interpretation is certainly prone to the charge of conservatism.)

But Banes also lauds the frank eroticism of *Night Journey*, and perhaps by entering into this strand of her argument we can recuperate this sense of “submission,” dependency,” and “domestication.” At times, Banes equates portrayal with approval, assuming that the choreographer’s presentation of a flawed woman onstage constitutes promotion of those flaws.⁹⁷ She expects Graham to present an ideal, “strong” image. And yet when Banes considers the open, vulnerable nature of certain movements, she offers a more nuanced interpretation, one that appreciates how Graham folds multiple meanings into a

Teacher to student: “I am so horny.”

single gesture. So the dance is simultaneously a “bitter” testament and a “celebration of mature female sexuality.”⁹⁸ Jocasta “yields, clasping [Oedipus] in a position that is both erotic and suggestive of childbirth.”⁹⁹ Later she “falls backward—a swoon of passion, and/or the instant of her tragic downfall.”¹⁰⁰ The rope stands “simultaneously for ‘super-advanced’ sex with sado-masochistic overtones, the umbilical cord they once shared, and the inexorable tightening of the web that binds their lives closer together at this new juncture in their tragic destiny.”¹⁰¹ In these passages, Banes recognizes the multivalence and potency of *Night Journey*. Riffing on her own text, one might say she reaches this understanding “almost despite herself,” contradicting her own insistence that Graham’s one step forward is undermined by her two steps back.¹⁰²

As Angela Carter’s terrible “gaping vagina,” her “crater of a volcano on the point of eruption,” makes abundantly clear, the gesture of opening or yielding need not be construed as “submissive” or “pathetic.”

Master class critique: “That’s a licentious piece.”

In fact, it is the *strength* of Jocasta’s pliancy that is stunning, moving, and frightening. About four minutes into the dance, the furies exit and Jocasta lies on the floor. On an ascending leap and cadential arrival in William Shuman’s music, she stretches her leg upward. This uncharacteristic coordination of music and movement is all the more striking for the fact that the first occurrence of the musical gesture underscored Tiresias’s mounting a pedestal. Jocasta, on the other hand, is laid low, and she can only reach. There follow several gestures of longing and supplication—including an arching backbend and a kick Graham termed the “vaginal cry”—in which the body opens and addresses itself upward, suggesting the heavenly yearning of an utterly earthbound figure.¹⁰³ These movements suggest several things at once: an opening to her lover, a yielding to her fate, and a willingness to take in knowledge. Finally, at the end of *Night Journey*, there is a beautiful and painful moment where Jocasta submits to her fate—death—in a gesture reminiscent also of her sexual surrender. As Banes notes, it is “her death throes as well as her last orgasm.”¹⁰⁴

This openness has resonance in a wider sense as well, the sense of Jocasta's openness to experience, an openness that is hard-won, through the intervention of Tiresias. An excerpt from Graham's autobiography, *Blood Memory*, describes the encounter between Jocasta and Tiresias:

But as she is about to slip the cord over her head to be strangled, Tiresias sounds his wooden staff on the floor and it waked her to a consciousness of his demand that she relive her past in its entirety before she can be permitted the peace and forgetfulness of death.¹⁰⁵

And in her depiction of the "furies," the all-female chorus of *Night Journey*, Graham directly acknowledges the difficulty and necessity of facing one's demons:

Those furies, the daughters of the night, are the terrors we all have. They are memories of things we dread to remember, things we wish to forget—the terrors. They must be recognized and lived through until they leave your mind.¹⁰⁶

They must be recognized and lived through. It is in this sense that we can once more understand Jocasta, and her midwife Graham, as anything but "pathetic." The furies are part of Jocasta's psyche, but they are the part that would prefer not to know, the part that wants to silence certain stories and drown in the oblivion of unconsciousness. Their choreography is characterized in part by rigid gestures, by movements that block the eyes and mouth and that push imaginary, threatening objects away. As Banes puts it, "That they so often place their hands over their mouths seems to literalize the 'unspeakable' nature of this marriage."¹⁰⁷

At times, Jocasta does adopt such material, but by and large, she presents fluid, yielding gestures: the opening movement of swaying and supplication, the arching backbend, the opening of her legs. This has meaning beyond the choreography itself, for her eyes, like her legs, are open. Jocasta is permeable;

Student: "Did you write that piece under Eric?"

she is seeing, knowing. So while Banes would prefer that Graham sanitize Jocasta's story, that she erase the painful aspects of her truth in favor of an "autonomous" heroine, Graham instead explores the complex and painful bond between Jocasta and Oedipus.

The furies cover their eyes and mouths, trying desperately to avoid knowledge. Oedipus removes his eyes, his vision. Tiresias, the blind seer, delivers the fateful news, and it is Jocasta alone who takes it in. She "relives her past in its entirety"—she is the subject here, and this prolonged moment belongs to her. She is permeable, porous, and herein lies her power. She warns us, the witnesses: *If you shrink from that which is difficult, you may end up, like Oedipus, unable to see anything at all.* In short, she is present. She responds to Tiresias's "demand that she relive her past in its entirety before she can be permitted the peace and forgetfulness of death."

Again, what of *present* opportunities? Another one is just that: to be present. To embrace and hold the difficult stories that are not always heard. To be present, and to allow those stories to be present too.

When I watch *Night Journey*, the vulnerability of Jocasta's movements stuns me. They are—dangerous, and as such, they might be understood as a form of what Richard Schechner calls "dark play":

"Playing in the dark" means that some of the players don't know they are playing. It is connected to maya-lila [an interweaving of the performer and the role] and to the feeling of being caught in the toils of fate or chance. It involves fantasy, risk, luck, daring, invention, and deception. Dark play may be entirely

Spouse to spouse: That stream-of-consciousness rant you're writing . . . am I in there?"

private, known to the player alone. Or it can erupt suddenly, a bit of microplay, seizing the player(s) and then as quickly subsiding—a wisecrack, a burst of frenzy, delirium, or deadly risk. Dark play subverts order, dissolves frames, and breaks its own rules—so much so that the playing itself is in danger of being destroyed, as in spying, double-agentry, con games, and stings. Unlike carnivals or ritual clowns whose inversions of established order is sanctioned by the authorities, dark play is truly subversive, its agendas always hidden. Dark play's goals are deceit, disruption, excess, and gratification."¹⁰⁸

Schechner's description of dark play favors more outrageous acts, stunts that eschew the proscenium stage in favor of, for example, performing an arabesque on a treacherous mountaintop over the objections of one's family members. But the sense of danger in Graham's *Night Journey* is, if less macho, nevertheless palpable, especially when one considers the dangers of exposing one's private agony. It's an intimate danger, which is encoded in the content of the dance as well as in her presentation: literally, she invites Oedipus "into the privacy of her body," and metaphorically, she allows the spectator to enter as well.¹⁰⁹

In *Blood Memory*, Graham exposes her vulnerability: "The dance proceeds but there are small intimacies that I have never revealed in words. All of these things mean a tremendous amount to me. I don't talk about them much because people might think I am a little cuckoo."¹¹⁰ And yet it is all there in the choreography. There is desire flavored by submission, power colored by vulnerability, and joy allied with anguish. This inclusivity, this embrace of the fullness of experience, is the gift of Graham's *Night Journey*. Its power lies not only in the content of the narrative but also in the character of its telling—and in the very fact that it is told.

A Bowl That One Fills and Fills and Fills

Virginia Woolf, too, confronted issues of power and their mapping onto gender. In her autobiographical essay, "A Sketch of the Past," she recalls a physical battle with her brother Thoby:

Just as I raised my fist to hit him, I felt: why hurt another person? I dropped my hand instantly, and stood there, and let him beat me. I remember the feeling. It was a feeling of hopeless sadness. It was as if I became aware of something terrible; and of my own powerlessness. I slunk off alone, feeling horribly depressed.¹¹¹

After going on to describe other significant memories from her youth, she continues,

It was the difference in the first place between despair and satisfaction. This difference I think arose from the fact that I was quite unable to deal with the pain of discovering that people hurt each other; that a man I had seen had killed himself. The sense of horror held me powerless. But in the case of the flower I found a reason; and was thus able to deal with the sensation. I was not powerless. I was conscious—if only at a distance—that I should in time explain it.¹¹²

Here she stresses the value of simply paying attention to calamitous as well as benign or transcendent moments, and of making sense, "in time," of those moments. Yet as Woolf describes the difficult but essential process of psychic integration, her appreciation of her perceptions and intuitions is colored by a painful ambivalence about the way experience penetrates her consciousness. She expresses a palpable fear of passivity coupled with an enthusiastic, even ecstatic, embrace of porosity. In this same passage she reveals her onetime anxiety that "such exceptional moments brought with them a peculiar horror and a physical collapse; they seemed dominant; myself passive."¹¹³ Yet elsewhere she celebrates

Composer: "I heard they had to hire a woman."

permeability and receptivity, opening the essay with a proposition that life might be "a bowl that one fills and fills and fills,"¹¹⁴ and stating later, "I am a porous vessel afloat on sensation." She also writes of her "instinctive notion—it is irrational; it will not stand argument—that we are sealed vessels afloat upon what it is convenient to call reality; at some moments, without a reason, without an effort, the sealing matter cracks; in floods reality. . . ."¹¹⁵ Given Woolf's personal history, this "cracking" reality, this vulnerable boundary, is by no means a purely reassuring image of the sort Banes would prefer. What it *is*, though, is an honoring of the writer's intuition, and a conjuring of a compelling image suggesting the interpenetration of consciousness and experience. We needn't rush to judgment on whether these images are "positive" or "negative," "strong" or "weak"; we might opt first to listen, to follow her example and simply pay attention.

Woolf's willingness to attend equally to nurturing and damaging experiences, to fold both into the stream of her recollections, to trust in her intuitions while questioning them, results in a profound and nuanced understanding of her past. In her future, she has a descendant in Elaine Barkin, who displays an openness to contradictions, uncertainties, retractions, and detours. Barkin does not believe that her "quests pertain exclusively to one or the other sex" but goes on to acknowledge the importance of being "most often identified and perceived as: female, girl, woman." The innocuous phrase that joins the two thoughts—"on the other hand"—performs the simple but crucial act of joining these apparently incompatible realities into a single subjectivity.

In her ruminative and insightful essay, “Rules of One’s Own,” which invokes Woolf, Barkin offers a gift: to pay attention, to make something out of what is placed in front of us, to trust that something that is “part of the thinking process [is] not to be banished or ignored because it doesn’t fit.” I wonder whether the things that “don’t seem to fit” are in fact the things that most need our attention. Virginia Woolf’s autobiographical writings are gathered under the title *Moments of Being*, a phrase she used often, yet at one point in her “Sketch of the Past,” she used instead the phrase “violent moments of being.”¹¹⁶ This describes a sudden insight, an abrupt shift in perception—something that “doesn’t fit” but that is nevertheless real. And such violent moments—interferences and interruptions—are worth paying attention to, for they are part of us too.

In composing this text, I have used suggestive language in contradictory and even chaotic ways, to underscore—in an inversion of Barkin’s statement—the way that one is “most often identified” according to one’s gender although experiences need not “pertain exclusively to one or the other sex.” One might jab and prod in one circumstance and embrace and engulf in another. And yet there are some experiences that do continue to pertain more to one sex than another. Those violent moments, which do not seem to fit; it would be easy to banish them out of fear, denial, or naïveté.

To return to questions I have posed above, *What opportunities are present? Which stories are told, and retold, and which remain untold? What do we witness? What can we receive? What do we honor?*

So, I contrive an encounter between Barkin’s generous question—“How has being a woman, being female, affected your work and the way in which you go about doing whatever it is you consider to be your work”—and Woolf’s “bowl that one fills and fills and fills.” I wade through my past, listening not only to theories and arguments that hum on my mental bookshelf, but also to the rumbling of a lifetime of “moments of being.” These are casual, ostensibly insignificant, comments that usually slip by

One to another: “ . . . ”

without fanfare: some I hear, others I overhear, and still others I rehear when they are reported by colleagues, students and friends. Some are insightful, challenging, or thought-provoking, and I welcome them. Others are offensive or troubling, and they plunge in unbidden. The urge to erase is strong. I don’t want readers to have a prurient thrill or to gather more weapons for their arsenal or to think me a killjoy or to try to attribute my unattributed quotations or to conclude—wrongly—that my department is an unhealthy or unfriendly place. So, these utterances float in my memory, they “fill and fill and fill” the bowl. And what do I make of it? I might be buffeted about by these recollected moments, as Woolf would say, “like a fish in a stream; deflected; held in place; but [unable to] describe the stream.”¹¹⁷ I might attempt to excise the more unpleasant experiences and project them onto others I’ll call “victims”; or on second thought, I might adopt the role of the aggressor, avoiding my own suffering by inflicting pain on others. Another possibility would be to *remake* some of these moments by interfering, by violating their identities. Or I could take a more expansive view and become like the bowl itself, holding the totality of these experiences and giving them shape. I am not making this up, but I am made of these moments, and I in turn make something of them.

This text grew out of my review of *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity, and Music*, ed. Elaine Barkin and Lydia Hamessley (Zürich and Los Angeles: Carciofoli Verlaghaus, 1999), which was published in *The Open Space Magazine* 4 ([September 2002]: 62–70), and particularly out of my response to Elaine Barkin’s essay “Rules of One’s Own” (273–292). I am grateful to Elaine for her example, but I take full responsibility for any misimpressions or misappropriations I have committed here. My essay is also informed by conversations and encounters with many colleagues and friends, among them John Blacklow, Alison Crocetta, and Julia Sullivan. Thanks are due to Dániel Péter Biró for reading an early draft; the title “I Am Not Making This Up” was supplied unwittingly by Julia Sullivan, who later informed me that she was quoting Anna Russell. (I am not making this up.)

¹ Pauline Réage, *Story of O*, tr. Sabine d’Estrée (New York: Ballantine, 1965), 38.

² Sally Banes, *Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage* (London: Routledge, 1998), 157.

³ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 160.

- ⁶ Ibid., 160.
- ⁷ Ibid., 163.
- ⁸ Ibid., 157.
- ⁹ Angela Carter, *The Passion of New Eve* (London: Virago, 1977), 64.
- ¹⁰ Jacques Lacan, "God and the *Jouissance* of The Woman." In *Feminine Sexuality*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, tr. Jacqueline Rose (New York: Norton, 1985), 144.
- ¹¹ I am grateful to Alison Barnes, Princeton University Class of 2005, for bringing this website to my attention.
- ¹² Claude Debussy, quoted in George Copeland, "Debussy, the Man I Knew," *The Atlantic Monthly* (January 1955). Cited in Julie McQuinn, "Exploring the Erotic in Debussy's Music," *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, ed. Simon Trezise (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 120.
- ¹³ Suzanne G. Cusick, "On a Lesbian Relationship with Music: A Serious Effort Not to Think Straight," in *Queering the Pitch: The Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, ed. Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas (New York: Routledge, 1994), 74.
- ¹⁴ Naomi Cumming, *The Sonic Self: Musical Subjectivity and Signification* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2000), 1.
- ¹⁵ Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 4.
- ¹⁶ Lieh Tzu, cited by Chungliang Al Huang in *Embrace Tiger, Return to Mountain: The Essence of Tai Ji*. (Berkeley: Celestial Arts, 1997), 72-3.
- ¹⁷ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process* (1969), cited in Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002), 58.
- ¹⁸ Louise Steinman, *The Knowing Body: The Artist as Storyteller in Contemporary Performance* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1986), 41.
- ¹⁹ Signe Hammer, "Against Alienation: A Postlinear Theater Struggles to Connect," in *Meredith Monk*, ed. Deborah Jowitt, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1997), 71.
- ²⁰ Marianne Goldberg, "Personal Mythologies: Meredith Monk's Education of the Girlchild, 1995." In Jowitt, *Meredith Monk*, 51.
- ²¹ "Meredith Monk in Conversation with Deborah Jowitt," in *Art Performs Life: Merce Cunningham/Meredith Monk/Bill T. Jones* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1998), 73.
- ²² Sally Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers* (Middletown: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1987), 164-5.
- ²³ Diamanda Galás interviewed by Andrea Juno, in *Angry Women*, ed. Andrea Juno and V. Vale, (San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1991), 11.
- ²⁴ Suzanne G. Cusick, "Gender, Musicology, and Feminism," in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), 472. I am grateful to Ruth Ochs for calling my attention to this article.
- ²⁵ John Howell, review of *The Gun is Loaded*, by Lydia Lunch, *Artforum* 26, no. 1 (September 1987): 130.
- ²⁶ Jeanie Forte, "Women's Performance Art: Feminism and Postmodernism," in *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, ed. Sue-Ellen Case (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 254. In the notes to this passage, Forte refers to the work of Dick Hebdige and Kaja Silverman.
- ²⁷ Howell, review of *The Gun is Loaded*, 130.
- ²⁸ Lydia Lunch, *The Gun is Loaded*. Written and performed by Lydia Lunch; directed by Merrill Aldighieri and Joe Tripician (New York: Mystic Fire Video, 1988).
- ²⁹ Forte, "Women's Performance Art," 257-258.
- ³⁰ Philip Auslander, "Intellectual Property Meets the Cyborg: Technology and Textual Ownership in Postmodernist Performance," in *Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1992), 114.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Ibid., 115.
- ³³ Laurie Anderson, *Collected Videos* (Burbank, Calif.: Warner Reprise Video, 1990). (The performance of "O Superman" on this video dates from 1981.)
- ³⁴ Mark Dery, "Signposts on the Road to Nowhere," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 90, no. 1 (1991): 794.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 797.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 790.
- ³⁷ Anderson, *Collected Videos*.
- ³⁸ Diamanda Galás, *Plague Mass* (New York: Mute Records, 1991).
- ³⁹ <http://www.artsworld.com/art-architecture/biographies/j-l/sarah-lucas.html>, accessed March 21, 2003.
- ⁴⁰ Elizabeth Manchester, "Short Text" (August 2000) accompanying Sarah Lucas's *We Score Every Night* (1992), <http://www.tate.org.uk>, accessed July 2, 2004.
- ⁴¹ Ibid. (The opening statement is by Lucas; Manchester cites *Young British Artists*, II, 3-4.)
- ⁴² Pauline Oliveros, "Cooking in the Quantum Kitchen: Nourishing the Body of Electro-acoustic Music." Keynote Address, *Listening In the Sound Kitchen*, Princeton University, November 15, 2003. Archived at <http://www.princeton.edu/WebMedia/special/>. This transcription has been transcribed and edited slightly for clarity.
- ⁴³ Vanessa Beecroft, quoted in Judith Thurman, "The Wolf at the Door," *New Yorker* March 17, 2003, 123.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 86.
- ⁴⁵ "'Hooters for intellectuals' was how one skeptical art critic characterized Ms. Beecroft's work. John Cage with subject matter, another said. 'Fascist and incorrect' was the description offered by a young New York art dealer. 'It didn't make me feel liberated in any way,' she said of the performance. Roberta Smith, "Critic's Notebook: Standing and Staring; Yet Aiming for Empowerment," <http://www.yvonneforceinc.com/yfinew/smith.htm>, accessed July 2, 2004.
- ⁴⁶ Holland Cotter, Review of Andrea Fraser exhibition at Friederich Petzel Gallery, *New York Times*, July 2, 2004, www.newyorktimes.com, accessed July 2, 2004.
- ⁴⁷ Annie Sprinkle, interviewed by Andrea Juno, in *Angry Women*, ed. Andrea Juno and V. Vale, (San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1991), 34. Also see www.anniesprinkle.org.

- ⁴⁸ Forte, "Women's Performance Art," 262.
- ⁴⁹ Elinor Fuchs, "Staging the Obscene Body," *The Drama Review* 33, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 43.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.
- ⁵¹ Derek Pearsall, guest lecture at the University of Pittsburgh (date is approximate). For a consideration of the question of Chaucer's alleged rape of Chaumpaigne, see Christopher Cannon, "Chaucer and Rape: Uncertainty's Certainties," in *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. Elizabeth A. Robertson and Christine M. Rose (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 225-279. Cannon opens with an epigraph from T. F. T. Plucknett, which bears a certain similarity to Pearsall's casual dismissal: "That he seduced Cecilia we may well believe; that she was angry with him, and still more with herself, is extremely probable. She may have honestly thought that because it all happened against her better judgment, that therefore it was without her consent" ("Chaucer's Escapade," *Law Quarterly Review* 64 [1948]: 35).
- ⁵² Alice Miller, *Banished Knowledge: Facing Childhood Injuries*, tr. Leila Vennewitz (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 27.
- ⁵³ Cumming, *Sonic Self*, 2.
- ⁵⁴ Louise Kaplan, *Female Perversions: The Temptations of Emma Bovary* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1997), 453.
- ⁵⁵ Margaret Emerson, "Gurus," in *Breathing Underwater: The Inner Life of T'ai Chi Ch'uan* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1993), 80.
- ⁵⁶ Kaplan, *Female Perversions*, 453-454.
- ⁵⁷ Morton Feldman, "Boola Boola" (1966), in *Give My Regards to Eighth Street: Collected Writings of Morton Feldman*, ed. B. H. Friedman (Cambridge, Mass.: Exact Change, 2000), 47.
- ⁵⁸ Mark Steven Brooks, "Memories of Morty" (2001), <http://www.cnvill.demon.co.uk/mfbrooks.htm>, accessed July 1, 2004.
- ⁵⁹ Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, tr. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1987), 366.
- ⁶⁰ "Thea Musgrave" (2003), <http://www.schirmer.com/composers/musgrave/>, accessed November 24, 2003.
- ⁶¹ Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1925), 131.
- ⁶² Alice Miller, *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child*, trans. Hildegarde and Hunter Hannum (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1984), 320. More recently, Woolf's illness has been described as manic depression, not schizophrenia.
- ⁶³ Augusta Read Thomas, quoted in *Instrumental Women*, Minnesota Public Radio, 2003. Archived at http://music.minnesota.publicradio.org/features/0302_instrumental_women/index.shtml. This commentary seems to be a response to the question from the host, Lauren Rico, about whether "it mattered to audiences whether the music was written by a woman or a man."
- ⁶⁴ Marin Alsop, "On the 'Woman Conductor' Issue," <http://www.marinalso.com/media-faq.html>, accessed January 27, 2003.
- ⁶⁵ Hermione Lee, in "The Mind and Times of Virginia Woolf." Featurette included in the DVD edition of Stephen Daldry's *The Hours* (Miramax, 2003). Lee's commentary is quite remarkable given her statement, elsewhere in the film, that for "a period of about three years, on and off, she was incarcerated, she was under the care of nurses, she tried to kill herself."
- ⁶⁶ Virginia Woolf, "A Sketch of the Past." In *Moments of Being: A Collection of Autobiographical Writing*, ed. Jeanne Schulkind, (San Diego: Harcourt, 1985), 78.
- ⁶⁷ Elaine Barkin, "Rules of One's Own," 277.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 273-4.
- ⁶⁹ Howell, review of *The Gun is Loaded*, 130. My "interference" with Howell—and below, of Sarah Lucas and Vanessa Beecroft—inevitably reminds me of the remixer's comment above ("I raped that song"). The abusive nature of the originals mitigates my discomfort only somewhat.
- ⁷⁰ Carolee Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy: Complete Performance Works and Selected Writings* (New Paltz, N.Y.: Documentext, 1979), 234. For the complete text to *Interior Scroll*, photographs of the performance, and other related writings, see this volume.
- ⁷¹ Lydia Lunch, live performance, Pittsburgh, PA, October 1994 (date is approximate).
- ⁷² Galás interviewed by Juno, *Angry Women*, 9.
- ⁷³ Laurie Anderson, *Collected Videos*. Anderson has told this story periodically since the mid-seventies.
- ⁷⁴ Sprinkle's dissertation, *Providing Educational Opportunities to Sex Workers*, was completed at the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality.
- ⁷⁵ Forte, "Women's Performance Art," 252.
- ⁷⁶ Sprinkle, Annie, *The Sluts and Goddesses Video Workshop, or How to be a Sex Goddess in 101 Easy Steps*. Produced and directed by Maria Beatty and Annie Sprinkle (New York: Beatty/Sprinkle, 1992).
- ⁷⁷ There are many pertinent issues that lie beyond the scope of my discussion here, among them the ways different generations have approached sexist imagery; the way that imagery has transformed even while it has persisted, the significance of different idioms and media on the act of reclaiming; and numerous questions regarding reception and spectatorship. See, for example, Roselee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, rev. and exp. ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001), Michael Huxley and Noel Witts, eds., *The Twentieth-Century Performance Reader*, 2d. ed. (London: Routledge, 2001), Amelia Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1998), and Lizbeth Goodman with Jane deGay, *The Routledge Reader in Gender and Performance* (London: Routledge, 1998).
- ⁷⁸ Like most, if presented with any genuine prospect of Sarah Lucas performing an act of castration, I would object strenuously. The fact that that metaphor is used to valorize her work underscores how unthreatening it really is; it is, rather, a slick packaging of a pseudo-threat. More generally, the value of "confrontation" or "threat" needs more questioning and prodding; see my review of Barkin and Hamessley, *Audible Traces* (see citation above).
- ⁷⁹ Angela Carter, *The Sadeian Woman* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 79.
- ⁸⁰ <http://www.femalepersuasion.net>, accessed March 21, 2003.
- ⁸¹ Michael Duncan, "Vanessa Beecroft at Gagosian," *Art in America* 89, no. 7 (July 2001), 96.
- ⁸² Like my title, this formulation comes from Julia Sullivan.
- ⁸³ The dubious honor of coining the spiteful term "victim art" goes to Arlene Croce, who refused to see but nevertheless reviewed (while claiming that she was not reviewing) choreographer Bill T. Jones's *Still/Here*. For a reprint of Croce's 1995 *New Yorker* article and a collection of essays written in response, see Maurice Berger, ed., *The Crisis in Criticism* (New York: The New Press, 1998). Of particular interest is Joyce Carol Oates's essay, which begins with the following statement: "The very concept of 'victim art' is an appalling one. Only a

sensibility unwilling to attribute full humanity to persons who have suffered injury, illness, or injustice could have invented such a crude and reductive label” (30).

⁸⁴ Hermione Lee, “The Mind and Times of Virginia Woolf.”

⁸⁵ Sprinkle interviewed by Juno, *Angry Women*, 32.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* There are two photographs on this work on p. 35. See also <http://www.anniesprinkle.org/html/about/photos/1990s/>, accessed June 30, 2004.

⁸⁷ Sprinkle interviewed by Juno, *Angry Women*, 32.

⁸⁸ Carter, *The Passion of New Eve*, 49.

⁸⁹ Banes, *Dancing Women*, 167. Banes refers, as do I, to the film of *Night Journey*, directed by Alexander Hammid and completed in 1961. Graham dances the role of Jocasta, Bertram Ross that of Oedipus (originally created or Erick Hawkins), and Paul Taylor that of Tiresias. The music is by William Schuman and the set design by Isamu Noguchi. The film is available on the Kultur Video 1177, *Martha Graham in Performance* (VHS).

⁹⁰ It was not until after I wrote that parenthetical sentence that I encountered Graham’s sketch for a film of *The Scarlet Letter*, which was never realized. Her notes (see *The Notebooks of Martha Graham* [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973], 61-77) juxtapose the narrative with a modern story exploring the “Idea of Intolerance today” (73), showing that Graham’s focus on “terror—shame—anguish” (61) is highly conscious, nuanced, and informed by a long literary tradition.

⁹¹ Banes, *Dancing Women*, 164.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 158.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Deborah Jowitt notes the tragic aspect of Graham’s portrayal of Jocasta while placing it in a wider interpretive context: “Jocasta, more than any other Graham heroine, is a victim, but even she must search her soul to see if she could have, should have, prevented the liaison. Although she is Jocasta, she is also any woman who, in taking a younger lover, must wonder how much of her love is true, how much a search for youth, how much thwarted maternity” (Jowitt, *Time and the Dancing Image* [Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988], 216).

⁹⁷ On the distinction between representation and endorsement, see Peter J. Rabinowitz, “Singing for Myself: Carmen and the Rhetoric of Musical Resistance,” in *Audible Traces*, ed. Barkin and Hamesley, 133-151.

⁹⁸ Banes, *Dancing Women*, 158.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Here, and again with mixed feelings (see n. 69), I apply Banes’s dismissal of Graham (“almost despite herself,” n. 4) to Banes.

¹⁰³ “Now Jocasta kneels on the floor at the foot of the bed and then she rises with her leg held close to her breast and to her head, and her foot way beyond her head, her body open in a deep contraction. I call this the vaginal cry; it is the cry from her vagina. It is either the cry for her lover, her husband, or the cry for her children” (Graham, *Blood Memory* [New York: Doubleday, 1991], 214).

¹⁰⁴ Banes, *Dancing Women*, 163.

¹⁰⁵ Graham, *Blood Memory*, 213.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Banes, *Dancing Women*, 158-9.

¹⁰⁸ Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies*, 106-107. Schechner’s explanation of *maya-lila* appears on p. 105.

¹⁰⁹ As I mentioned earlier, that revelation of intimate experience can have a rather different effect. As I completed this essay, I happened upon a few minutes of a PBS documentary that voyeuristically and melodramatically displayed Judy Garland’s life story, taking obscene pleasure in the correspondence between her own experience and that of her character in *A Star is Born*. The long tradition of consuming women’s pain, however, need not discredit Graham’s work or one’s response to it; on the contrary, the fact that vulnerability is so often exploited and devoured makes Graham’s gift, if anything, even more precious. Rather than reacting against expectation by presenting a “strong” image, she entered into the “woman’s” role with dignity. Given the complex interweaving of gender and judgment, there is no guarantee that adopting a different gender identity will be subversive or that exploring one’s usual one will be reactionary.

¹¹⁰ Graham, *Blood Memory*, 214.

¹¹¹ Woolf, “A Sketch of the Past,” 71.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 72.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 71-72.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 80.

an occasion of saying thanks

to and for Elaine Barkin

Paul Humphreys

Enumeration's one way
of recalling your generosity
and my gratitude, co-arising
over half a lifetime or so.

Your mentoring of projects
impossibly dreamed;
your shepherding through the valleys
and peaks of academic passage;
the "skillful means" of your editorial eye;
the depth of your empowering conviction
that conversation must occur among equals.

Another way, preferred, 's to muse
over what makes you
the person you are--
the person I'm thankful
still to be learning to know.

As to this "what," your erudition is instructive.
It begins with fearless acumen in music,
grown to include musics from
outside the "western" sphere,
salient particulars besides
from disciplines ancillary
though by no means "incidental"
to music.

On the way, it extends to criticism--
never lacking in authority,
never burdened by arrogance--
and traces through literature,
philosophy, religion,

"... becoming" poetic and penetrating
interrogations of musical selves
("we mostly try")
and "others
(on)."

And your music, never to be
pinned down or predicted,
never failing to surprise, not
intended to delight, perhaps,
but in spite! And always
challenging we "others" who listen
to hear, think, and frame
our experience (of music)
in new (and old-become-new) ways.

And your having come to practice
and profess the illuminating
uncertainties of improvisation, so
counter to the expectations
of students and, though differing so,
colleagues alike.

And the subsequent interrogations
from which new/old selves are welcomed in:
trading twelve tones for five,
pen and paper for found objects,
reinvestigating the agencies of "composer."

And relationships,
your manner of which
reaches ever and elegantly
o u t w a r d,
actions belying
a declaration once overheard
among students, that you could not be
at the same time "Teacher
and Jewish Mother" to us all.

But also, and remarkably, friend--o
the sum, alone, of postcards
revealing not only whereabouts
and wry whimsy,
but indefatigable grace of spirit
as manifest in your hand.

Enumeration's this way, after all! ...

... all of which falls away
in recalling a time
when my recounting of a pandit's caveat
led to your mondo-like reply.

"The spiritual path, best not begun,
once begun is best finished."

"I like the first part!"

Time, Rhythm, and Silence: A Phenomenology of the Buddhist Accelerating Roll¹

Paul Humphreys

The matter of life and death is great.
Time runs quickly, nothing remains;
It waits for no one.
Take care not to waste the time.

– after a translation by NISHIMURA Eshin (1973:11)

Introduction

At dawn and before bed each day in the temples and monasteries of Rinzai Zen Buddhism, a suspended slab of hard wood is struck in a manner that calls attention to not only these moments of diurnal transition, but, through association with the verse cited above, the continuously transitional character of being-in-the-world as well. The sound of the mokuhan (literally translated, “wooden board”) carries out from the meditation hall, often well beyond the perimeters of the temple proper, in a patterned sequence that incorporates three distinct occurrences of the so-called “accelerating roll.” This rhythmic phenomenon has a wide distribution in east, southeast, and central Asia, as well as Indonesia. Its association with Buddhism in each of these large regions suggests the antiquity of its origin. In this paper, I suggest, moreover, that the experience of hearing the sequence reinforces essential Buddhist teachings as well. I will offer as support for this hypothesis, evidence from my own investigation of the sequence, modeled after the phenomenological method of eidic variation.

Representative Contexts

Relatively few scholars have taken note of the wide distribution of the accelerating roll.² My own preliminary investigations suggest that the accelerating roll occurs primarily in one of three generic contexts: orchestral, theater, and ritual performance. Examples of the first context include the gong orchestras of Indonesia and Southeast Asia where the roll may be played as a signal that the composition has come to a close. In Bali, for example, the roll may be played on a number of instruments in loose synchronization as a final answer to the sounding of the last gong of a composition or *gending*. By contrast, the roll-as-closing-signal is sounded on a single instrument in the ancient Khmer repertoire of the *pi phat* ensemble of Laos. In the orchestral tradition of Japanese *gagaku*, the accelerating roll frequently serves as a kind of anacrusis for phrase arrival points (I shall return to this usage of the accelerating roll in the final section of this paper).

A second generic context is theater and dance music. In Vietnam, it may occur to signal the beginning of a classical dance. In Japan, a remarkable adaptation of the roll is used to accompany *aragoto* or “rough style acting” (Malm 1959: 225) in the kabuki theater. Here the roll is no longer an abstract or “purely musical” feature, but rather a clearly programmatic gesture intended to create anticipation and suspense. The roll also characteristically accompanies the opening and closing of the curtain of the kabuki stage.

It is from ritual context, however, that I shall draw the occurrence of the accelerating roll that is the primary focus of this paper. With few exceptions, such as the Confucian hymns of Korean A-ak, these contexts are associated with Buddhism. Among numerous usages of the roll in the liturgy of the dBe-lugs-pa order of Tibetan Buddhism may be heard an instance in which the “operation” of acceleration is applied not to a single pulse, but to a short-long rhythmic cell.³ The effect is a kind of dialog-in-progressive-diminution that culminates in silence.

Phenomenological Background

The essential groundwork of Husserlian phenomenology was set down by Kant⁴ in eighteenth century and Hegel⁵ in early nineteenth century Europe. It is Edmund Husserl, however, to whom its formulation—both as term and as method—is primarily attributed. Husserl originates the philosophical technique of “epoche” or bracketing, whereby anything that cannot immediately be identified with a particular perception is set aside, or “bracketed.” Once the phenomenon has been disentangled from any number of cognitive associations, a systematic investigation of the “pure” nature of that perception can begin.

My initial and subsequent perceptions of the accelerating roll serve as examples. At first, my attention was directed towards its constituent articulations. Grasped in this way, the generating principle of the sequence emerges as a gradual quickening of an otherwise constant pulse. In subsequent presentations of the sequence, however, I became receptive to a kind of foreground-background reversal of sound and silence. That is to say, the individual strikes came to have significance primarily by virtue of the silences that they delimited in turn. Grasped in this way, the generating principle of the sequence is a gradual contracting of the silences between sounding articulations.

Variation and questioning such as this has as its objective the isolating of the features of perception that do not change, that is, the “invariants” of the perception. Among others, Husserl postulated three factors as invariant in any given perception: the object itself;

the objectivating act; and the ego. He also posited fields of possibility and of “intentionality,” the latter of which he held synonymous with consciousness. Husserl backed away, however, from what, as some have argued, is the logical consequence of his own reasoning.

It remained for his student-become-antagonist, Martin Heidegger, to push the notion of intentionality beyond the limit of the notion of “self,” and thus arrive at the notion of “empty intentionality.” A corollary of this formulation is that the ultimate ground of being “that which regions” is necessarily lacking in any sort of will of its own (1-6: 79, 80). Since the 1930’s, Keiji Nishitani, a prominent representative of the so-called Kyoto School and a contemporary of Heidegger, has attempted to illuminate resonances between phenomenological and Buddhist thought such as these.

The Zen Doctrine of “No Mind”

The teaching of mushin or “no mind,” as a formulation of the Buddhist doctrine of emptiness or sunyata, originates with Hui-Neng, the seventh-century Chinese teacher who is acknowledged as the Sixth Patriarch in the lineage of Rinzai Zen. Hui-Neng’s was a new formulation of an idea that traces to the experience of the historical Buddha, Sakkyamuni, who lived and taught in Northern India during the 5th century B.C.E. The doctrine of “no-self” or “non-self” is central to all three of the major schools of Buddhism.⁶ This ontological premise holds that an individual arises entirely through a combining of aggregate factors, and that apart from these factors, no quality of “own being” can be identified. The second-century teacher and scholar Nagarjuna elaborated this doctrine into a more encompassing formulation of sunyata or plenum emptiness (Ch’en 1-4:

84 - 86). Subsequent schools emphasized and elaborated different aspects of the so-called Triple Treasure of morality, meditation, and wisdom (idem: 313 - 54).

Hui-Neng's formulation came at a time when practice or dhyana had begun to hold sway over wisdom or prajna. The task of the practitioner, in this dhyana-biased view, is to work to bring out his or her pure and undefiled original nature. In the view of Hui-Neng, such an emphasis gives rise to the misleading conception of original nature as something separate from one's self-in-the-present. He objected that any practice informed by this conception of "cleaning the mirror" of the self must needs be a life-negating practice. For Hui-Neng, "there is no mirror upon which for dust to alight" (Suzuki 1986: 25). This view is not representative of nihilism such as that espoused by Nietzsche and Sartre in Europe. Rather it is an affirmation of the fundamental ground from which all existential phenomena may be understood to arise⁷ and to which they may be understood to return.

The Three-fold accelerating roll

The accelerating roll is a prominent feature of the "aural landscape" of formal Zen Buddhist practice. Whether as a signal to come for services, to commence individual chants within services, to perform ritual bows, to prepare for meals, to prepare for a discourse by or individual meetings with the master teacher—the roll is sounded on a variety of instruments in a variety of contexts throughout the day. Distinctive among these presentations is a three-fold sequence—played upon a thick oaken board, or han, suspended from the eaves of the meditation of hall—that marks the coming of the light at dawn (in winter, the practitioners may have already been awake for hours) and the opening and closing of evening meditation.⁸ In both presentations, each sounding of the roll proper is preceded by a number of equi-temporal articulations: the first roll is preceded by seven of these; the second by five; and the third and final by three. In the Rinzai version of the overall sequence, each grouping of equi-temporal strokes is concluded with a cadence stroke that is allowed to rebound into silence. Thus within a clearly delimited durational span, the sequence establishes three levels of identity, the nature of each it is to culminate in silence.

Interrogating the Three-fold Sequence

In an effort to better understand the ways in which conscious intentionality mediates the three-fold sequence and my perception of it, I have presented and observed it a number of times for myself. In the course of these presentations, I have come to question how the act of counting might condition my experience.⁹ To insure that the performance is correct, it is necessary, of course, that I count the number of equi-temporal strikes as I perform them. When the accelerating portion of the first phase within the three-fold sequence begins, however, it is frequently the case that I continue to count the individual strokes as if it were my intention to sound a definite number of them. It is in the nature of the activity of performing the roll, however, that as I reach a point beyond which counting is impossible, the "acquired habit" falls away. Now my intentionality is free to attend to the relationships of progressive diminution within the sequence. At a point still further into the presentation, a moment comes in which I must again suspend my intentionality and allow the process of diminution to complete itself. Thus three distinct stages within my experience of performing the roll are set off from one another by two moments (or thresholds) in which I have been obliged to relinquish first one, and then yet another aspect of the very intentionality with which I set out to present it.

Once the first cycle is completed, the presentation of the overall sequence requires that my intentionality again be directed towards the activity of performing, and thus counting, the five equi-temporal strokes of the second component cycle.¹⁰ I experience this portion of the sequence and the roll which follows as a diminution of the ratio of stroke-articulated equi-temporal spans to contracting ones. In the third and final

portion of the sequence, this diminution is more pronounced, and I perceive the exhausting of the intentionality required to present the complete sequence as a consequence of the very “rule” that defines it. Taken as a whole, the pattern thus instantiates yet a third dissolutional process.

Interpretation

Don Ihde (1976: 90, 91) has described the experience of temporal focusing as being situated within a “field” of awareness that extends both ahead and back into time.¹¹ The delimiting horizons of this field vary according to the consistency and predictability of its constitution. Thus the rhythm that attends the coming of the day, its passage, and the onset of night is the essential background against which we measure our daily experience. A disruption of this background is likely to change our perception of phenomena that have in their spatio-temporal content remained the same.

It can be suggested, by extension, that the accelerating roll, is a systematic disruption of the background of temporality. In the act of performing or listening to the sequence the horizon of field awareness gradually contracts into a focus upon the moments in which any given duration occurs. As the field of past-future intentionality becomes narrower with each stroke, so does the focus of presence become deeper. At the moment in which silences of the sequence “overtake” sounding strokes, effectively contracting to nothing, the field of presence becomes, to apply the usage of Nishitani, “bottomless”¹²: the duality of sound and silence collapse into the non-duality of a “higher order” silence.

It is this very attribute, inherent within a presentation of the sequence, that prompts me to interpret it as a primary impetus for the often-remarked phenomenon of beat attenuation in Japanese gagaku. Katarai, as the roll is named in this context, serves as a kind of anacrusis in relation to culminating points of the colotomic cycle, also articulated by a loud stroke on the large taiko drum. I am reluctant to suggest that this pattern either was or was not incorporated within the rhythmic tissue of gagaku with this effect intended. That this music flourished during the flowering of Mahayana Buddhism in Tang China (ca 618 - 907 C.E.) suggests that perhaps it was. It seems all the more tenable to suggest that the roll—particularly as amplified through cumulative emphasis in the three-fold presentation as described above—was included within the rituals of Buddhism with full cognizance of this attribute.

From a phenomenological perspective, an intentional relationship with the sequence tends to collapse the three-fold process-structure of analysis, objectification, and object into a condition described by Heidegger as “releasement towards things” (1-9:54)¹³ From a Buddhist perspective, the sequence manifests both the spontaneous arising of subject-object duality from the undifferentiated “bedrock” of sunyata, as well as the dissolution and returning of that duality to sunyata. It further demonstrates the essence of Hui-neng’s view: duality and non-duality are complementary and equally necessary aspects of the activity of emptiness.

Conclusion

In the history and very likely the prehistory of world musics, practitioners and theorists have often observed that music and sound have inherent attributes that may move those who hear or imagine it to joy or sadness, good or ill-health, success or failure, the noble or the mundane. In Europe, however, this view has been regarded with skepticism since the mid-nineteenth century. It is perhaps true, as Leonard Meyer has argued that music becomes meaningful largely by virtues of engendering expectations that, within a culturally delimited context, a listener subsequently perceives as fulfilled or not. This view does not rule out the hypothesis with which I draw this discussion to a close: that some musical phenomena may have significance by virtue of the response they engender within a listener or performer without regard to the norms of his or

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her enculturation. The accelerating roll is arguably one such phenomenon; like the fact of death that reaches across all human cultures, it illuminates that which is—through a pointing toward that which is not.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented to the International Musicological Society at its fourth meeting in Osaka, Japan, August 1990. I extend express heartfelt thanks to Sue Carole DeValle, John Edlund (CalPoly, Pomona), James Spira and TOKUMARU Yosihiko (Ochanomizu University, Tokyo; emeritus) whose generous advice, criticism, and encouragement have, in a variety of salutary ways, helped to “condition the arising” of this paper.
2. Peter Crossley-Holland (1970: 6) has remarked upon its occurrence “throughout the Northern or Mahayana Buddhist world.” William Malm (1959: “, 224) has drawn attention to various contexts of its occurrence in the musics of Japan. Thus far, however, a systematic treatment of the phenomenon is lacking.
3. “Drum beat to Summon Dietics”: *The Music of Tibet* (Anthology 1970), side A, band 1.
4. In this attempt to define the conditions under which self-consciousness is possible, Kant recognized that “the consciousness of my existence is at the same time an immediate consciousness of the existence of other things outside me” (quoted in Strawson 1-6: 27). The interaction of this subjective reality with the “abiding framework” of objects in Kant’s thought are arguably the first stirrings of a phenomenological method.
5. Hegel formulated a deeper-reaching hypothesis that clearly derives from Kant’s “critique,” that ego arises from the activity of consciousness, in the process of self-reflection, recognizing “the unity of itself in its otherness” (1-7:227).
6. This doctrine is a principal divergence of Buddhist from Hindu ontology.
7. The Buddhist term *pratityasamutpada* (Japanese: *engi*), also translated “conditioned origination” (sometimes co-origination), appears in the second century C.E. in the works of Nagarjuna (Schmann 1974: 142 - 44).
8. Harrich-Schneider (1-7: side B, band 8) has recorded the sequence in association with the *kai-chin* or daily closing ceremony at Eiheiji monastery in Japan.
9. I am indebted to John Edlund for suggesting that I direct my investigation in this way.
10. I interpret the act of counting as affirming, rather than negating, the identity of individual strokes and silences.
11. “Within the limits of field presence [defined by horizons of “protection” and “retention”], focal concentration is not limited to a 91 center’ [i.e. the “source point” (Husserl) or “leading edge” of presence]” (Ihde 1976: 95,96).
12. Nishitani questions the adequacy of Nietzsche’s concept of “instant” (*Augenblick*) by juxtaposing it with the notion of “bottomlessness” that he uses to describe “a genuine moment” (1987: 28).
13. *Die Gelassenheit zu den Dingen*, coupled with the complementary notion of “openness to the mystery, bears a striking resemblance to Nishitani’s characterization of *sunyata* (see La Fleur 1988: 91).

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10 minutes of improvisation in homage to Elaine.

Warren Burt

IBERIAN ANKLE

is an anagram of Elaine Barkin.

She has 12 letters in her name, but lots of repeats, so don't go looking for row structure puns here (octachords, maybe), at least not this morning.

LEAN BRAIN IKE

is another anagram. This one makes more sense - studying at Brandeis in the 50s, working away, while Ike was president. Twas probably enough to make anyone's brain lean.

I LIKE A BANNER

is another anagram. But Elaine has never been one to hold up banners - she's always been her wonderfully independent self - always surprising and unpredictable.

A BARE INK-LINE

is yet another. This one seems almost poignant. The act of composing - putting things out there - the conflict between the "inner studio" and the "public space" - something that she's often written keenly about. A composition being just that bare line, until heard, internally or externally, and by whom and for whom?

10 minutes of improvisation in homage to Elaine

A BILINEAR KEN

This one's stretching it. As in "Do ye ken, John Peel?" And her 3 Rhapsodies, for flute and clarinet - two line thinking and hearing...and Gamelange, two identities (harp and gamelan) doing the swap, switch and remain separate game with grace and alacrity....

RAN KNEE ALIBI

Well, I had knee problems, and we both have/had bad backs. I remember getting together once with Elaine and Miriam Gerberg for lunch in the Valley, and we talked about different back exercises, and how to overcome one lumbar problem or another.

BALKAN IN EIRE

Eastern Europe shines through strongly in her, but also mixed with East Coast moxie and West Coast wide open curiosity. Like all of us, she's a combination of many influences - on the way to becoming.....as she once wrote.

She's been a friend, a colleague, someone to have fun with, someone to be serious with. Someone to talk music with, someone to talk life with. Here's to her, in celebration

and love,
Warren

¹ i crumpled up my official graduate student evaluation of EB after she popped her head back into the seminar classroom and said something like, "No one cares about that crap. I'm retiring anyway."

² we imagine the meaningfulness of music no matter from where it comes toward us (and it comes from all around, endlessly), that look deepened.

³ and how do you copyright that?

⁴ would EB stress that she doesn't care where it goes?

⁵ i was telling EB about a job interview during which an academic found it necessary to ask me *only* about the *form* of gamelan music, stressing that only this presumed, analytic concreteness of 'important immanent structure' could redeem this music in her eyes. "did you tell her to [expletive]?" snapped EB.

⁶ where does art go?

descending intonations in an agogic world, for E.B.

Jonathon Grasse

logic does not structure the world, does it (no question mark here, rather the descending intonation of a statement from 'does' to 'it', as a sort of power of statement)

okay, but that is not the point (slight dynamic emphasis on 'point' with a second type of descending intonation at the end of that word, perhaps argumentative or confrontational)

what is the world is more like it (sharp dynamic emphasis on 'what', stretch out 'world' with a descending intonation to conjure mystery and importance - an agogic 'world')

the world is also what we bring forth from ourselves (longer contour shape here: starting from higher pitch, descending intonation from 'world' to 'our-' followed by a new descending coda on '-selves', [never forget self]).

language fits in there/here somewhere ('language' gets its own, slight emphasis via stretching, dynamics, and a clear, intervallically differentiated melodic break between 'lang-' and '-guage': note the dual role of the letter 'g'- is that a diphthong?. 'somewhere' is also expressed using a mystifying descending intonation)

note to reader: the descent is the consequent of the ascent's antecedent yet the descent can descend without the ascent.

Aristotle said that logic governs language and thus the world, but was he wrong? wouldn't E.B. ask about aesthetic consciousness? how logical are we/is art, really? (lots of potential descending intonation patterns for various points of emphasis)

so . . . the power, confrontation and mystery of descending intonations. the Blues

the Blues still provide us with a grand tradition of descending intonations with their own, not necessarily mournful 'logic'. did Aristotle have the Blues? shouts and hollers from ancient Greek discourse (shout 'shout' and holler 'holler', no descending intonation, intone 'logic' as if questioning the term)

it is okay to be mystified (descending intonation after tenuto syllables of 'o-kay', so that 'to be mystified' is rendered as an idea, an allowable affect, even comforting)

the blues is sometimes about Time and Space, the dynamic duo, the batman and robin of the intersection between human consciousness and the physical world. who was it in the 20th century that said music is a Space with no places? did Augustine, in the 7th century, really question the existence of Time? past and future in the distended present (various descending intonations to accent mystery of Time, past, future, and present, maybe an agogic stretching of 'distended', or is that too obvious?)

Leguagua, Sunni, and the Rest of the Risas: A Fantasy

Katherine Hagedorn

This report is being filed in accordance with the requirements of the pre-doctoral fellowship sponsored by the Swann Foundation for Sociological Research (SFSR), which fellowship was awarded to me in January 1990 for use in my 1990-1991 fieldwork while enrolled as a graduate student at Brown University, in Providence, Rhode Island. The report provides a narrative of crucial fieldwork activities during 1990.¹ You may have forgotten my research proposal by now (it's been more than a year since you read it), so here is an excerpt of my project summary as submitted with my initial application:

"I propose to conduct preliminary research about the divine *risas* (deities) of Santamaría (a little-known Afro-Caribbean syncretic religion practiced by approximately thirty-five percent of the inhabitants of Cariño Island, mostly on the western part of the island) during 1990 and 1991. What is interesting about Santamaría is that it is considered a "major" religion neither in Cariño nor in the rest of the Caribbean, yet it has been growing steadily since about five years ago (in 1985, for example, only twenty percent of the population was reported to practice Santamaría, according to a state-sponsored self study.) What accounts for this growth, especially in a country where roughly half of the inhabitants claim to be Catholic? And, perhaps more important, what is the significance of Santamaría to its practitioners? My research will take place primarily in and around La Joya, the capital city of Cariño. I propose to apprentice myself to a priest of divination to begin to understand what *risa* worship means to its adherents, and how religious practice relates to theology. I estimate that the duration of this field trip will be roughly six months, after which time I will evaluate my findings, and revise and refine my research agenda."

Rather than bore you with a description of my daily activities, I will focus on a "thick description" (Geertz 1973) of three main events: my initial meetings with Baba Najito, a Santamaría diviner (Baba is an honorific title meaning priest of divination), the reactions of Najito's wife Nivania and her friend Malvina to my illness a few months later, and a hallucinated visit to a disco with Nivania and Malvina during this illness. These three events proved pivotal in my research because they showed me how Cariñosos who practice Santamaría create the world around them through their *risas*, or divinities. (For a reference to similar work, please refer to Rufus Bremer's landmark article, "Why Cariño? Why Now?," which mentions my [then forthcoming] work, "Risa, Race, and Revolution: The 'Three R's' of Postcolonial Cariño," in the journal *Ethnographic Quarters*.)

* * * * *

When I started my research in Cariño in the Spring of 1990, *risa* workshops and *risa* tours did not yet exist, and in order to find out anything about the *risas* of Santamaría one had to seek out a teacher, preferably a priest and diviner of Santamaría. I ran into Najito by accident—literally, I almost ran him over with my bicycle. I was pedalling away from the Hotel Cuatro Caminos in downtown La Joya, the capital city of Cariño. Najito was attempting to cross the street against traffic, but the large, clumsy cars that clogged La Joya's streets

¹ A friend of mine received this same grant a few years ago, but he was unable to accomplish most of what he set out to do in his proposal, so he fictionalized his entire research report (I hope you don't mind my telling you this). His fieldwork imaginary became so compelling that he submitted it as a conference paper to the American Anthropological Association, and it won a prize for the best graduate student paper.

dwarfed Najito, and made it difficult to see him, even astride my bicycle. I was turning right onto the main road as the cars rumbled by, and Najito was scurrying across the street from the far side at the same time. As I looked to my left and started to pedal, directing my front wheel to the right, I heard loud curses and immediately felt a firm cushion of flesh against my knees. A small, balding man with a large belly was furiously brushing off his T-shirt and shorts, which I had inadvertently soiled, and adjusting his leather pouch to the back of his hips. His eyes glared at me; that is, one eye (the green one) glared at me, while the other (brown) gazed calmly back at the street.

I apologized to the angry green eye in nervous Spanish.

“¡Ay, discúlpame, papá! Que no te ví—te herí? Estás OK?” (Oh, excuse me, sir! I didn't see you—did I hurt you? Are you OK?) The eye stared at me for a few seconds, and then looked at my bicycle, a rusty but sturdy Romanian “Boomerang” model.² The flushed face asked me where I was from. When I told him I was from the United States, the brown eye swivelled slightly closer to the green eye, and a gold eye-tooth caught the light of the late morning sun as the left side of his mouth pulled upward into a skewed grin.

“Estadounidense, eh? Qué barbaridad. You people are incredible. You're all over the place, like flies.” He then asked how old I was, and when I told him I was in my mid-thirties, he declared that I was lying.

“You're no more than 25 tops. Are you married?” It was as though my almost running him over gave him the right to ask me as many questions as he wanted, a sort of initial exchange of humiliation. Before I could stop myself, I replied truthfully, “No.” The green eye looked me up and down.

“Do you have kids?” I hesitated, and again said no.

“Why not?” he asked cheerily. His question made me blush, and I blurted out that I was a graduate student, doing research on the *risa* religion in Cariño, and didn't really want to have kids until I was done with my graduate work. This time both corners of his mouth swung upward, revealing two more gold teeth as well as a few white ones. His green eye rested briefly on my purple fanny pack.

“What do you want to know?” By this time I had recovered my wits sufficiently to respond reasonably.

“I want to know what it means to practice Santamaría here in Cariño. His amused half-gaze took in my thin gold necklace and green-and-blue Swatch.

“How much did you pay for your watch?” he asked. Who was this guy, anyway?

“Forty-nine ninety-five. Dollars.” He nodded, as if agreeing that \$49.95 was a fair price for the watch.

“Bring your watch and I'll answer some questions for you.”

He was already turning away when I asked him why I should believe that he had anything to offer me. Still moving away, he reached into his leather pouch and pulled out some smooth black and white stones, shook them gently in his palm, and dropped them back into the pouch. These were divining stones, used in Santamaría to predict the future, and to resolve difficulties. Only priests of Santamaría possess these stones, according to Honeycomb (1958).

² Cariño has a unique trade relationship with certain small countries in colder climates: it trades sugar and coffee to those countries in exchange for bicycles and cars. Romania is famous in Cariño for its Boomerang bicycles (los boom-boom) and the Czech Republic is known for its Cza-Cza cars.

I yelled to him, “Are you a priest of Santamaría?” He was already half-way up the hill, and didn’t bother to turn around as he gave me directions.

“I’m on the White Road, in Spíritus, between Carlos El Greco and Los Jimaguas. You’ve got a bicycle—it should take you about a half-hour. We’re usually home.”

As he receded from view, the weather-beaten, curled leather pouch beat against his hip, making his gradual withdrawal seem like an off-beat dance, with the pouch keeping time.

I was confused yet excited by this encounter. This was my first field trip; I had been in Cariño less than 48 hours and had already met a Baba. True, he hadn’t actually admitted that he was a Baba, and I had almost run him over, but nonetheless, he had invited me to his house. And he seemed to know a lot about the *risas* of Santamaría. This boded well, didn’t it? One had to assess these opportunities as they presented themselves. I had been on my way to the Museum of Religion in the older part of the city when I ran into him—perhaps this was a sign? Perhaps he was placed there as a way to indicate that the Museum of Religion was of secondary importance to a human informant? I returned to my hotel room and brooded excitedly for most of the afternoon. Should I visit this person? Was it even a real invitation? Did I have anything to lose? Did I have anything to gain?

By the end of the afternoon, I had decided to make the trip to Spíritus the next morning, and spent the early evening writing down all I could remember about the encounter, and researching the area where my potential informant said he lived. I found his neighborhood on the map I bought at the hotel store (actually, I found the White Road and followed it out of La Joya and into Spíritus, but the map seemed to stop just short of Carlos El Greco), and memorized the route I would take on my bicycle the next morning. I was prepared for my trip, and was dismayed to find out that, after all that effort, it was only 9:00 in the evening. Time passed slowly. I walked up and down the hotel stairs a few times and wandered around the large Cuatro Caminos bar and lounge, sitting at various empty tables until a waiter would start to approach me, at which point I would get up and move to a different one. (I didn’t want to spend my grant money on drinks, but I liked the cool, dark atmosphere of the lounge.) After about a half-hour of this, the bartender followed me to my next table and told me I had to order a drink or leave. I agreed to leave, but, in an effort to be amiable, I told him I was staying at the hotel for a while, and that I might see him later. He looked confused, and I felt suddenly odd, so I went back up to my room. By midnight some of my nervous energy had dissipated into exhaustion, and I fell into a fitful sleep.

I awoke the next morning at 7:15 and raced down to the hotel dining room for breakfast (included in the price of the room). The sign on the still-closed dining room door said that breakfast was not served until 7:30, so I quietly slipped in and served myself. By the time the waitstaff got to me I was already on my third cup of espresso, and had polished off a few of the mango slices decorating the large tray of sticky-looking guava pastries. I wrapped two of the pastries in one of the hotel’s linen napkins and stuffed it into my purple fanny pack, patiently explaining to the apparently surprised waitress that I was not “stealing” the napkin; only “borrowing” it. (I couldn’t remember the Cariño verb for “borrow” that early in the morning, so I just said “take,” but I think the message was clear enough, since she ran back into the kitchen after our exchange.) After a stop in the hotel lobby bathroom, I was finally on my way (15 minutes earlier than planned!).

As I cycled through the streets of downtown La Joya, dodging huge buses (*guaguas*) and trucks whose flatbeds were jammed with people (*burros*), I realized two things about my first field “mission”: I did not know my contact’s name; nor did I have his exact address. This was vexing. How could I have forgotten to get his name? And his house number? As I paused at the traffic light at Avenida G and Emperador (still a few miles from Spíritus), I considered turning back. How would I find my wild-eyed friend? I waited for the light to turn

green/yellow (Always Proceed with Caution) from red/yellow (Stop in Advance), and grew impatient. The traffic lights were not working well—flickering from red/yellow to green/yellow and then back again to red/yellow—so I timidly began to cross the intersection (with caution), walking alongside my slightly dented bicycle. By the time I had made it to the other side, I was determined to go to *Spíritus* and find this mysterious Swatch-coveting *Cariñoso*. I rode onward.

I was well into the journey along the White Road when I noticed that the houses began to look slightly more relaxed, as if their walls sensed that there was more space in between them, and so expanded accordingly. The dusty pastel colors of the houses, the trees, and the sky vibrated in the hot *Cariñoso* sun. A few people were out on the White Road, listening to their boom boxes, eating “postal pizzas” (*pizza correo*, a dig at the glacially slow postal service; the pizzas were made “while you wait,” and sometimes you waited a good long time), sitting on their small but tidy porches. I had been on the White Road for about two miles when the look of the street signs shifted radically. Gone were the quaint concrete cornerstones with the names of streets engraved on them. Instead, tinny looking posts sprouted up at each corner, with welded metal plaques atop them, sporting what seemed to be hand-stamped black numbers. 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 105a, 106, and so on. *Carlos El Greco* was nowhere in sight. What had happened?³ I cycled up to 120 Street, and then became worried. How would I know where to go? I slowed down and parked beside a pizza stand, the vendor’s head and torso shaded by his awning.

“Excuse me, sir, do you know where *Carlos El Greco* is?” His legs shuffled a bit and out from the awning came a skinny, brown man with delicate, pearl-like teeth.

“Yes.” I waited, but he didn’t elaborate.

“Where is it, then?” He motioned with his left hand back the way I had come.

“Back that way.” I looked in the direction of his hand.

“How far?” The feet shuffled again and the head withdrew underneath the awning. I waited for a long minute.

“About twenty blocks.”

I turned my bicycle around and headed back toward 100 Street, and noticed that the road rose ahead of me at a slight incline. By the time I reached 100 Street, I was winded and sweating. To the left, the block seemed preternaturally quiet; no one was out on the street and most of the front doors were closed. I got off my bicycle and slowly walked along the uniform row of houses. From the third house on the right came a squeal and then the abrupt laughter of a child; a tousled head appeared in the dark doorway and then disappeared. I ventured up to the door and knocked, even though it was open. The same tousled head appeared, hiding its body behind the door.

“*Buenos días, niña*. Can you tell me whether a diviner lives on this block? He’s short, has a belly, one green eye and one brown.”

She ran from the door and yelled “*Mami!*” toward the back of the house. A few moments later, her mother, wearing plastic scuffs and a loose floral print dress, came to the door.

“Can I help you?” Her deep-set brown eyes seemed wary, but friendly.

“I hope so. I’m looking for a diviner who lives around here. He told me to come visit him today, but I don’t know his exact address. He’s short, balding, with a bit of a belly, one

³ I found out a few days later (in a guide book about *Cariño*) that *Bandito* had changed many of the street names in *La Joya* to numbers just after he came to power in an attempt to cut down on the printing costs of future phone books and maps. (McKevitt 1989: 15)

green eye and one brown.” She half-smiled and looked down.

“He told you to visit him?” She seemed skeptical.

“Yes, he invited me to visit his home. I’m researching Santamaría and *risa* worship.” By this time her daughter had joined us. She popped out from behind her mother and said, “Jito, Mami! She means Jito!” I laughed as the child bobbed up and down, shouting the diviner’s name while performing a private elated dance of childhood. Her mother wrapped her arms around the child, and pointed out the door to the right.

“Najito is probably who you’re looking for. He and his wife live two houses down. It’s the one with the brick patio out front.”

Thanking them both, I turned my bicycle toward Najito’s house, and walked it to his door. The door was open, so I assumed someone was home. I knocked loudly and cleared my throat. No response.

“Uh, Najito?” I offered tentatively. I waited. No answer.

I was beginning to feel conspicuous waiting dully on his doorstep, and desperately wanted to walk through the door into the house. I decided to try the informal “street greeting” I had heard a couple of Cariñosos give upon entering a room or a building.

“Najito!!” I shouted, barking his name like a command. I heard pots and pans jangling in the back of the house.

“Come in!” came the muffled response.

And that was it. I was in. I walked slowly through the house, taking careful note of all the details. For all I knew, this house was representative in some way of practitioners of Santamaria, and its inhabitants “typical *risa* worshippers.” All of the rooms had high-ceilings, heavy wooden doors, and windows whose fanciful, wrought-iron grills defended the inhabitants from would-be intruders. (Some of the grillwork depicted Superman arriving from the Planet Krypton, Batman and Robin racing to the rescue in the Batmobile, and other talismanic scenes from North American cartoons. But there was something odd about these metal figures; in place of their eyes were tiny holes, and their mouths were represented by delicate gashes, giving these American superheroes a vacant, ghoulish aspect.) At the front of the house was a sitting room, followed by a bedroom, a bathroom, a dining room, and then a tiled kitchen, at the very back. An old wooden staircase located just before the bathroom appeared to lead up to an attic, or perhaps a loft.

You could tell that the house used to be very nice—that the dining room walls, for example, were once bright yellow rather than burnt shades of dull gold, and that the graying floor had once borne the delicate blue stencilwork of the nineteenth-century artisans who had lived here before the Langosterato.⁴ But paint was hard to come by these days, and floors were now considered to be strictly functional instead of artistic showcases, so those particular details of the house were left to fade.⁵ The front entrance, however, was framed by clean tiled bricks, and their reflective ceramic facades of pink, green, and rust lit up the doorway, as if to insist that inside there existed a magical place, free of the apparent constraints of reality.

As I walked through the house, I glanced into the bathroom to see whether they had gotten water that day—no such luck. Most neighborhoods outside of La Joya had been hit hard by

⁴ Yborio Langostero was the President of Cariño from 1910 to 1958. The duration of his reign is typically referred to as the “Langosterato.”

⁵ According to Najito, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, well-mannered guests used to stop before entering their host’s home to admire the stencilled floors. Some people cared so much about conserving their floors that they only allowed people with fine white cotton socks to walk on their floors, so as not to fade (or color) their precious stencils.

the various restrictions on water, gas, and electricity imposed by the so-called “extraordinary time,” the euphemism for the economic tailspin caused by the withdrawal of Kanadian and U.S. support for Cariño in 1990. The “*rato extraordinario*” was supposed to last a year or two, according to Director Fernando Bandito (affectionately known as “Frito”),⁶ until the country got back on its feet. People were putting up with the hardship of *el rato*, mostly because they believed that the earnest attempts of Frito to establish trade relationships with a few European nations and certain Karibbean nations would soon be successful.⁷ But as a result of the shortages, many neighborhoods often went without water for 16 hours a day (die-hard supporters of Frito prefer to say that “water flows freely between 6 and 10 in the morning and between 6 and 10 in the evening”), without electricity for 12 hours a day (from 12 midnight to 12 noon), and without gas for 9 hours a day (from 9 at night until 6 in the morning). Most people had begun referring to *el rato* as *el rato roto* (the broken time), savoring the dark, alliterative humor.

The smell of garlic greeted me as I made my way to the kitchen. It was lunchtime, and Najito was cooking. Bits of green and blue fish were sprawled across the pitted wooden counter, waiting to be tossed into the heavy black frying pan that was now sizzling with garlic, olive oil, and lime juice. I realized I was hungry.

“Well, I made it!” I said, excited and nervous.

“Would you like some food?” he asked, not turning around. I salivated.

“Yes—if there’s enough. Thank you.”

I waited in silence for him to acknowledge me formally, or to invite me to sit down, but he did neither. Instead, he asked a question.

“Did you bring the watch?”

I had stuffed the Swatch in my pocket mid-way through the trip to Spíritus because my sweat had made it slide up and down my wrist, distracting me from steering the Boomerang.

“Yes, of course. It’s in my pocket.”

“Give it to me.”

“Why?”

“Because I want to show you something.”

I was intrigued, and reached into my pocket to hand him the sweaty Swatch. He took it gingerly, as if the sudden intimacy of my sweat repulsed him.

“What color is this watch?” he asked.

“Green and blue, but you can see that, can’t you?” I answered.

“And what color is the fish?” he asked, ignoring my question.

⁶ According to the daily Cariñoso newspaper, *Bemba*, Bandito prefers to be called “Director” rather than “Presidente” or “Comandante.” A deeply literary man, he often paraphrases Shakespeare, explaining, “If all the world’s a stage, then I’m a director!”

⁷ One of the oddest aspects of Bandito’s Revolutionary Directorate has been his propensity to change the names of places and people in Cariño, as well as the Cariñoso people’s usage of foreign place names. In a 1960 proclamation, soon after he took over power in a bloodless (and legless, for Bandito had lost both his legs in the Skirmish of 1953, and was still waiting for a “replacement pair” from France) coup, Bandito declared, “Only Cariño has the right to use the noble hard C in its name. Only Cariño has fought for this privilege. Only Cariñosos are worthy of this flexible consonant. Those other nations -- Kanada, Kape Verde, the whole Karibbean, for that matter -- let them use “K!” It was rumored by the popular press at the time that Bandito uttered this proclamation in an attempt to shore up his dazed and confused leadership, who, after essentially being handed power by the blind 96-year old former president, Langostero, suddenly felt let down, as if all their scheming and strategizing hadn’t really mattered after all. (See Thomas 1982: 3300-3320; and Perez 1984: 300-320.)

“Uh — green and blue.”

“Yes, green and blue. And anything that is green and blue, I like. Do you know why?”

“No.”

“I like all things green and blue because they belong to Leguagua, and Leguagua is the master of my fate.”

Najito put the Swatch on the counter, next to the fish, and continued preparing the food. I leaned against the doorway from the dining room into the kitchen, and thought about where he had gotten the rare green-and-blue fish. The fish, known as *verdeazul*, had a buttery soft texture when cooked, and tasted faintly of oranges. I knew that it was very expensive on the black market (the equivalent of two weeks' salary), and thus very difficult to find, especially during *el rato*. However, because *verdeazul* was a favorite food of Leguagua, Najito's primary *risa*,⁸ he had probably traded a radio or a set of clean white sheets to secure this treat for his deity. (Both radios and white sheets were in demand during *el rato roto*; the radio to provide a temporary respite from the hardships of everyday life, and the white sheets to cool tempers and temperatures.) I saw a few bananas on the counter near the sink, unpeeled, and hoped we would have fried bananas, too. Najito put a few *verdeazul* pieces into the frying pan, and with his back to me, mumbled something and giggled.

“Excuse me?” I asked.

Najito didn't respond at first, but continued working the worn wooden spatula underneath the now sticky *verdeazul*.

“I said, you know what Leguagua is known for, don't you?” He snorted.

“I'm not sure—what?” I began to feel intensely hungry, and a little dizzy.

Najito reached for a banana, stared boldly at me, and popped the banana out of its peel with one smooth motion. He began to laugh, first a small, controlled giggle, located mostly in his teeth and eyes, and then a heartier laugh, growing and getting louder until it shook his whole body and mine, too. The *verdeazul* began dancing in the pan and the oil shot up to the ceiling, spraying it with delicate green pinpricks. For a moment, the tiled walls of the kitchen pulsed with every echo, and Najito's laughter rocked the very foundations of the house, down to its stenciled floors. We vibrated with the kitchen in the echoes of Najito's laughter for a long, Daliesque moment—

Suddenly the kitchen cooled down immediately as a sudden draft extinguished the flame under the fish as the front door opened.

“NAJITO!!!” screamed a voice as it entered the front room.

The tiles settled back into the walls, and the ceiling shrank into itself. The banana, which had been emitting a strange yellow glow in Najito's hands, fell to the floor as he closed his mouth and stood at attention, eyes focused in slightly different directions.

“NAJITO!!!!” the voice shouted again, dominating the hallway.

“Yes, *mi amor!*” responded Najito obediently. “I'm here, *amorcito.*” The voice huffed and puffed as it strode toward the kitchen. Najito shivered slightly.

“Who is this?” asked the voice, its carrier coming into focus.

⁸ Some recent scholars have characterized Leguagua as a trickster deity, or even as “The Devil.” I would remind those scholars and any others who read this that *risa* worship is first and foremost a religion of lightness and laughter, and has very little to do with the dark forces that are typically associated with the essentially medieval notion of “The Devil.” (See Masonite 1992: 333-338; Browner 1989: 38-300; Bettelheimer 1990: 103-130.)

“I don’t know, *mi cielo*, why don’t you ask her?”

The voice belonged to a striking woman, roughly five feet nine inches tall, and with a regal, braided, bronze-colored coiffure that added perhaps three more inches to her height. Her eyes were bright hazel, and the light coffee-colored skin of her face was unlined, with the exception of two sharp furrows etched between her eyebrows. She wore long faded blue jeans and a clean, gauzy white shirt. Her voice, like the rest of her, was powerful, though she seemed weary.

“Who are you, and what are you doing here?” she commanded.

She looked me up and down, stopping briefly to note my damp, stringy hair and the blotches of sweat under my sunburned arms.

“My name is Gloria,” I answered. “Gloria Munday.”

“Gloria Mundi?” She gave it an extra-Cariñoso pronunciation. I waited.

“Gloria. My name is Nivania, and I am Najito’s wife.”

I smiled, and stuck out my hand in greeting.

“Nice to meet you,” I said.

“No no no no. Not so fast, la Gloria, not so fast. We’re not done yet.” She took a deep, asthmatic breath.

“What are you doing in my house??”

“I’m here because your husband invited me.” Her left eyebrow shot up and both eyes widened. I continued nervously.

“That is, I’m interested in learning more about Santamaría, and he said he’d help me.” Her left hand rested on her hip as she lifted her right eyebrow. Her head dipped to the left for emphasis, and she leaned toward me.

“Let me tell you something, Gloria. There are some girls, some real pushy chicks, who say they’re interested in learning about Santamaría from my Najito.” She was settling into it now, crossing her arms.

“And they come into my house, and they eat my food, and they sit on my couch, and they watch my T.V.—and you know what? They’re not interested in *learning* from Najito.” Her hands had escaped from her inner elbows and were now clutching her hips for emphasis.

“These girls are interested in *screwing* Najito, plain and simple.” She leaned into me.

“And I don’t go for that. Do you understand me? I don’t go for that.”

By this time her chest and neck were surrounding my nose, and her elongated face was directed downward, into the crown of my head. I absorbed her anger and humiliation like a sponge, and felt myself reddening from the knees up. Her breath smelled like cigarettes plus mint—chewing gum? TicTacs? I sucked nervously on my teeth and looked up at her hair, training my mind on the many upstanding Presbyterian clergy in my family. I felt my skin revert to its pale Protestant pallor.

“I’m from a very strict family myself, you know, Presbyterians, and we don’t really go for fooling around, either, so I can understand exactly what you mean. I’d just like to learn a little about the religion, is all.”

Nivania relaxed a bit and leaned against a dining room chair, though she continued regarding me with her speckled, unblinking stare.

Najito had relit the burner, and had continued cooking the fish during this exchange, apparently oblivious to his wife's tirade. From the back, his frame looked small and wiry, but from the side, his large belly dominated his physique, and seemed to propel him about the kitchen. His khaki shorts were fastened just below his belly button, and his blue and white "Adidas" T-shirt, stained with the excitable fish sauce, rested just above it, leaving this tender reminder of his birth to regard the world unprotected, at roughly counter-level. Najito was an excellent cook, I learned, and even during the *rato rato* had managed to prepare delicious meals for his wife and occasionally their neighbors. They had no children and no relatives in the immediate vicinity, and so frequently shared their food with neighbors and visitors.

He had prepared for us three plates of rice, *verdeazul*, and *abogado*, the latter of which was a soft green pulpy mass, somewhere between a fruit and a vegetable, said to have been brought to the New World centuries ago by Spanish lawyers, hence the name. Nivania and I looked contentedly at our plates as Najito prepared an additional serving for his ancestors. On top of the ancestral plate he poured a cup of sweet *café cariñoso* and some extra sugar, and placed the mixture just outside the kitchen door, in the back alley. As he came back in the house, his brown eye located his wife and held her gaze.

"*Sin muerto no hay risa*," intoned Najito and Nivania together.

"*Sin muerto no hay risa*," I whispered, a beat after them.

Najito and Nivania told me they said this prayer before every meal, implicitly thanking their divinities (*risas*) and ancestors (*muertos*) for the food, and acknowledging that the divinities can't exist without the ancestors. But *risa* is also the Spanish word for laughter, so an alternate interpretation would be, "Without the dead there is no laughter." We sat at one end of the large dining room table, the flies on stale crumbs reminding us of past meals. Najito ate with gusto, scooping up rice and *verdeazul* with a huge spoon. The *abogado* he left for last, picking up the plate and slurping the slimy green slices into his mouth one by one. Nivania ate with delicacy, cutting up the fish with the side of her fork, spearing the moist steaming white pieces, and then moving them around her plate to soak up the fragrant sauce. Each bit of fish was followed by a bite of rice, and then a small section of *abogado*, until all that was left on the plate was the pungent green juice. I ate slowly, chewing my food long after the two of them had finished, savoring the delectable mixture of *abogado*, rice, and garlic sauce, yet distrustful of the *verdeazul* (hadn't it just danced in the kitchen?). Nivania seemed impatient, so I finished the last two bites quickly, risking the possibility that some *verdeazul* would remain stuck in my braces.

Najito cleared the table, taking the opportunity to wink his green eye at me and flash me a gold-toothed smile. The brown eye was already looking toward the kitchen. I flushed and immediately looked at Nivania, who was fishing around in her purse for a pack of Papal-Vuhs. Papal-Vuhs were the result of a half-hearted commercial attempt on the part of the Cariñoso government to appeal to the large sector of Catholic Cariñoso smokers. (In the initial planning phases, some of the Central Directorate members had wanted to call the cigarettes María, Leguagua, or some other name more closely associated with the sacred unconscious of the Cariñoso people, but weeks after returning from a relaxing vacation in the highlands of Guatemala, and months before the Pope's visit to Cariño, Bandito had nixed the plan, decreeing instead that the brand-name be Papal-Vuh, somewhere between a papal encyclical and the sacred Mayan text.) Due to inconsistent manufacturing practices, certain Papal-Vuh cigarettes occasionally smelled like manure when lit, but most evoked more comforting olfactory associations, such as sweet burning banana leaves or spicy smoldering swampgrass.

"Get me the lighter, 'Jito."

Nobody seemed to call anyone by their "birth" names in Cariño—except for Najito (who was,

in fact, named Najito, but, according to him, even his brothers and sister argued that their mother was in a delirium when she named him, for who would name her first child after an orange-flavored soft drink?). Nivania and young children often called Najito “Jito,” which was an affectionate shortening of his name that was also a typically contracted endearment of “mi hijito” (mi’jito; my son), but most everyone else called him Najito.

Najito blew a kiss to Nivania and brought in a huge brass-plated lighter in the shape of the Liberty Bell that an African Methodist Episcopal minister from Philadelphia had given him as a gift in 1976 when Najito was a theology student at Universidad de La Joya. (The minister had been a guest lecturer for a semester, and had tried, unsuccessfully, to promote the cause of the A.M.E. Church in Cariño.) The lighter played the tune of “Happy Birthday to You” when you lifted the bell, but if you were a practiced smoker, as Nivania was, and didn’t need much time to light up, as Nivania didn’t, you only had to listen to “Happy Bir—” or some such fragment. Nivania sucked deeply on the filterless butt as she offered me the pack.

“What kind of cigarettes do you smoke in the States? Marlboro? Kent? Can you get Vuhs?”

Prolonged exposure to cigarette smoke tended to make me sick, and I hadn’t smoked a cigarette since I had graduated from high school, although I remembered the illicit thrill from smoking in the girl’s room.

“There are so many brands to choose from, I don’t know. I mean, I don’t really smoke.”

Najito came back out to the dining room.

“You don’t smoke? Why not?”

Nivania had stopped in mid-drag. Both of them stared at me, concerned and incomprehending.

“It makes me sick. I’m allergic to it.”

Nivania looked annoyed.

“How can you be allergic to cigarettes? Cigarettes are good for you; they clean you out. Try a Vuh. You’ll like it.” I blushed and smiled, shaking my head, hoping Nivania allow me to forgo this gesture of hospitality.

Vuhs certainly had a positive effect on Najito and Nivania, making them ebullient and loquacious. In fact, Najito and I had our first interview at one end of the dining room table, with Nivania chain-smoking Vuhs at the other. From the bedroom near the front of the house, Najito had brought in his divining stones and his seven *bombóm* drums, the sacred instruments used to call the divinities, or *risas*, from heaven to earth. Najito and his wife were both practitioners of Santamaría, though they worshipped the *risas* in different ways. Najito, a Baba, or priest of divination, mostly presided over divination and life-passage ceremonies. Nivania was one of a few prestigious dreamworkers, who were able to work themselves into the dreams of the faithful and help them communicate with the *risas*.

The name of the religion, Santamaría, gives a nod both to Catholic mariolatry and the emphasis on the female divinities of many of the West African traditions that helped form it. The word for the divinities of Santamaría, *risas*, is also the Spanish word for laughter, as noted above, and is an important trope for understanding the religion. According to Nivania, the *risas* are capable of bringing or taking away laughter, and the challenge of the religion is to “bring” more laughter in a day than is taken away from you. So, if someone steals your chicken, and it makes you sad (takes away your laughter), you need to draw on the *risas* to bring laughter again, either by finding the humor in the situation (not always possible, as the

risas are also capable of hiding humor quite effectively), or by turning your attention to a situation that is indeed inherently funny, such as finding out that your neighbor's rooster, the one who crows every twenty minutes, day and night, has also been stolen. The logic is, once you have laughed again, balance is restored. Embedded within the philosophy of Santamaría is the notion that nothing is so tragic that it can't (eventually) be laughed at.

For example, I am reminded of the time I became very sick while I was staying in the loft area at Najito's and Nivania's house in August 1990. My U.S. colleagues are now convinced it was malaria, considering my symptoms, but since I never saw a doctor while I was sick, I can't be sure. For four days and three nights, I had diarrhea. And when I wasn't in the bathroom for diarrhea, I was doubled over, face directed into a pail, vomiting. I spent much of the middle two days alternating between a spiky fever and chills, calling for blankets, shirts, jackets, anything to take away the chill in the 90-degree heat, and then ripping it all off as I soaked the bedclothes with my sweat. I don't remember many details from that period, but Nivania tells me this is what happened. Nivania and her good friend Malvina cared for me during the worst of my sickness, emptying the pail and making trips to a special "paper house" (*casa de papel*)⁹ to get me more toilet paper. At the time, both Nivania and Malvina appeared to be quite concerned about my health, and even took to smoking their Vuhs in one corner of my room, rather than over my bed, as was their custom. The growing pile of Vuh butts in the northeast corner of my room served as a testament not only to their own anxiety, but also to their genuine concern for my well-being. I was moved by this, but also realized that if they were worried, perhaps I should be worried, too. This realization brought on more vomiting and diarrhea, and I finally passed out from exhaustion and dehydration.

When I awoke, Nivania and Malvina were leaning over me, Nivania with her hand on my forehead and Malvina grinding out a butt with her bare heel near the head of my bed. Things must be looking up.

"How are you, Gloria?" asked Nivania, solicitously.

"I feel a little better—the fever's gone, but I had some wild dreams last night," I said unevenly.

"Oh good!" exclaimed Malvina.

"Yes, that's great," said Nivania.

They slapped their right hands together in a "give-me-five" gesture, and nodded vigorously. This was a strange response. Why would the admission of wild dreams be the cause for such enthusiasm? The nodding gave way to deliberate dance steps, which transformed into controlled prancing around the room. Their eyes were focused on each other, and they moved their torsos back and forth as they stepped in a counter-clockwise motion. Suddenly both of them threw their heads back, hooted loudly, and began doing imitations of me during my fever, Malvina shivering and hugging herself as if for warmth, and Nivania providing the monologue.

"Oh, I'm so cold! I've never been so cold! Give me my white socks! Get me another sweater! I think I'm going to die from cold!"

After a few minutes Malvina switched from shivering to panting, miming the removal of her dress and other articles of clothing with great drama. Nivania picked up the cue.

⁹ The *casa de papel* is where one can procure toilet paper, facial tissues, paper towels, and all other manner of paper goods associated with domestic use: There used to be a *casa de papel* only ten blocks from the Cuatro Caminos hotel in La Joya, but during 1990 alone it had to move three times due to consistently successful midnight raids by marauding bands of black marketeers. The one in *Spiritus* closed at the end of 1990. The only people who know the location of the last remaining *casa de papel* are members of the Central Directorate. The rest of the population has to make do with newspaper, writing paper, or carefully wrapped packages of tissue from foreign relatives.

“But now I’m so hot! Ged rid of these sweaters! Take off my socks! I can’t stand it, I’m so hot! Oh my God, help me-e-e-e-e-e!”

Nivania’s falsetto imitation of me gave way to peals of hysterical laughter, in which Malvina joined, holding her sides as cascades of giggles escaped from her mouth. After several minutes of laughter, Nivania and Malvina collapsed in a heap at the foot of my bed, tears streaming down their faces, and Nivania gasping and coughing from this apparently enjoyable exertion. After they had both calmed down enough to breathe normally, Nivania looked at me intently.

“How are you now?” she asked.

“Confused.” I said.

“Hm.” Her eyes looked into my eyes from a distance of two inches.

“We didn’t go for long enough,” she said.

And with that she and Malvina repeated the performance, but this time they actually took off and put on clothing, working up a sweat for the spiky fevers and shivering audibly for the chills. As a climax, both wretched convincingly. I was stupefied and embarrassed, and then felt silly, and then finally began to enjoy the performance.

After about fifteen minutes, they collapsed again on my bed, and then each rolled over to light a Vuh.

“How do you feel *now*?” asked Nivania.

“A little better, actually.” I smiled sheepishly. “What were you doing?”

“It was a *risa* performance for you, to restore the balance.”

According to Nivania and Malvina, they had become temporarily possessed by the *risas* to show me the humor of my situation, and to get me to “snap out of it.” (As was noted before, *risa* humor can take many guises, and this particular guise was mimicry.) I laughed weakly, not yet ready to ridicule myself, but willing to recognize the humor in my previous situation.

“Thank you,” I said quietly. Nivania checked my eyes again, then my pulse, and finally my temperature. Then she tried to tickle me. I squirmed, and she pronounced me “almost balanced.”

“You’ll be fine tomorrow.”

Malvina said she was late for her job at the Solé Perfume Factory, kissed my cheek, and traipsed out the door, Vuh in hand. Nivania sat with me for another few minutes, wished me well, and then left to make lunch for Najito, who had spent the previous night presiding over a *bombomazón* and who would likely be waking up after noon, exhausted from the night’s activities.

A *bombomazón* is a Santamaría drumming ceremony designed to bring down the *risas* for a specific, yet major, purpose, such as a large-scale healing or a political upheaval. Najito knew the best *bombóm* drummers in the city, and was always able to contract them for important *bombomazones*. His drummers always seemed to invoke just the right amount of levity and gravity in their ceremonies, lifting the real to the magical, and making the magical seem not only normal, but essential.

Although Najito himself was not a trained drummer, he knew a fair amount about the rhythms from having presided over so many *bombomazones*. A couple of weeks after our first meeting, Najito had given me a beginner’s lesson in *bombomazón* drumming. He told me that the correct way to learn these drum rhythms was to start with Leguagua first, because he

Laguagua, Sunni, and the Rest of the Risas

was the opener and closer of all roads, and because playing the *bombóm* for Leguagua was the first step in learning to call the rest of the *risas*. However, the *bombóm* rhythms for Leguagua are the most challenging of all the rhythms, and this fact symbolically represents his purpose: as a drummer, if you can't get through Leguagua's rhythms, you can't get to the rest of the rhythms. Leguagua had closed my road for several hours that day, and I was becoming frustrated. Najito picked up on my frustration.

"Listen, Gloria, no offense, but you play like a girl. You're never going to get through Leguagua's rhythms playing like that. You're hitting it like you've never played a drum before. Hit it harder. Make a sound. Slap it!"

I hit Leguagua's *bombóm* drum with great force, and then even harder, but only succeeded in severely bruising the finger bones on the inside of my right hand. I yelped and Nivania stopped smoking and looked up.

"That's it for today, Najito. Give the girl a break. Let her go home."

I appreciated Nivania's intervention and took her cue. My hand had already begun to turn a florid shade of purplish red, its hue enhanced by the blood pulsing furiously through the swollen hump of my upper palm.

"Does this ever happen to you?" I asked sullenly.

Najito regarded me evenly, as if discerning how badly I was hurt would determine the nature of his response.

"No. I have callouses. All over my hands. From playing all the time."

"And that's no picnic, let me tell you," chimed in Nivania.

They looked at each other and giggled.

* * * * *

After Malvina and Nivania left, I felt slightly better, though their accurate imitations of me had hurt my feelings. Was I really so whiny? Had I become so melodramatic during my sickness? Although I appreciated the *risa* process of restoring the balance, being the focus of a *risa* possession performance was humiliating, at least initially. I thought about my own hallucinations the night before (vivid manifestations of four of the major *risas*, Leguagua, Sunni, Yomama, and Buyaya), and wondered about the concurrence of Najito's *bombomazón*. Leguagua (Najito's main *risa*) is the opener and closer of all roads, he who allows (or does not allow) things to happen. That he is the patron saint of buses (*guaguas* are named after him) must come as no surprise, for the *guaguas* take Cariñosos through the city, and sometimes through the countryside. When the *guaguas* don't work, or when they don't arrive on time to their destinations, Cariño practitioners of Santamaría typically try to "open the road" with propitiatory sacrifices for Leguagua, such as *verdeazul*, bananas, *boniato* (a sweet grayish pudding made from unrefined sugar), and, to a lesser extent, *abogado*. It should be noted here that Leguagua, in addition to guarding the crossroads and watching over buses, is also considered the god of sex, which may elucidate Najito's mystifying comment in the kitchen.¹⁰

Sunni¹¹ is one of the main female deities of Santamaría, and is known as the *risa* of dating and

¹⁰ Certain scholars have tried to suggest that the banana is in fact a phallic "extension" of Leguagua, and that anyone who eats a banana slowly can be said to be enacting a propitiatory sacrifice to Leguagua. Other scholars, focusing on the main component of the deity's name (*guagua*) have noted with interest the Freudian image of the bus (*guagua*) going through La Joya's tunnels.

¹¹ Mangleur 1994 has erroneously spelled Sunni "Sunny," in a not-so-veiled reference to her association with the sun (see Mangleur, "Sunny Daze: Our Lady of Bright Shiny Things"). My six months of field research have led me to believe

shiny jewelry. Her two sisters are Yomama (also “Yo-mama”), *risa* of protective parenting and nutrition; and Buyaya (alt. “Booyaya”), renowned warrior *risa* and school bully.

Together, these three *risas* correspond roughly to three of the Cariño Catholic Marys: Our Lady of Bright Shiny Things, Our Lady of Her Children Only, and Our Lady of the Schoolyard. Sunni is the youngest of these three sisters, and the most likely to evoke a quick laugh (or grin) from her adherents during a possession performance. During later trips to Spíritus, several people had noted my reflective metal braces and my general affinity for bright shiny jewelry, and had speculated that Sunni might be my primary *risa*.

My hallucination during the fever was actually a welcome diversion from my typical dreams, which usually boiled down to me being unprepared: boarding a plane for Miami yet (bizarrely) checking my luggage through to Manila, and having the counter attendant nod knowingly at the discrepancy without rerouting my luggage; arriving at a deserted concert hall in La Joya for a solo performance, but without my instrument (alternately a baritone saxophone or an upright bass, neither of which I can play); inviting my sister and her family for dinner but losing the groceries out the car window as I rounded a hairpin turn on the way home; etc. This hallucination was more pleasant, largely because my own misadventures were not the primary focus.

It started out in a one-room discotheque just south of Spíritus, with a huge disco ball suspended from the center of the ceiling, ejecting bits of reflected light like sparks at the patrons as it revolved slowly on its axis. The room was smoky, and packed mostly with pre-teens, but there were a few older folks, as well. Two of the older people were dressed to the nines, but they stayed pressed against the back wall, not dancing, and both kept on their hats and dark glasses, even in the close, dark room. The DJ was playing a mix of El Médico de la Salsa, Síntesis, and Selva Salvaje, and the younger people were dancing vigorously yet politely, without too many collisions.

I was escorted into the discotheque by Nivania and Malvina, who disappeared as soon as we walked through the door. As I peered through the smoke, I could see only the disco ball and the older couple, who had moved away from the wall and were elegantly shuffling toward the DJ. (I say shuffling because their feet never left the ground, yet their steps were fluid, and did not seem like the hesitant steps of frail, elderly people.) The younger dancers were making way for this older couple, and actually seemed to be shrinking, while the older couple appeared to grow larger with each step. The woman looked like Celia Cruz—the platinum blond “page-boy” wig, false eyelashes, white sequined dress, gold cuff necklace and matching bracelets, and gold lamé high heels; and the man looked like an updated version of Barry White, in a black silk tuxedo, with blue satin trim, and a glittery green bow-tie. As they approached the DJ, the music of Síntesis gradually faded into Donna Summer’s “Last Dance.” The platinum-haired woman began mouthing the words with a wide smile, fluttering her eyelashes in the direction of her companion: “Last dance, last chance for love, yes it’s my last chance for romance tonight, I need you by me, beside me, to guide me, to hold me, to scold me, ‘cause when I’m bad, I’m so so bad [she wiggled her hips to the rhythm of this line]—so, let’s dance, last dance, let’s dance, last dance, let’s dance, last dance tonight . . .” As the violins sawed and swelled, she took advantage of the long instrumental interlude and swirled around on the dance floor, unrestricted by her long, elasticized dress. The man watched her dance, grinning appreciatively each time she turned her back to him – the back of her dress featured a strategically placed cut-out in the shape of a sun, resting just above her shapely hips.

The younger people had all but vanished by this point, leaving the older couple in the center

that the correct spelling of this *risa*’s name is “Sunni,” and that the use of “Sunny,” while a convenient mnemonic device for some, is ultimately misleading.

of the dance floor, the man supporting the woman's spins and twirls with his arms and small sidesteps and shuffles. Donna Summer's fluid vocals were suddenly cut off by Diana Ross belting out "Ain't no mountain high enough, nothing can keep me, keep me from you . . . !" An explosion of blue smoke at the edge of the dance floor produced a skin-tight dress made of blue feathers surrounding a well-endowed woman in her fifties. The front of the dress was open to the navel, with two neon turquoise branches of the letter "Y" reaching up to cover her two breasts, while the root of the "Y" stretched down below her waist. In her face and carriage, this woman looked like Queen Latifah, and she strode into the center of the room with confident, rhythmic movements. The Celia Cruz lookalike twirled away from the glittery disco ball and let her colleague take center stage. Blue feathers floated through the air as the Queen lunged from the center toward the edges of the dance floor, physically demonstrating that nothing could stop her from caring for the ones she loved.

After Diana Ross had sung her song, Carl Douglas' lyrics about kung-fu fighting gradually overwhelmed the sound system, as a fourth dancer dropped onto the dance floor from on top of the disco ball, where she had apparently been watching all night. The Queen jumped back in alarm, and then waited with Celia, a few steps away from the center. The music grew louder: "Everybody was Kung Fu fighting, those cats were fast as lightning, in fact it was a little bit fright'ning, but they did it with expert timing . . ." This trim, muscular woman was slightly younger than the other two, and dressed in a sparkling magenta catsuit. Her hair was cropped in a short Halle-Berry-style cut, and true to the lyrics of the song, she kicked out her legs and extended her arms in expert kung-fu style. At the back of her catsuit was a detachable leather tail, painted with yellow stripes, which also functioned as a whip. As the kung-fu catlady spun around, she punctuated the rhythms of the song with sharp-sounding lashes. Her fists were encased in jeweled brass knuckles, designed in such a way that if she punched you, your bruise would look like the letter "B."

Throughout these performances, the man who had originally come in with the Celia lookalike seemed to be watching quietly, but at a closer glance, his hands and arms twitched slightly with each move the dancers made. Just as the kung-fu catlady executed a backflip and double kick aimed directly above the man's head, a spotlight shone on him, revealing that his hands and arms were moving precisely in time with the dancers – indeed, he was *moving* the dancers. With this realization, the man's movements became more pronounced, until he was clearly controlling each of the three dancers on the dance floor, making them spin, twirl, and jump with ever-increasing speed and intensity. Their faces no longer looked confident and happy, but rather helpless and angry. The man was literally whipping up these women into a frenzy, and my role in this hallucination began to change from fascinated observer to concerned activist.

I stepped forward from out of the shadows, where I had been hiding, and attempted to move into the center of the performance, hoping to disrupt this now macabre dance. To my surprise, Nivania and Malvina also reappeared, stepping forward from opposite corners, moving toward the dancers with the same controlled prancing they had used during my fever. This time, however, Nivania's long arm reached out and grabbed me, pulling me into their circle. The three of us moved in a counter-clockwise motion toward the center of the dancers, and as we moved closer to the center, our own dance circle traveled faster and faster, until we were moving just as quickly as the other three women dancers under the disco ball.

In what seemed like a controlled tornado, the six dancers became three, and the three of us – Nivania, Malvina, and myself – were somehow transported back to Najito's and Nivania's house, back to the loft bedroom where I was sick. I opened my eyes, and saw Nivania reading a book in a rocking chair next to the bed, using a blue parrot feather as a bookmark. Malvina was asleep in the chair near the window, a yellow ribbon holding up her crimson-colored

pants. And I was lying in bed, staring at a small gold cuff bracelet digging into my left wrist. As the rest of my senses awakened, I smelled the heady orange fragrance of *verdeazul* cooking in Najito's frying pan, and heard Najito singing an old Barry White tune: "You'll never find, for as long as you live, someone who loves you, the way I do. . . Oh, I'm not trying to make you stay, baby, but there's no ifs or buts, or maybes: You're gonna miss my lovin' [you're gonna miss my lovin'] You're gonna miss my lovin' [oh when it's cold outside] You're gonna miss my lovin' [you're gonna miss, you're gonna miss my love]..." I felt lightheaded, and suppressed the urge to giggle, relieved to find that the *risas* were supernatural but also human, out of this world, but also of it.

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After a trio improvisation session, Elaine Barkin, David Martinelli, and I talked about Giacinto Scelsi's improvisations and the way he used them to generate the works of his mature period. Elaine encouraged me to explore the striking sonic and symbolic similarities between two of my favorite pieces, a Taiwanese aboriginal (Bunun) millet germinating song and Scelsi's Fourth Quartet. In this tribute to Elaine, I discuss some of the metaphysical ideas that shaped Scelsi's creations in sound.

SOURCES, INTENTION, AND PRECEDENTS OF GIACINTO SCELSI'S MUSIC

Robert Reigle

You have no idea what is inside one single sound! ... One single tone has movements travelling toward the inside and outside. When this sound has become very big, it becomes part of the universe. As minute as the sound may appear, it contains all. –Giacinto Scelsi (2001: 13)

Through new processes of movement and harmony in works such as *Tre canti sacri*, *Quattro pezzi (ciascuno su una nota sola)*, and the Fourth Quartet, Giacinto Scelsi (1905-1988) established a new route through the interior of sound. Scelsi's music is a realization in sound of his dance with ontology. His concept of sound as "the very first movement of the unmovable" stems from both personal experience and studies of metaphysics (Scelsi 2001: 15). A consensus on this point runs through the writings to which Scelsi paid special attention, as indicated by the books in his library showing signs of heavy use or underlining, and texts referred to in his own essays. These include works by Abhinavagupta (preeminent Kashmir Shaivist author), Shri Aurobindo (Hindu saint), Helena P. Blavatsky (founder of Theosophy), Pierre Jean Jouve (poet), Jacques Masui (writer on yoga), Dane Rudhyar (astrologer, composer), Cyril Scott (composer), and Rudolf Steiner (founder of Anthroposophy) (Gregory Reish 2001: 101-05, 318-33).

In this article I discuss the primary aim of Scelsi's music, methods he developed to achieve that aim, musical precedents of these methods, and some of the important philosophical sources of his aesthetics. In order to contextualize these musical techniques I mention precedents that Scelsi would not have had access to, along with those that he knew. Although I focus on Scelsi's post-1951 works, the discussion also touches on his earlier writings and influences.

Compositional Aim

Gregory Reish's (2001) analysis of the transition between Scelsi's two style periods suggests that Scelsi shifted his main focus from a concern with mainstream European musical discourse to music as a vehicle for spiritual transformation—specifically, for conveying knowledge that leads to liberation. Although he worked outside of the musical mainstream, Scelsi had carefully studied European music, felt that it had declined, and set forth his ideas towards revitalizing it both through his compositions and in a series of essays (Scelsi 1944, 1981, 1982, 1992a, 1992b, translated in Reish 2001). The desire to dedicate his work to the betterment of humanity reflects Asian and Theosophical views (Alessandra Montali 1999), and Scelsi may also have encountered similar ideas in the work of German-speaking "energetics" musicologists (discussed below; Lee Rothfarb 2001: 928, number 5) during his studies in Vienna and Switzerland.

In 1953/54 Scelsi predicted that "it will be possible to perceive [the complexity of harmonics] before the end of the century, specifically by the acquisition of a more subtle perceptive faculty or by a state of consciousness that permits a greater approximation of reality." (Scelsi 1981, in Reish 2001: 285-286) Indeed, public awareness of harmonics increased dramatically in the last half of the 20th century.¹ Two developments spurred this increase: computer analysis of sound, and the international dissemination of recordings featuring clear demonstrations of harmonic spectra. The latter began in the 1960s with the UNESCO albums of Tibetan Buddhist chant, expanding in the 1970s with recordings from Mongolia, in the 1980s with Tuva and David Hykes, and most recently western New Guinea (Irian Jaya, Indonesia). Scelsi's own music began to contribute towards this deepening awareness of timbre in the late 1950s, foreshadowing the spectral school and intuitively engaging some of the primary concerns of timbre research in general (c.f. Anderson 1991; Joshua Fineberg, ed. 2000; Curtis Roads 2001; James McHard 2001). His influence expanded dramatically following the 1980s premieres of his orchestral works, and continues to do so as performances, recordings, and scholarship proliferate.

In *Art and Knowledge* (recorded in 1953/54), Scelsi states that the arts offer a path to knowledge (translated in Reish 2001: 297). The great Indian philosopher Patanjali wrote of knowledge as the final goal of spiritual achievement (Patanjali and Bailey 1955: 375, Sutra 31) in his Yoga Sutras, a key text on yoga that Scelsi recommended in *Sound and Music* (Reish 2001: 288). In the edition of the Yoga Sutras Scelsi owned, Alice Bailey comments that Patanjali's yoga produces "universal consciousness and not simply self-consciousness" (Patanjali and Bailey: 377).

Scelsi intended his post-1951 music to offer the listener a way to experience transcendence and eventually liberation. For example, in his note to the Arditti Quartet's first recording of the (then) complete quartets, Scelsi wrote:

It seems that with different languages every quartet tells the same story and that after returns, contrasts, and dramas the finale is always a liberation, a catharsis. (Scelsi 1983a [1982])

According to Hindu tantra, *moksha* (liberation) is the last of the Four Aims of Being.² In his integration of different systems of yoga, Shri Aurobindo called this fourth level of existence the Supermind, a bridge between the three lower and three higher levels (Robert McDermott 1973: 38).³ Scelsi intended his music to move one towards liberation through the creation in sound vibrations of unity in diversity, or changeless-change. Indeed, listeners often attribute spiritual significance to Scelsi's sound of changeless-change (for example, Denis Vaughan N.d.), and of characteristics associated with ritual (Kay-Uwe Kirchert 1998).

In a holographic or self-referential way, Scelsi used sound as a medium to move the unmovable, the medium itself already a moving stasis. Perhaps in this way Scelsi created in sound the non-dualism of the Kashmir Shaivism that he studied in Abhinavagupta's *Essenza di Tantra*. Scelsi's own program for the Third Quartet, for example, concerns liberation from dualism. In the second movement "The spirit calls: dualism, ambivalence, conflict." Then "The soul awakens... ..and falls once more into pathos, but now with a sense of imminent release," leading to "Liberation, Catharsis" in the fifth movement. (Scelsi 1983 [1963]: 13, 21, 31, 41)

Sources of Scelsi's Aesthetics

In this section I briefly discuss Scelsi's use of improvisation as a compositional technique, and present a general overview of the metaphysics materials that shaped Scelsi's aesthetics. The following section will delineate specific musical methods used to create "resemblance," encompassing seven of

¹ Nonetheless, *Grove Music Online* provides only a single paragraph under "Timbre," but some 70 pages for "Rhythm," and 30 pages for "Pitch."

² The other Aims are *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma* ("piety, wealth, and desire and its fulfillment") (Sir John Woodroffe 1969: 92).

³ *Ānanda* (Bliss), the level above Supermind, is the name of a private record label on which two LPs of Scelsi's music were released, along with a disc by Alvin Curran.

Scelsi's compositional concerns: one-note, motion, changeless-change, dissonance, ascent, timbre, and microtones. The latter section also includes sources and precedents; thus these two sections overlap.

Improvisation. Scelsi began improvising at the piano at the age of three (Franck Mallet 1992: [4-5]). Many of Scelsi's compositions are transcriptions of his own recorded improvisations, typically performed on an ondiolina, a keyboard that allows the bending of pitches.⁴ Inspiration, Scelsi states in *Sound and Music*, mostly comes from elevated planes and contact with the Devas (see Reish 2001: 293), spiritual beings according to Hinduism and Theosophy. Scelsi "viewed himself as a kind of medium able to communicate messages from a transcendental reality" (Adriano Cremonese 1990: 22), and in one of his trances, he spoke about time, feelings of weightlessness, and a past life (c.f. the excerpt from Scelsi 1982b, translated in Colangelo 1996).

Scelsi told many people, including myself, that he did not compose a single note of music, but rather the music came *through* him. He said that he did not like to talk about his music because each piece was "like giving birth," and it was painful to talk about because in doing so he would experience that birth again. Thirty years earlier he drew a parallel between the technique needed to achieve painless childbirth, and trance as a method to create "verbal, sonorous, or plastic" art (Scelsi, in Reish 2001: 299-300). He attached great weight to this metaphor: "The sick person lives if he rids himself of death; the artist dies if he does not give birth to life" (Scelsi, in Reish 2001: 300). The idea of "giving birth" in music appears in the work of two authors Scelsi was familiar with: Dane Rudhyar, and Abhinavagupta (Rudhyar 1930; Abhinavagupta 1968: xxi, xxxiii). Rudhyar states:

Every improvisation performed on a piano by a creative musician is a 'gesture' by means of which an emotion is expressed. ... The gesture, the improvisation is in all points analogical to a birth. It causes in turn life-experiences for the hearers which they may synthesize [sic] with their own selves. (Rudhyar 1930 "Art of Gestures and Art of Patterns": 22)

Thinking of improvisation as giving birth reflects Scelsi's high regard for spontaneous creation, a method that some composers dismiss as incapable of producing musical works equal to those created more slowly.

Philosophical Wellsprings. While the musical techniques that Scelsi had learned or developed made his late style possible, his spiritual studies and experiences determined the specific forms this music took, enabling him to make a coherent and substantive break with the European music traditions that had contributed to his nervous breakdown (circa 1949-1951). What, then, are the sources of Scelsi's post-1951 music? Along with statements and poetry by Scelsi himself, the books in his library provide an intriguing guide to the multifarious references surfacing both in titles of works, and in sonic features of the music.

Scelsi's library contained few books on European philosophy, yet a number of Western philosophers specifically affected his aesthetics, as demonstrated by Gregory Reish (2001). A majority of the books on metaphysics concern East Asian religion, spurring some of Scelsi's most important ideas.⁵ Remarkably similar ideas also appear in the work of several German and Swiss writers. Scelsi briefly studied composition in Vienna and in Switzerland, where he may have encountered the anti-rational and spiritual ideas of musicologists Hermann Kretzschmar, Arnold Schering, Ernst Kurth, or Alfred Lorenz (the "energetics" school has striking parallels with Scelsi's basic ideas of motion and energy; see Rothfarb 1992, 2001; Kurth 1991). Their ideas, in turn, have roots in Georg Hegel's writings on music and spirituality. Hegel was among the first European philosophers to acknowledge East Asian thought as relevant to European philosophy. In a discussion of music he wrote:

The single point, qua such a negativity (excluding space) is in itself a concrete and active process of positive negation within the attributes of matter, in the shape of a motion and tremor of the material body within itself and in its relation to itself. Such an inchoate ideality of matter, which appears no longer as under the form of space, but as temporal ideality, is sound, the sensuous set

⁴ Hundreds of these taped improvisations exist. See Frances-Marie Uitti 1995.

⁵ For a discussions of Eastern influence on Europe, see Sergio Crapiz 2001 and Peter Heehs 2003.

down as negated, with its abstract visibility converted into audibility, in as much as sound, so to speak liberates the ideal content from its immersion in matter. (Hegel 2004: 13)

These views may have directly or indirectly trickled down through Scelsi's teachers to shape his thoughts about sound motion, composition as the crystallization of an instant, and *nota sola* (discussed below). In addition to Hegel, Asian philosophy influenced many European thinkers and artists beginning from the late 18th century, including Ludwig van Beethoven, who copied parts of the *Bhagavad Gita* into his journal (Mirabein 1999: 33-39; Mark Lindley 1999: 114-116).

A diverse set of Scelsi's aphorisms reflect an Asian-European philosophical continuum, both challenging the listener and offering insight into the composer's inner world:

In very truth those that speak ill of me are my good friends.
 For my part I cannot keep from viewing the history of music in a totally different perspective from that of historical criticism.
 There can be no music without sound, but sound exists, in itself, without music. Music comes to be in time; sound lies beyond time.
 There are instruments not suited to the music, and music not suited to the instruments.
 With stones make gold.
 What does the monkey see when he peers through his house's five windows?

By trying too hard to stand on tiptoes one loses one's balance. (Lao-Tse).
 If he is sitting let him now arise.
 Man shall one day know the secret of the single sound.
 He who comes after me—will he be wise, or out of his senses?
 Is the art of composition a thing of the past? Or is it yet to come?
 There are in the field of sound harmonies which for the senses are mute (Plotinus).
 Who has ever sought for camels on a roof-top?

Giacinto Scelsi (1983a).

These statements and questions reveal Scelsi's concerns with transcendence, transformation, and music composition, as well as the breadth of his investigations.⁶

Beginning in 1952, after recovering from a mental breakdown, Scelsi titled many of his works with words drawn from his spiritual studies. Those studies can be traced by considering the library he left in his flat in Rome, which Gregory Reish has grouped as "Music and Music History," 57 items; "Religion, Philosophy, and Spiritualism," 131; "Art and Art History," 27; "Fiction and Poetry," 80; and "Miscellany," 66 (Reish 2001: 314-37). By far the largest group, the books concerning metaphysical studies may be further divided according to religions and arranged according to the earliest publication date within a group. The table below categorizes Scelsi's metaphysics library and shows the number of works that have titles or programs deriving from five major religions. Many more of his late works deal with spiritual transformation but cannot be identified with a particular tradition.

Scelsi's Metaphysics Library and Correlated Musical Subjects

RELIGION	BOOKS	PUBLISHED	WORKS	COMPOSED
?	10	1920 – 1982		
Theosophy	6	1923 – 1951		
Anthroposophy	8	1927 – 1981		
Hinduism ⁷	42	1928 – 1986	15	1953-1987

⁶ Karl Jaspers (1966) wrote a philosophy survey that included Lao-Tzu and Plotinus, the two sources Scelsi cites in his album notes, among the 16 great metaphysical thinkers of the world.

Sources, Intention, and Precedents of Giacinto Scelsi's Music

Mysticism	15	1929 – 1986		
Comparative	4	1938 – 1976		
Philosophy	14	1939 – 1981		
Buddhism	14	1954 – 1986	4	1952-1966
Christianity	8	1954 – 1980	8	1958-1974
Confucianism	3	1954 – 1975		
(Asian Indian) ⁸	4	1960 – 1969		
Islam	2	1974 – ?	1	1960
Judaism	1	1974	3	1962-1967

In addition to the 31 works with religious titles, Scelsi created 70 works with secular or abstract titles, from 1952 to 1987.

Methods for Creating Resemblance

This section describes and traces precedents for seven methods or areas of concern that Scelsi worked with to create his music: one-note, motion, changeless-change, dissonance, ascent, timbre, and microtones.

Scelsi felt that music creates forms that, if correct, have the power to effect spiritual transformation. . . Correct forms, according to "the law of resemblance," actually imitate actions or structures required for transcendence:

Vibrations create a form that is shaped according to the law of resemblance, corresponding with and also transforming its resonant structure.

This is the basis of the doctrine that places sound at the source of all revelation that is revealed internally. (Scelsi 1981, translated in Reish 2001: 288)

Scelsi may have acquired this idea from Cyril Scott, whose book *Music: Its Secret Influence Throughout the Ages* is one of the few books in Scelsi's library that contained extensive highlighting (Reish 2001: 318). Scott wrote:

Thus the particular emotion which a given piece of music depicts is reproduced in ourselves; it operates through the law of correspondences. Furthermore, our researches have proved to us that not only the emotional content but the essence of the actual musical *form* tends to reproduce itself in human conduct ... (Scott 1958: 40; see also 134)⁹

The law of correspondences offers an explanation for Scelsi's choices of musical methods. All of the methods relate to metaphysical views of sound, but merely thinking about them is not enough to effect spiritual transformation. The law of correspondences allows their symbolism to become realized through the experience of vibrating the body.¹⁰

Although I discuss Scelsi's methods separately, many relate to each other in complex ways. Indeed, the central ontological concern is the moment of complete unity. Scelsi's music incorporates ascent and changeless change, which through resemblance, provides a potential experience of rising to

⁷ Within the vast literature of Hinduism, Scelsi focussed on Shri Aurobindo, Kashmir Shaivism, mainstream Hindu tantra, and general works.

⁸ This category covers books that discuss more than one Indian religion, typically Hinduism and Buddhism.

⁹ As further evidence of Scott's influence on Scelsi, both Scelsi and Scott also refer, in their respective publications, to M. Coue's "simple theory of the repetition of one sentence for the improvement of health" (Scelsi in Reish 2001: 293; see Scott 1958: 40).

¹⁰ Scelsi recommended Laya and Kriya yoga techniques to acquire "knowledge of the effect of sounds on our physical organs and our nerve centers," admonishing his interlocutor that "a few simple daily exercises are more beneficial than a dozen books" (Scelsi in Reish 2001: 288).

"the most elevated [plane], where silence and sounds may be unified as it is with form and formlessness, movement and stasis" (Scelsi 1981, in Reish 2001: 296).

One-note. Around 1300, Engelbert of Admont described a *tremula vox* ornament as an oscillating, repeated sound on one note (Paul Van Nevel 1993: 11). Other than sacred chant of both oral and literary cultures, however, "one-note" musics were virtually unknown before the minimalism movement of the 1960s.¹¹ Precursors include Ivan Wyschnegradsky's 1920 *Variations sur la note DO* (Médiathèque de l'Ircam 2002), Josip Slavenski's 1926 *Sonata Religiosa* (Slavenski 1986), and the painter Yves Klein's 1950s "symphonies" (Hans Zender 1999: 17). Henry Purcell's 1680 *Fantasia upon One Note* served as the basis of a 1974 *Fantasy* by Elliott Carter, who devoted the seventh etude of *Eight Etudes and a Fantasy* (1949-1950) to a single pitch. Carter visited Scelsi possibly before, and definitely after, Scelsi composed his first *nota sola* compositions (Sciannameo 2001: 23).

Quattro pezzi (ciascuno su una nota sola) constitutes a milestone in Scelsi's efforts towards energizing the individual tone. In that work, a 26-piece orchestra vibrates the pitches F, B, Ab, and A, in a succession of four separate pieces. The pitches are blurred via glissandi, wide vibrato, harmonies, and quarter-tones. Scelsi's term *nota sola* suggests not merely the generic "single note," but rather this new, expanded sense of pitch, which Heinz-Klaus Metzger described as "even chang[ing] its height without, however, losing its identity as the very same note," and Dane Rudhyar called a "living tone" (Metzger 1983; Rudhyar 1930 "The New Sense of Space": 24-25, 27). According to several Asian mystical and scientific traditions, each sound has its own life.¹²

Motion. In terms very similar to Scelsi's, Hermann Kretzschmar (1848-1924) wrote about the dynamism of tone, and musical spirit, as well as presaging the idea of the gestalt (Rothfarb 1992). While some ideas of Ernst Kurth (1886-1946), a Swiss musicologist, appear diametrically opposed to Scelsi's, his highly developed thoughts on psychic energy (Kurth 1991) have much in common with Scelsi's aesthetics (Scelsi 1944, 1992a, 1992b).

Continuous movement was also a "prevailing ideal" among some American composers in the early twentieth century (Judith Tick 1998: 3), including Dane Rudhyar, whose *Art as Release of Power* (1930) had a considerable effect on Scelsi's mature style (Reish 2001: 101-05).¹³ Rudhyar's discussions of "living tones" would have fit in with the zeitgeist that included scientific discoveries about atoms, growing European awareness of Hindu and Buddhist philosophies (see the inventory of Scelsi's library in Reish 2001: 314-37), and Scelsi's own futurist/machine piece *Rotativa* (1929). This zeitgeist was shaped by Henri Bergson (Reish 2001: 30-33; Carol Oja 1999). Some modern scientists concur with Scelsi's emphasis on vibration: "With the discovery of superstring theory, musical metaphors take on a startling reality, for the theory suggests that the microscopic landscape is suffused with tiny strings whose vibrational patterns orchestrate the evolution of the cosmos" (Brian Greene 1999: 135).

Changeless change. The eleventh-century Indian philosopher Abhinavagupta's Kashmir Shaivist philosophy also influenced Scelsi. Scelsi studied Abhinavagupta's *Essenza di Tantra* (1960 [11th century]), as indicated by the "numerous highlights in colored pencil, especially in the first half" of Scelsi's copy (Reish 2001: 319).¹⁴ In particular, Abhinavagupta's explanation of the concept of *spanda* may have shaped Scelsi's sonic creation of changeless-change. Jaideva Singh interprets the sage's definition of *spanda* as "spiritual dynamism without any movement in itself but serving as the *causa sine qua non* of all

¹¹ See Bert Van Herck (In Press) for a summary of some of the most prominent instances of European single-note emphasis.

¹² For example, *sigimse*, the technique of creating living tones, is essential to Korean *p'ansori* (opera), shaman, court, and folk musics (HWANG Byung-ki 2002: 815; Maria Seo 2002: 168; Jin Hi Kim 2001: 2; Kim 1995, compact disc). For an introduction to the idea of the living tone in Asian musics, see CHOU Wen-Chung 1970; 1974.

¹³ The continuous movement of tone, on both the micro and macro temporal levels, remains central to a wide range of music studies. Erik Christensen, for example, supports his discussion of the roles of movement in music with powerful statements by Jean-Claude Risset, Jan LaRue, John Chowning, David Wessel, and Edward Carterette, regarding movement as the essence of music (Christensen 1996: 16, 44, 148-149). See also Peter Chang 2001: 102; Henkjan Honing 2003; Robert Adlington 2003. Regarding the physical movement of sound, see *South Asian History* 2004; Arthur Ludwig 1997.

¹⁴ The Italian translation of the *Tantra Sāra [Essence of Tantra]* has been published four times, most recently in 1990. Although that key text has never been published in English, the *Paratrisika-Vivarana*, perhaps the most important Kashmir Shaivist work on sound, appeared in English as *A Trident of Wisdom* (David Reigle 2001; Abhinavagupta 1989).

movements" (Singh 1980: xvii). Abhinavagupta also set forth detailed accounts of the vibrational effects of phonemes, which appear to have influenced Scelsi starting in 1958, when he began to use phonemes as texts for his vocal compositions.

Abhinavagupta taught that the Fourth State of Consciousness, *turya* [*Turīya*], lies in a gap between the states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep (Lakshman Jee 1991: 109), and according to his student Kshemerāja, also in the emergence, persistence, and subsidence of the perception of these states (Mark Dyczkowski 1992: 158).¹⁵ The four states likewise, in a sense, form the basis of the four stages of speech, which also describe ontology and consist of three levels plus a "level which is above them and contains them: *parāvāc*, the Supreme Word" (André Padoux 1990: 168). This liminal state, modeled by changeless-change, may also be the Fourth Dimension, mentioned by Scelsi in *Évolution du Rythme* (Montali 1999: 358), as well as Madame Blavatsky's "One Reality" that pervades the three levels of cosmic manifestation (Blavatsky 1978: 16).¹⁶

By illustrating changeless-change through the medium of sound, Scelsi recreates his understanding of the spiritual basis of sound and existence, the universe as vibration. John Cage eloquently described the paradox of movement and stasis in Scelsi's music, during a conversation with Joan Retallack:

He would make a whole piece that would be one sound. Constantly changing, but still just one sound. Not in any way making it clear that it was changing, but changing nonetheless. ... It's the experience of the same thing being a different thing all the time. Sameness and difference as being together.

(John Cage 1996: 109).

Scelsi uses his concept of sound as "the first movement of the unmovable" to engage the world of perception through the continuous movement (changing) of sound particles that resist parsing, creating an apparently steady surface (the unmovable principle).¹⁷ Both the changing and static qualities of the sound are readily accessible to the listener. Scelsi's view reflects the idea, discussed by H.P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*, of an immutable principle whose inherent nature of motion causes the manifestation of the universe.¹⁸ This apparent movement "does not involve change in the unchangeable" (David Reigle, In press).

Scelsi's music offers listeners the experience of changeless change through "tremendously subtle variations of rhythm, intensity, pitch, timbre, tempo, and amplitude, producing an array of solutions that [are] always different yet that always [retain] the specific identity of the sound" (Cremonese 1990: 23). He successfully fused melody, harmony, and rhythm into a form that sounds as though it is simultaneously moving and static.¹⁹

Dissonance. Precedents for Scelsi's style exist in both Asian and European musics. In Scelsi's country, for example, intervals smaller than thirds appear to have been heard as dissonances only towards the end of the Renaissance, as evidenced by some of Carlo Gesualdo's²⁰ music and a description of singing

¹⁵ Perception of these states may parallel the perception of static music. Cognitive studies of auditory stream analysis have explored the physiology of liminal perception, providing a tool for spectral composers of a positivistic persuasion. See, for example, Pressnitzer and McAdams 2000: 51-54.

¹⁶ Scelsi, who owned a book by P.D. Ouspensky's associate A.R. Orage, may have been referring to Ouspensky's *The Fourth Dimension*, and likely knew the work of its author's teacher G.I. Gurdjieff. Gurdjieff wrote of the "meeting points" of the three forces in a way very similar to the Kashmir Shaivist and Theosophical writing on existence. Physicist Basarab Nicolescu finds confirmation of Gurdjieff's view in quantum physics (Nicolescu 1996: 44-45).

¹⁷ But see Pressnitzer and McAdams discussion of the term "sound object" (2000: 52).

¹⁸ Scelsi's copy of a two-volume Italian edition of *The Secret Doctrine*, published in 1947 and 1951, is one of only four metaphysics works in Scelsi's library showing signs of heavy use and highlighting. The other three, all concerning Hinduism (an important component of Theosophy), are by Abhinavagupta, Shri Aurobindo, and Jacques Masui (Reish 2001: 319-320, 323).

¹⁹ In 1949 Gregory Bateson also wrote along these lines, describing Balinese music as having no climax, and noting that both the body and human relations require "continual nonprogressive change" to maintain a steady state (Bateson 1972: 113; 125). Scelsi, like Bateson, shaped his views on music with parallels between philosophical, physical, and musical ideas, first presenting them as a system in an article originally published in French (Scelsi 1944).

²⁰ Scelsi owned an edition of some of Carlo Gesualdo's compositions (Reish 2001: 317).

in seconds as “howling” (Ernst Ferand 1939). Based in the musically vibrant Rome of the 1960s, Scelsi played a key role in re-consonizing close-interval harmonies. Musicians from around the world visited him there, exchanging ideas about music (Alvin Curran 2004: 3). The name of the group of improvising composers Scelsi associated with, Nuova Consonanza, suggests a consensus on the idea that they heard formerly dissonant sounds as new consonances (see Daniela Tortora 1990). The composers paid homage to Scelsi in their recording of a seventeen-minute improvisation on a single pitch (Gruppo di Improvvisazione Nuova Consonanza n.d. [1976]: track 4).

Many of the most “dissonant” works of the first half of the twentieth century were written for piano, and Scelsi contributed a substantial body of work to this repertoire. The piano cluster lineage includes Alexander Scriabin, Charles Ives, Henry Cowell, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Dane Rudhyar, Bela Bartok,²¹ and Olivier Messiaen.²² Colin McPhee used piano clusters to imitate both the shimmering pitches and the lively rhythms of a gamelan. Scelsi, on the other hand, first called for an imitation of a gong at the beginning of the second movement of his First Quartet (1944). This imitation reaches fruition in the piano Suite No. 8 of 1952, where Scelsi “recreates the gong’s decay by filtering out the notes that were introduced as resonant components of the expanding sonority” (Reish 2001: 189). Scelsi would probably have known about Scriabin’s (Anatole Leikin 2002) and Igor Stravinsky’s imitation of bell sounds (Ozan Baysal 2004), but not Ives’ (in “Thoreau” and “The Bells,” for example).

Dane Rudhyar, a composer and writer who influenced Scelsi,²³ related action, life, and movement to dissonance in music, stating that “Consonances ... are static, dissonances dynamic” (Rudhyar 1930 “Dissonant Harmony”: 11). Furthermore, “The more developed [a hearer’s] power of relating apparently heterogeneous elements, the smaller the field of discords for any particular hearer” (op cit.: 4). Drawing a parallel across the domains of music and philosophy, Rudhyar wrote that “Dissonant music ... abolishes tonalities, exactly as the real Buddhistic Reformation abolished castes into the Brotherhood of Monks; for Buddhism is nothing but spiritual Democracy” (1930 “Dissonant Harmony”: 10-11). In the 1950s, Scelsi’s interest in Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism grew more serious, as suggested by the subtitle of the piano Suite No. 8, *Bot-ba* and the dates of Buddhist books in his library (see table above).

Ascent. Around the world, music that ascends without returning to a lower point is rare (c.f. Kurt Sachs 1965: 49-58; Mieczyslaw Kolinski 1976: 3, 8). Furthermore, when such music occurs, it often has a marked intensity stemming from its religious basis and/or the novelty of its sound.

Scelsi would have heard the ascending lines of Alexander Scriabin’s piano compositions (see Reish 2001: 208, n. 19), as well as the ascending pitch drift found in religious chant traditions such as Tiberan and Sri Lankan Buddhist, Roman, Byzantine, Russian, Hasidic, and Vedic. His extensive studies of Hindu philosophy and music suggest that he may have come across the south Indian classical music form *sopana sangeetam*, named after the staircase leading to a temple’s holy of holies, and involving ascent of pitch and speed (*laya*) (P.P. Narayanaswamy N.d.: 2).²⁴ Scelsi was probably not aware of similar ascending sounds in oral cultures such as South American (c.f. Anthony Seeger 1987: 91-100; Dale Olsen 1996) and Taiwanese first peoples; he seemed to disapprove of the Venezuelan shaman record I had purchased when I visited him in 1983.

Scelsi wrote his first string quartet in 1944; the next three followed in 1961, 1963, and 1964; and for the fifth, from 1985, he arranged his piece for distorted piano, *Aitsi*. He reveals the importance of ascent in his music in the notes he wrote for the first recording of the (then) complete quartets:

²¹ When I met Scelsi in 1983 I mentioned that the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion was my favorite Bartok piece, to which Scelsi replied that he considered it Bartok’s best work.

²² Hear also, in a surprising zeitgeist retroactively paralleling the improvisatory nature of Scelsi’s methods, Cecil Taylor’s music (compare the eleventh of Scelsi’s *12 Preludes*, 1936/40, with 1960s Taylor). Taylor made his first recordings in 1956, the same year Scelsi abandoned his focus on the piano.

²³ Gregory Reish has demonstrated that Scelsi read Rudhyar’s “A New Sense of Space,” and it is likely that Scelsi would have also read “Dissonant Harmony,” published in the same collection of essays (Reish 2001: 101-05).

²⁴ An ascending staircase was chosen for the cover illustration of the compact disc *Giacinto Scelsi: Intégrale de la Musique de Chambre pour Orchestre à Cordes* (2000).

The four quartets have one thing in common—a certain ascending line, present in each, even though the language is quite different. This ascendant line may be easily found in every finale of the quartets. It is especially evident in the first since, after the exasperated chromaticism of the beginning, the finale is quiet and dissolves completely in an unexpected, totally diatonic atmosphere. (Scelsi 1983a [1982])

Ascent is important in many of Scelsi's compositions, including *Pfhat*, where the conclusion consists of the chorus and orchestra playing high-pitched dinner bells, with the sound further heightened by piccolo, flute, celesta, piano, and organ at the top of their ranges.

The idea of ascent as a metaphor in Scelsi's music raises questions beyond the scope of this article. A full analysis should take into account, for example, interdisciplinary work on metaphor and bodily schema, the wide-ranging philosophies that Scelsi studied, recent music theory perspectives, and the musical applications of ascent throughout history (Mark Johnson 1987; Lawrence Zbikowski 1998; Erik Christensen 1996; Jean-Marc Chouvel and Makis Solomos, eds. 1998; etc.).

Timbre. The fused timbre resulting from extensive overlapping of voices has roots in some of the denser polyphonies composed by Renaissance composers, works whose voice parts were blurred through echoes from cathedral walls. The multiple-choir compositions of Johannes Ockeghem, Thomas Tallis, and others can be heard today in fine recordings, but in the years Scelsi developed his style, he would have had to rely more on live performances and scores in order to access these works. His library contained five volumes of Renaissance music published by Ricordi (who also published the solo piano version of Scelsi's *Rotative* in 1933) in the early 1930s, two of which are devoted to compositions by Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli (Reish 2001: 127, 314, 316, 317).

Predecessors of Scelsi's technique of using overlapping voices fading in and out at different rates to create a melded/evolving timbre include Arnold Schoenberg's *Farben*, No. 3 of the Five Pieces for Orchestra (1909),²⁵ and the third movement of Ruth Crawford's String Quartet (1931).²⁶ A description of this movement, from a recording of Crawford's music, might just as well have been written about Scelsi's own Fourth Quartet:

The four voices, which consist of long held notes, join together to form a seamless "sound band." This band slowly rises from the initial depths into the heights and then sinks down swiftly after a highly expressive climax. (Felix Meyer 2000: 14)

Crawford wrote similar textures, but of shorter duration, in the third of *Three Chants* (1930) and in the third of *Three Songs*, "In Tall Grass" (1931) (David Nicholls 1990: 114). György Ligeti wrote *Apparitions* in 1958-1959, and Friedrich Cerha composed a remarkable series of fused timbre works in 1960-1961, called *Spiegel*.²⁷

Microtones. The history of microtonality can be traced from the ancient civilizations of China, Greece, Persia, and India, through modern composers such as John Foulds, Julian Carrillo, Alois Hába, Ezra Sims, Lou Harrison, La Monte Young, and Harry Partch (Julian Rushton 2001: 661-62). In his First String Quartet (1924/1953), Ivan Wyschnegradsky (Vyschnegradsky) conceived of the tonic as "the whole tonal region between *c* and *c* [3/4 sharp], the density of which consists of three quarter-tones," in other words, a pitch-band consisting of four pitches separated by quarter-tones (Wyschnegradsky 1990: 57). At the beginning of the piece, Wyschnegradsky sustains four-note pitch-bands around C and G, but for just under one second. Scelsi, with his expanded tolerance for sustained close-interval chords, concentrated on an extensive range of fused vertical sonorities (302 different chords in the Fourth Quartet, for example), extremely subtle differences between those sonorities, and several types of pitch

²⁵ Charles Burkhardt describes the stream of chords in this work as a "changing-chord organism," concluding that the piece "is as inert and unassertive as possible, as though it aspires not to move at all" (1973-1974: 143, 151, 172). For a new perspective on Schoenberg's *klangfarbenmelodie* that deals with phonetic sounds and fused chords with imperceptible pitches, see Alfred Cramer 2002.

²⁶ Apparently aware of the new ground she had broken, Crawford transcribed this movement for string orchestra, as Scelsi did with his Fourth Quartet.

²⁷ For a summary of the history of fused timbre works, see Julian Anderson 2000.

movement within and between them. Unlike his predecessors, who tended to highlight the melodic possibilities of microtones (Marion Bauer 1933: 252), Scelsi used microtonal fluctuation for the purpose of fusing vertical sonorities.

Conclusion

Giacinto Scelsi's statements and music indicate that he viewed his work as providing a method for spiritual change, with a goal of liberation or transcendence. Spiritual beliefs appear in his music as sonic representations of philosophical ideas and metaphors, such as "ascent." Although Scelsi's music seems radically new to many listeners, a number of intriguing harbingers suggest that some of the underlying concepts and cross-domain techniques have attracted musicians during many different eras. Using improvisation as a means for implementing ideas from Hinduism, Theosophy, Anthroposophy, and mysticism, Scelsi transcended the strictures of the musical practice of his time, resulting in the discovery of new sounds and techniques that continue to influence many composers.

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Reflex-ions of Robert Morris' *Four or Five Mirrors*

Jon Forshee

Every time I listen to Robert Morris' computer piece *Four or Five Mirrors* I compulsively press "stop" on the CD player before the next piece begins and index back to listen again. But why do I do this? What goes on in *Four or Five Mirrors* that invites such behavior? What goes on in me, while listening to this piece, that invites such behavior?

One of the first things that catches (and caught) my ear in *Four or Five Mirrors* is the inclination toward ornaments, or rather, the ornamental *treatment* of the musical line(s). The sensibility here is almost Oriental, but not imitatively so; ornamentation is more "in the blood" of the music. In this regard musical "ornament" highlights topical features of the musical fabric without drawing excessive attention to the "ornaments," or "ornamental figurations," themselves. (On the flip-side, the "ornaments" *are* the topical features of the work.) In a way this attitude evokes New York's Central Park—throughout the lush, sprawling (and decidedly planned) paths and retreats of the Park are punctuating lamps, which, in the evening, illuminate and reveal the surrounding garden. Of particular interest here are the lamps themselves—designed (on commission) by architect Kent Bloomer—which feature foliated arches that encase the luminaire. That the "ornamented" natures of these revealing lamps seem, indeed *are*, part and parcel of Central Park in the dark brings the experience of walking through this urban refuge close to the experience of listening to "ornamented" configurations in *Four or Five Mirrors*.

(Note: the very lack of available descriptive languages for what I hear in Morris' work is one of the second things that catches (and caught), my ear.)
Is *Four or Five Mirrors* like this?

As a teenager, I lived with my mother in Enid, Oklahoma. At home, mom ran a tight ship. However, during the summer when I was 15, mom had to leave town on business for 6 days. After much pleading and negotiating I was allowed to stay home by myself. As soon as she left, I prepared for my experiment: I closed all the bedroom doors on the ground floor, laying rolled towels over the thresholds to block any light. I did the same with the kitchen and dining room. This left access to only the living room, bathroom, and connecting hallway. I moved some choice books, food, bedding, my Casio keyboard, and my tuba to the living room. In the living room and bathroom I used cardboard and duct tape to block out the windows, then unplugged the VCR, TV, the radio tuner on the stereo system, and the clocks. I turned the ringer on the phone off, and left a message telling my mom (and anyone else who called), that I was home but practicing so "I'll call you back." I was all set. The idea was that without any sunlight or clocks, I'd develop a different sense of time...I remember thinking: "I'm only gonna sleep when I'm tired, eat when I'm hungry, write music when I want, play my tuba at all hours, etc." Without an external sense of time, much less day or night, I would break the habit of sleeping, eating, etc., at "appropriate" times (or so my thinking at the time went.) For at least five solid days I lived like this. (My mother was really worried and bewildered when she came home.)

I suppose things went as planned because when my mom got home I had just laid down to sleep and was sure it must be late late at night. It was late afternoon.

Reflex-ions of Robert Morris' *Four or Five Mirrors*

Anyhow, the thing I remember most is that, without any clock or sun-motion to gauge time, whenever I awoke from sleeping (unless I slept for a long time), I had no idea whether I had slept for 20 minutes or 2 hours.

Four or Five Mirrors is richly orchestrated. There are times when the musical fabric is so brightly hued that the ear is drawn to many timbres at once. Especially during these times I *forget* (despite sometimes concerted efforts not to forget) that I'm *listening*. And during *these* times, I will sometimes glance at the CD track display to find: where I thought little time (10-20 seconds) had passed, 2-3 minutes had; and where I thought 4+ minutes had passed, only 1-2 minutes had....so I listen again.

(...Is this addiction?)

Four or Five Mirrors (1990) is the second piece in a series of four computer pieces by Robert Morris; the title of the first is *Night Sky Scroll* (1985, rev. 1992), *MA* (1992) is the title of the third, and the fourth is *About the Same* (1999).¹ These works are linked, at least in part, by a similar attitude toward orchestration.

I have seen scores for *Night Sky Scroll* and *MA*, so it seems reasonable that there is a score to *Four or Five Mirrors* (and *About the Same*, for that matter). The scores for the pieces I've seen are in traditional equal-tempered Western notation, but include only the pitch/rhythm dimension; dynamics, articulation, and instrumentation are not included (, a suggestive omission). That these computer pieces are notated implies a great deal about the concern with which the harmonic and timbral momentum of the work unfolds. More than this is difficult to infer, since I do not have a score. This is no complaint, however; without the score, our ears become the sole purveyors of the musical terrain, and we make connections (such as those between timbre and rhythm, or timbre and pitch) that are clouded by (indeed unavailable through) attention to a two-dimensional score.

Some readers will be familiar with Paul Lansky's formulation of implication² in music. Conceptualizing the piece as a whole, and then conceptualizing certain sections, this work sounds *like* something, something that is not the music, but a shadow of it---or, maybe more precisely, there is *something* that sounds like this music, this work being a shadow of this *something*. Sections of *Four or Five Mirrors* also allude to, or imply, other (real world?) experiences---imply so directly that while listening I often (always) think: "I know what THAT is. I just can't REMEMBER what that is...." In this spirit I have many times listened to the work with the accompaniment of an oscilloscope or spectrogram (computer programs with these "visuals" are available on every computer and platform). The experience is rewarding, and yields interesting revelations about the work's structure (or, really, figurative relationships/correspondences within the work), but I don't yet have enough data to determine if visual aids elucidate the "implications" I hear and remain happily confounded that they don't (yet).

¹ See Elaine Barkin's excellent text on *About the Same* in *The OPEN SPACE Magazine*, issue 3, 2001.

² See Jeffrey Perry's "The Inner Voices of Simple Things: A Conversation with Paul Lansky," online at <<http://silvertone.princeton.edu/~paul/perry.interview.html>>.

Jon Forshee

The instrumentation of *Four or Five Mirrors* includes but is not limited to:
(, and here presented in no particular order):

Sinusoidal timbres
Sawtooth-ish sounds
(e.g. harpsichords)
frequency modulation
low low oscillations
Ring Modulation-produced tone colors
Whistles
[silent instruments]
Chimes
Bells
Square waves (approx. clarinets)
Pizzicati

Now, it is tricky to describe the changes in tempo of *Four or Five Mirrors*. In general (and I mean in a very general way) the overall tempo of the piece follows a “fast ---slow---fast” schema. BUT, the way this occurs is quite different from typical examples of the schema...a more apt characterization would be that the work outlines a “dense---less dense---more dense” textural schema, which reflexively suggests changes in tempo. It’s as if the music doesn’t slow down, but rather that the music becomes stretched across the face of time. Also, it’s like being able to step inside the work and survey the velocity, projection, and shape of each riff. Toward the end of this hallucination, it’s as if the “face of time” is re-asserted, snapped (albeit gradually) back into place, with the further effect of now untangling the rhythmic collisions earlier evident in the work between musical voices so that now each voice has its place, only barely trespassing on another voice’s territory.

Robert Morris’ program notes to *Four or Five Mirrors* are available online at <http://www.esm.rochester.edu/rdm/notes/4-5.html>. After explaining the title (considered later in this paper), Morris writes that:

“...the resolution of form and content, entity and relation, is at issue in this piece, the perception of which, like any other object of contemplation, mirrors the attention it receives.”

Ring Modulation is a unique synthetic timbre, since there is no hierarchical relationship between the two frequencies required to produce this sound. For instance, in frequency modulation, one frequency acts as a carrier (c) and modulates another frequency (m), producing “difference tones” which the ear hears as one “tone color.” In ring modulation, two frequencies are also necessary, but these frequencies modulate each other, producing “combination tones” which the ear hears as one “tone color.” In frequency modulation, one frequency “modulates” another; in ring modulation, two frequencies “modulate” each other.

Ring modulation timbres offer the fruits of a reflexive relationship between two frequencies, between two vibrations within space; moreover, the greater the amplitude of each frequency, the greater number of “combination tones” hearable.

Four or Five Mirrors engages a reflexive relationship between itself and the listener; the more a listener contemplates the work, the more s/he perceives, which gives the listener more to contemplate, so that s/he (unwittingly?) perceives more, which gives the listener more to contemplate, and in turn s/he perceives more, which...

In this regard, the conceptual paradigm through which to best hear *Four or Five Mirrors* is explained within the occurrences of the ring modulating instrument(s) within the piece. (DNA also contains instructions for behavior on a similarly micro-level.)

While the highly charged “embellishments” of the musical lines and musical fabric draw a great deal of attention to local shaping and phrasing of *Four or Five Mirrors*, this is only one of several layers discernable in the work. A truer way to explain this is that there are several discernible layers of music unfolding at once at any given time over the 14 minutes and 52 seconds of this composition. These ‘cognitive’ layers interpenetrate, and are also partition-able, pick-out-able of the musical texture, according to many possible criteria. For instance, the mercurial “ornamentation” co-mingles with, indeed is heard as such by virtue of, a reposed long line (in an FM timbre, as I hear it), which outlines a wide contour within (sometimes in slight relief of), the musical topography.

It might seem as well to say that the long line foliates in the “background” of the embellished music, but with a little change of focus, the ornamentally inclined riffs can be heard as the background of the distinctive long line; with the right focus, each may be heard as background to each.

Many criteria can be used to separate cognitive levels of the work; the above distinction of the long line and the scurrying ornament takes as its common concern the polarities of long/short pitch duration. Other partitions of musical layers could be the polarities of the timbral spectrum (which may prove useful, especially on a broad scale, in describing successive sections of the work), polarities of articulations or attacks, relative lengths or rates of decay, polarities of pitch space (high/low), polarities of location within the stereo field (discernable through attention to panning and /or the positing of musical passages within a particular channel), polarities in pitch/rhythm density spaces, and so on. Each layer, and all possible layers, interact simultaneously at all times, though to varying degrees. Surely, a subtle cognitive layer of the work is the discernible polarities in degree of interaction(s) of all cognitive layers. How two or three layers interact with each other suggests certain characterizations of shorter passages, while attention to the degrees of interaction of all cognitive layers over the full course of the work suggests ways in which to conceptualize *Four or Five Mirrors* as one entity.

From this perspective the content is the form of the work, and the form is the content.

Moreover, the chiliagonal surface of the work is not hierarchic. However, the prominence or brightness of cognitive levels at particular times invites the ear to follow different, and unique, paths through the work with each new audition. Does this become evident through the increasing taxonomy of cognitive levels afforded by increasing attention to *Four or Five Mirrors*?



The Ninth of Fa-tsang's *Ten Mysteries*:

“Distinct existence and mutual inclusion of separate factors of existence in time. That is to say that each and every facet of existence participates in every other one without loss of identity.”

The pianist Glenn Gould is respected for his exquisite technique and inimitable interpretations, as well as for his championship of modern composers such as Schoenberg and Hindemith. Especially in his recordings of Bach for the CBS label, we can hear Gould quietly singing and humming almost beneath the threshold of hearing. It is well known that Gould embraced the new recording technology of his time, and I have often read that, in his obsession with control and quests for perfection, most recordings of his playing are heavily spliced and edited. The decadent application of such studio techniques “could” lead to a dis-pleasing vertical-ization of a recording, especially in the case of a fugue or other highly contrapuntal compositions.

Lately it has begun to seem reasonable to me that Gould, in an attempt to minimize a vertical emphasis in his recorded work, interwove into the final mixes of his recordings additional tracks of him quietly singing or humming in order to sustain an illusion of uninterrupted horizontal continuity. I don’t know if this is true, but if it were it would be an elegant, if eccentric, solution to Gould’s anxieties about the perception of linear cohesion in his work. The way in which this could be a solution is: in addition to hearing the interaction of individual musical lines within whatever Gould is playing (esp. Bach, Schoenberg, Hindemith, et al.), we hear, or think we hear, an overt interaction (“accompanimental” singing) between Gould and his performance of the composition, which implies “Glenn Gould is singing while he’s playing this piece.” This implication is devoid of any piecemeal splicing or editing.

It is in this way that the long line(s) of *Four or Five Mirrors* help(s) to achieve musical continuity and (along with continuity) a fluid “cohesion.” However, not only concerns with linear continuity are addressed in Morris’ composition, but also concerns with vertical continuity, pitch cohesion, rhythmic teleology, etc. The subtle polarities of interaction between all cognitive levels throughout the work fruitfully address (if not assuage) all concerns with every genus of continuity. The care with which the vertical dimension of the work is addressed by pitch cohesion in some ways necessitates, or at least calls to arms, the care with which all other dimensions (polarities) are addressed.

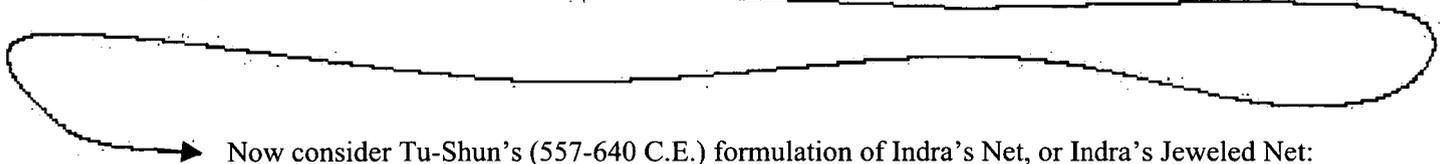
String Theory³ is a growing branch of Physics wherein scientists are attempting to reconcile, or unify, the theories of behavior of the very large (Einstein’s General Theory of Relativity) with theories describing the behavior of the very small (Quantum Electro-Dynamics). [Prior to String Theory, the notions behind gravity, electro-magnetic fields, etc., were at odds with the possible (and necessary), existence of quarks, muons, tachyons, and other tiny particles that are thought to be found throughout the fabric of space.]

According to String Theory, the universe has eleven extra dimensions: ten spatial dimensions and one time dimension. We are unaware of these dimensions, as they are found in tightly curled-up spaces called *Calabi-Yau* spaces. Calabi-Yau spaces are described by tiny vibrating “strings” which sweep throughout the world-sheet of the cosmos. “Strings” are so small, that each point in the Universe is occupied by a Calabi-Yau space.

Four or Five Mirrors is a Calabi-Yau space large enough to hear, but with more than eleven dimensions. We may perceive, or mentally keep track of: the pitch space dimension, the pitch-class space dimension, the timbral dimension, the dimension of pitch/rhythmic density, the literal spatial dimension (i.e. panning), etc.; listening to *Four or Five Mirrors* offers the opportunity to perceive ALL dimensions at once...and this can seem confounding since perceiving all dimensions at once consistently seems just beyond the (at least my) mind’s capacity.

³ For more (much more) on String Theory see Brian Greene’s book *The Elegant Universe*, published in 1999 by W.W. Norton.

Put a different way, String Theory posits that the fabric of the Universe is permeated in every direction by a vast, nanoscopic, vibrating network of strings which describe a Calabi-Yau space at every point in the Universe.



Now consider Tu-Shun's (557-640 C.E.) formulation of Indra's Net, or Indra's Jeweled Net: a vast "net" that extends throughout the cosmos and holds, at each juncture, a jewel. Each jewel of Indra's Net reflects every other jewel. The jewels may be considered as "units of consciousness," "individual life-forms," "atoms," or "cells." Indra's net illustrates, or seeks to illustrate, the interpenetration of all these things---each jewel is connected to others through the net, and each jewel also reflects each other jewel; further, all jewels are but one jewel. In the Avatamsaka Sutra a student asks how all the jewels can be one jewel, and the teacher replies: "If you don't believe that one jewel...is all the jewels...just put a dot on the jewel [in question]. When one jewel is dotted, there are dots on all the jewels...Since there are dots on all the jewels...We know that all the jewels are one jewel."

It seems reasonable to conceptualize the multiple dimensions of *Four or Five Mirrors* as one single oscillating dimension, or entity---partition-able, clearly, into manifold parameters of musical experience while listening, but singular when remembering what we heard. Memories of experiences of listening to this composition seem somehow more complete than what we think we hear while actively listening.

To state that the best parts of a composition are the silences within it may strike some as less than complimentary. But silence extends in all directions, especially in Morris' *Four or Five Mirrors*, wherein unique chord voicings showcase vertical silences between the notes; wherein silence above and below linear melodic lines delineate the lines' contour; and (and here most especially), wherein silences before and after a particular (e.g. sinusoidal) timbral passage makes the later re-appearance of that timbre all the more gratifying. Indeed, the 15 minutes of *Four or Five Mirrors* is carved out of silence, silence being the one instrument that may not be ostracized by the *Four or Five Mirrors* musical community.

Taught by *Four or Five Mirrors*:

1. The rate of decay of pitch is equal to the envelope of silence.
2. The rate of decay of silence is equal to the envelope of pitch.

Jon Forshee

Four or Five Mirrors was initially realized as a quadraphonic work; the version I have is a stereo mix; listening to a four-channel version is best.

In the online program notes regarding the title Robert Morris writes:

“The mirrors are the four locations for the sounds or the five sections of the piece, each of which reflect the musical content of any of the other "mirrors." This holographic metaphor was suggested by the expedient actions of the Chinese sage Fa-tsang, who, when pressed by uncomprehending students, devised a special room fitted with mirrors on all surfaces (including the ceiling and floor) containing a single lit candle. This spiritual diorama was a demonstration of the interpenetration of all "dharmas" (things and laws).”

The flush architecture of the work may be partially reproduced (in the stereo version) by:

1. Placing your stereo speakers on opposite sides of your room and listening at a high volume. This arrangement gives an impression of the spatial dimensions of the work, with only some loss of detail.
2. Listening with high quality headphones at a comfortable volume. This method gives a strong impression of the spatial dimensions of the work, while preserving the sculptural detail of pitch color and pitch.

Also try:

3. Listening at a very soft volume level through normal loudspeakers. This offers a clear description of the pace of the work, though most detail is lost.
4. Play at a very loud volume and listen from another room of your home; if you live in a studio apartment, or other one-room home, listen from outside.

I am not sure that I have wrangled successfully with my compulsive listening behavior, since all my reflecting has only aggravated my condition. I still compulsively listen again and again and again as I did upon my very first hearing. But that's OK. A thought recurs, however, a quote I've heard somewhere:

“It is a fool who regards a finger which points to the stars.”

Thinking about Elaine and listening to her music

Tildy Bayar

*On the way to becoming, we try others on.*¹

Elaine collects masks. What a visitor notices first about the masks arrayed along her shelves and walls is personality. Some are ex-ritual objects from Bali and elsewhere, but none bear hieratically blank expressions; instead what you notice, when you notice them looking at you, is the humorous curve of a wooden mouth, or curiosity peering slyly out from under heavy-lidded, half-closed eyes. These are characters - animal, human, fantastical, supernatural - living on the walls of Elaine's house, taking up a different kind of space than does mere inanimate decoration; they are more like eccentric, curious, ever-present family members than the usual sofa-complementing *objets*.

*In our alleged world of reality, a ventriloquist's dummy has no life without the ventriloquist. But, imagine the sound of a room resonating with the voices of autonomous dummies.*²

Elaine also makes masks. She makes them out of hubcaps, exuberant bright paint, and found materials - feathers, colored pipe cleaners, old cds, bits of plastic, yarn, buttons, beads. Not masks for wearing; not ceremonial objects for ritual use - and yet not quite mere *objets* for hanging on walls and admiring, either. Elaine's masks also have that quality of personality, and her self-appointed task as their maker is to discover the character each wants to be, and help it to become itself - albeit a self with a lot of Elaine mixed in. I remember one pink and purple paint-splashed abstraction and Elaine's lovingly calling it "she"; and "GM", which was obviously Groucho Marx, but wearing headphones and sporting an insouciant grin that had a lot of Elaine in it.

Think of a mask which reveals presence rather than conceals it.

I think everything must be particular, in Elaine's world - particular like the masks, individual, imbued with personality. I doubt there exists generic or ritual to any significant degree (thus her non-comprehension when, as a young pianist, she was pressured to play in public; "I play for myself", she said). It seems to me that Elaine gives equal weight to personalities and to utterances, a radical elevation of the generally marginalized detail to the status of content. An attention to whole presences rather than

¹ "On the way to becoming." In *E, an Anthology*. Red Hook: Open Space, 1997.

² "AMBIVALENCE." In *E, an Anthology*.

the usual backgrounding of great swathes of detail; a lack of desire to separate message from medium -- a special tuning of the eye, ear, brain, like having 360-degree or X-ray vision.

*My voice is not your voice; your voice is not my voice...*³

(How Elaine is a Feminist Without Being an "-ist")

Voice. Identity. Somehow stood on their heads in modern parlance to mean collectivized voice, group identity. In her writings (See *E, an Anthology*, Open Space, 1997) Elaine reacts against these definitions, and instead radically perceives the individual with all her or his attendant multiple, probably confused, definitely confusing valences leading her or him in directions other than the officially sanctioned. You can read in Elaine's responses to hardline feminist texts a confusion: What happened to me, to you, as might sit down together and have a conversation (not a Conversation between me-as-Woman, you-as-Man or me-as-Composer, you-as-Performer or...). Her "identity" the mask that offers access, allows for a way in (the generic always merely an entry point; the particular always an arrival point); her "voice" her self, speaking to your self.

*(but of course one cannot "possess" a piece of music as one can possess a painting or a sculpted piece)*⁴

If you listen to Elaine's music with this idea of foregrounded personality in mind, what emerges are sonic personalities in interaction. The character of a motive is inseparable from how it will act in relation to other motives; in her *Poem* it is degrees of instrumental energy coming together and exploding or entropizing, shrill insistent piccolo encountering languid fainting-couch clarinet meeting obviously chirpy handbell. In her *Songs* the music speaks like particularly lyrical speech, rhythms hesitating or gushing. The lush, gorgeous *for my friends' pleasure* stopping along the way to luxuriate in sensual quavers, to savor in-between spaces, not particularly in a hurry to arrive.

Each of Elaine's pieces on Open Space cd 16 explores, in one way or another, the compositional potential of in-between pitch spaces and extended vocal and instrumental timbres, always in the service of greater expressive specificity for an instrumental personality. This music isn't overly concerned with "good" sound, although it is very beautiful. Instead it's concerned with getting the right voice, or tone of voice, for each instrument and each nuance of saying. But it doesn't place its concern with personalities over musical coherence; each piece's soundworld is delicately and precisely chosen, and each soundworld evolves, sometimes straightforwardly, sometimes subtly and obliquely with stops along the way to luxuriate in some particularly sensuous passage.

You can hear a strong gamelan influence in this music, but nothing's quoted; it's Elaine's ears having been tuned to listen to delicate variations, and to hear when something wants to stop and rock gently for a while before moving on.

On the way to becoming, we try others on...

³ "IN YOUR OWN VERSE: a.k.a. "An Alice is Lost". In *E, an Anthology*.

⁴ "TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN." In *E, an Anthology*.

Thinking about Elaine and listening to her music

*The song and water were not medleyed sound
Even if what she sang was what she heard,
Since what she sang was uttered word by word.
It may be that in all her phrases stirred
The grinding water and the gasping wind;
But it was she and not the sea we heard.
For she was the maker of the song she sang.⁵*

⁵ From Wallace Stevens, "The Idea of Order at Key West"

Respiration

in Stefan Wolpe's *Piece in Two Parts for Six Players*

Robert Morris

Stefan Wolpe wrote four works partly titled "in Two Parts." While there are significant differences between these pieces, their first part introduces and develops characteristic material and the second elaborates and extends it. By material, I not only mean the collections and sequences of the musical elements in domains such as pitch, rhythm, and timbre, but the supervenient gestures and flows that emerge from the composition of the elements. While I think a bottom-up approach to the *Piece in Two Parts for Six Players* is appropriate, I don't mean to imply that Wolpe's compositional procedures exclude long-range planning or formal schemes—only that one can start with the music surface and work one's way "up" to an appreciation of the whole. I also don't want to imply that the passage from the notes to the piece is linear or hierarchical, for it is precisely the ruptures, discontinuities, disjunctions—even inconsistencies—that make Wolpe's music unique and compelling. Wolpe wrote much on his conception of musical process and especially on the dialectic between musical formation and annihilation, continuity and intermittence, memory and presence, and regularity and chaos. But the nature of his dialectic is not altogether Hegelian or Platonic, but also non-Western, as in the figure of the Yin-Yang, where one pole contains a trace of its opposite and is continually transforming into the other. This is the reason Wolpe's musical forms assert impermanence, a forming and transforming, as opposed to fixed form or formula. Accordingly, my bottom-up analytic approach studies how Wolpe projects musical instability, and on this occasion more: how Wolpe opens and closes musical space—how his pieces breathe.

Concentration on the breath helps promote the calm that leads to insight. An open and relaxed mind can take in the vast flux of musical gesture without being overcome, thus helping one not only experience it fully, but comprehend it. I mention this not only because it underlies my approach to music appreciation in general, but because Part I of the *Piece in Two Parts...* projects this mood, in spite of all of its local turbulence and impulsive turns. Balance and grace pervade the whole, perhaps partly induced by the isometric scheme of time signatures that repeats the sequence of 4/4, 3/4, 8/8, and 3/8, throughout most of the piece. The beginning of the piece deviates from the scheme—like the irregularity in our breathing that accompanies a new and perhaps unexpected event. Example 1 provides a chart of the time signatures in Part One.

Balance is projected by a more obvious feature of the piece; its first 16 bars are repeated exactly at its end. The use of what would appear to be a clear ABA form flies in the face of Wolpe's emphasis upon forming as opposed to formula. And in a context of perpetual process stark repetition should sound arbitrary and stiff. Yet it seems right, and I shall provide some reasons why.

The opening note sequence in the clarinet also heralds equanimity. This is shown in Example 2. Its six even quarter-notes, at *pianissimo* within a narrow compass in the middle range of the clarinet—and of the entire ensemble—projects a disinterested poise that is only offset by the accompanying chord and mild outburst in the piano. I will need to refer to this six-note tune as X since its pitch-classes generate nearly all of the pitch material of the work.

Example 1 Scheme of time signatures.

measures: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19

$\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

missing 8/8

retrograde

measures: 20 --- 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68

iterate 8 times (same as first 16 measures)

$\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

extra 4/4 added to compensate for the elided 4/4 at measure 16.

missing 8/8

retrograde

Example 2 X and the opening set, Y0, in *Form for Piano*.

Ex. 2a X = <957645>

clarinet.

pp

Ex. 2b Y0 = <85A974>

piano

pp

Ex. 2c Y1 = <96BA85>

Example 3 First phrase of composition.

$\text{♩} = 72$

violin *ppp*

clarinet *pp* *con sord.* X (horizontal) = <957645>

trumpet *ppp*

cello *ppp*

harp *ppp*

piano *f* *sfp* *pp*

X (vertical ordering) = <74569>

X (vertical ordering) = <746597>
(horizontal ordering) = <{47}{56}{47}>

Wolpe has begun other pieces in a similar way. For instance, *Form for Piano* begins with the hexachord shown in Example 2b. But there are differences between the hexachord of *Form...* and X. Significantly, X has only five distinct pitch-classes, repeating its F-natural twice. In the context of Wolpe's notions about form, the two Fs immediately draw our attention to the functions of repetition. One function is closure. Certainly X seems self-sufficient, due, no doubt, to the way the notes F \sharp G and E converge on the final F. X therefore is more than a set; it is a passage from its first F (preceded by something like an upbeat) to its second F (preceded by something like a cadence). Whatever X is, it is not simply a motive, although it is literally repeated later in the work; and it is not simply a member of the set-class 5-2(01235), for then it would be generic. X's singularity and placement at the beginning of the composition poses a question: since it includes repetition and closure, how will the rest of the piece repeat and close? The most obvious response is provided by the repetition of the first sixteen measures at the end. But mere repetition doesn't automatically guarantee closure. And specifically, what is it about the first 16 measures of the piece that permits closure in the first place? But perhaps the question is moot, for we can regard the repetition as unclosed so as to function as a prelude to Part Two, which is based on the same materials as Part One. Nevertheless, I will show there are elements of closure in the first 16 measures.

The singularity of X also brings it to one's attention as "something"—a figure among grounds. Other compositions by other composers may employ ordered segments and/or particular set-classes to the exclusion of all others to provide an underlying pitch-class consistency to a work, but without reifying any particular manifestation of the set or segment. Perhaps Wolpe doesn't want to exclude reification because it can be used to highlight stages in the compositional process, to focus a passage on its particularities, and to implement a range of relatedness from similar to different, whether the passages related are adjacent or remote. So the reification of X as singular and closed invites one to seek for it in the rest of the piece. However, one does not find it as such; one finds transformations. These transformations involve repetition, permutation, and pitch-class transposition and inversion. Repetition allows certain notes to return and or dominate others in a presentation of X. It is interesting that these repetitions are always linear, for there are no direct octave doublings in the piece, save one in the middle section. Permutation allows intervals between notes not adjacent in X to become adjacent thus bringing a latent feature into relief. In this way, contiguous segments and verticalities can project all of the abstractly included set-classes within X. Transposition and inversion preserve the included interval-classes and set-classes in X, but bring in new pitch-classes and expose inherent symmetries as pitch-class intersections. To illustrate this last point, consider the transposition of the hexachord of *Form for Piano* up one semi-tone as shown in Example 2c. Now consider the relation between this transposition, called Y1, and the original set, called Y0. The first three notes of Y1 are the same as the three last notes of Y0. This is because the first three notes of Y0 are the semi-tone transposition of the last three. The inherent relation between these notes in Y0 is therefore displayed as shared notes between Y0 and Y1. In general, if a set S has an internal relation R between its parts, there will be an intersection of pitch-classes between S and the R of S. Internal relations therefore provide criteria for choosing particular transformations, an awareness of which Wolpe uses to great effect in his music.

One topic remains before I can proceed to the analysis: the instrumentation. The score is not written in the standard order of instruments; the violin part written on the top staff is followed by the clarinet, trumpet, cello, harp, and piano. The top four instruments are braced together, while the staves of the harp and piano are bracketed independently. This would seem to indicate the harp and piano work against the remaining instruments. But it turns out that the harp often shadows the piano, as in measure 2, echoing the piano's bright sound with a softer resonance. The other instruments work in any and all configurations, and the quick and often unpredictable changes in who plays what when tends to support Wolpe's ideals of formal impermanence, and never to partition the work into sections based on timbral identity.

Now let us look at the opening of the *Piece in Two Parts...* to see how it opens and closes musical space. Example 3 presents the first two measures of the composition, which I call

phrase one. As I've already mentioned, X in the clarinet is accompanied. There is a soft, sustained chord in the violin, muted trumpet and cello and a gesture in the piano and harp. These events use only the pitch-classes of X, but in different registers except for the lowest note of the chord and the piano dyad and the highest note of the harp dyad, all of which double notes in the clarinet at the unison. The entrance of the chord on the second half of beat one presents the note F before it is played in the clarinet and therefore upstages the presentation of X. Another kind of independence from X is provided by the *forte* grace-note seventh in the piano and the *sforzando* sixth in the piano articulating the same notes in the harp. This independence allows us to hear the accompanying figures as different presentations of the notes of X rather than merely including all of the notes in mm. 1 and 2 as a presentation of an unordered set in different registers with repetitions. So, taking the chord and the harp dyad together we have X presented temporally as a sequence of two unordered sets {F F# A} then {G E}; however, we can look at these notes from bottom to top; then we have linear ordering of the notes of X in the order <G E F F# A>. Similarly, the piano gesture can be registered as the descent of three dyads in time—or from bottom to top. Here we have the notes of X presented, but with the G-natural doubled and placed at all the most salient positions of the gesture, at its top, beginning, bottom, and end. This confluence of horizontal and vertical orderings of a pitch-class set is a feature of much of Wolpe's music and it operates here to saturate the music not only with the notes of X, but its various subsets and intervals.

In Example 4 we have the second phrase of the composition. The clarinet starts somewhat forcefully at *mezzo forte* and continues to present the notes of X, but over a two octave span and with duplications of the notes F F# G. These notes were adjacent in X and two of them are presented in the same register. Until the last high A, G is the lowest and highest note of the clarinet, a feature inherited from the piano gesture accompanying X. Despite this much more elaborate presentation of the notes of X, the contours of the clarinet line are all derived from X. Example 5 shows how. Note that the last three notes of the clarinet line are the same as the first three notes of X, but in retrograde, an octave higher. This would seem to induce some sense of closure at the end of the phrase. Rhythmically, the presentation of the notes of X is in eighths, twice as fast as the quartet notes of X before, but with one eight-note filled in by a triplet. This triplet deviation is pounced upon by the *forte* violin and piano chords, which do not rhythmically align with each other or the triplets. In contrast, the trumpet and cello merely shadow the clarinet by presenting its second through fifth notes as two dyads. Two other vertical sets are presented. First, there are the piano and violin chords, which are not only temporally adjacent, but timbrally, due to the use of pizzicato in the violin. Second, there is the up-and-back violin arpeggio, whose lowest and highest notes are the same as the clarinet's.

Two new elements have entered the scene, the notes A-flat and B-flat. These are the outside notes of the *forte* piano chord and the inside notes of the violin arpeggio. These come from an inversion of the notes of X. Namely, the T_2I of X. This new set <F G A-flat A B-flat>, represented by the violin and piano chords, shares F G and A with X, its first three notes. The connection is brought out by the clarinet, which ends its phrase with these tones, however accompanied by the two new notes in violin arpeggio.

Let us stop for a moment to further discuss the relation between X and T_2IX . (The reader will notice I have stopped using the locution "the notes of X" and simply say "X" to save time.) Example 6a lines up X and T_2IX to show their intersection and union at a glance. Together they produce a seven-pc set that is symmetric around G, a member of the chromatic set-class 7-1. It is clear that Wolpe has chosen T_2IX because it introduces only a few new notes. But why didn't he choose another transformation of X that would introduce only one new pitch-class? Example 6b and 6c show the two possibilities. Perhaps the unions of these combinations are too symmetric—that is, too closed—since both of them yield all-combinatorial hexachords. Second, these hexachords do not invert around a tone as does the union of X and T_2IX . Third, the addition of two new notes versus one is in keeping with the cardinality of X and invokes a 5/7 partition of the aggregate, which is not symmetric like a 6/6 partition.

Respiration in Wolpe

Example 4 Phrase two of composition.

3 4 7

violin pizz *f* arco *p* = T₂IX

clarinet = X

trumpet *ppp* *pp*

cello *ppp* *ppp*

piano *f*

--- (vn. and pn.) = T₂IX

Example 5 Contour sets in phrases 1 and 2 in the clarinet.

1 2

3 4

contour sets: A = <201> B = <210> C = <3021> D = <3201>

Example 6 Pairs of transforms of X.

Example 6a

X =	{4567 9 }		
T ₂ IX =	{ 5 789A}		
Z = (X ∪ T ₂ IX) =	{456789A}	Z ∈ SC(7-1)	Z = T ₂ IZ

Example 6b

X =	{ 45679}		
T _B IX =	{24567 }		
Z = (X ∪ T _B IX) =	{245679}	Z ∈ SC(6-8)	Z = T _B IZ Z' = T ₆ Z = T ₅ IZ

Example 6c

X =	{4567 9}		
T ₁ X =	{ 56789}		
Z = (X ∪ T ₁ X) =	{456789}	Z ∈ SC(6-1)	Z = T ₁ IZ Z' = T ₇ Z = T ₇ IZ

Example 7 shows the third phrase of *Piece in Two Parts*. We see how the clarinet's opening flourish together with the sustained G in the cello, in response to the previous violin arpeggio, performs T_2IX , followed by a vertical presentation of the same set in the plucked chord in measure 5 in the harp and pizzicato strings. The clarinet goes on to re-establish X, and then introduce a new transformation, T_1X . But his new set introduces no new pcs. The note G, the center of symmetry of the union of X and T_2IX , tends to dominate this phrase as it did in phrase two, now sustained by the trumpet. The end of phrase three introduces another new transformation of X in the pedaled piano passage. The set is T_BIX , which adds the note D into the composition as the last element of the phrase, immediately preceded by another flickering arpeggio in the violin.

The fourth phrase is given by Example 8. It is made out of three *forte* verticalities followed by more pedaled piano. The second of these verticalities extends the music into the bass for the first time. As the example shows, the verticalities project T_2IX , T_BIX , and the trichord {F A Bb}, which is included in T_2IX . The notes in the piano add three more new pitch-classes by introducing the chromatic tetrachord {C Db D Eb}. This set needs either an F or a Bb to associate it with a transform of X: with F we have T_8X ; with Bb we have T_7IX . This quick, impulsive move toward aggregate completion seems to warrant a compensation; a new and clear presentation of X is played by the piano and harp in even quarters as in measure one, which completes the phrase. Or does it? The violin tremolo (suggesting the arpeggiated flickers of before) fall on the heels of the phrase and extends it into the cello line, which, with the trumpet high A, presents X again. But the action is not yet over, for a three dyad gesture in the piano overlaps the cello and trumpet, which leads in turn to a clarinet passage that recalls the line in phrase two. Clearly, the music has lost its division into clear phrases by the use of elisions and extensions, which continue for the next several bars. One can with some difficulty locate phrase boundaries in these measures, and the presentation of transforms of X helps find the kinds of verticalities and lines that constituted the fabric of the first four phrases of the piece. Of course, the obscure and difficult phraseology from measure 7 on is the outcome of a process of increasing phrase connection from the beginning. Phrase one and two are separated by silence, and phrase two and three touch via the sustained G in the cello. Phrase four immediately succeeds phrase three and shares transforms of X.

Let me summarize the composition's progress so far. The music starts off with various presentations of X, followed by transformations, which introduce new pitch-classes until the aggregate is almost completed. X starts out as a melodic and closed event, but it quickly loses its singularity as it is extended, transformed and spread across the rest of the ensemble. Yet X returns just as the division of the music into phrases becomes too complex to easily parse it into non-overlapping units. The almost complete chromatic saturation—B-natural has yet to appear—and the return to X in measure 8 close the music, but musical space is simultaneously opened by the introduction of new transformations of X, of new pitches (as opposed to pitch-classes), and of increasing activity and overlap of gestures in the various instruments, alone and in combination. The charts in Example 9 and 10 summarize these processes. Example 9 shows the progress of transformations of X, their intersections and unions, and the introduction of new pitch-classes; Example 10 shows the first entrance of each pitch and pitch class in the composition so far and beyond.

Yet there is one trend that Examples 9 and 10 do not readily show; this is a gradual opening of lower pitch registers. After the high harmonic A in the violin and a few piano notes in the same register at the beginning, the register remains unarticulated. The next two lower octave registers in the treble clef remain dominant throughout, with the register of X getting increasing rhythmic saturation as the piece goes on. Below middle C, there is no articulation except for the G until measure 5 where a few more notes are introduced. Measure 6 begins a new lower register with the *forte* E in the cello. (E was the lowest note in X of the second measure.) The return of X in the piano and harp in measures 8 and 9 spans the three registers from E below middle C to the G two octaves and a third above.

Example 7 Phrase three of composition.

The musical score is arranged in six staves, each with a 4/4 time signature. The first two staves are marked with measure numbers 5 and 6. The violin part (top staff) begins with a rest in measure 5, followed by a pizzicato (pizz) note in measure 6, and then an arco (arco) section in measure 7. The clarinet part (second staff) features a triplet in measure 5, followed by a series of notes in measure 6, and a triplet in measure 7. The trumpet part (third staff) has a rest in measure 5 and a note in measure 6. The cello part (fourth staff) has a rest in measure 5 and a note in measure 6. The harp part (fifth staff) has a rest in measure 5 and a note in measure 6. The piano part (bottom staff) has a rest in measure 5 and a note in measure 6. The score includes various dynamics such as *f*, *pp*, *p*, and *mf*, as well as performance instructions like *pizz* and *arco*. A 7-measure rest is indicated in the violin part in measure 7. The score concludes with a double bar line and a fermata.

Example 9 Progression of Transforms of X in mm. 1-6

set	pcs	pcs from 0-B 0123456789AB	type	cumul. # of pcs, 0-B 0123456789AB
X	{45679}	xxxx x		1111 1
T ₂ IX	{5789A}	x xxxxx	P +2	1212121
T ₁ X	{5678A}	xxxx x	E	1323222
T _B IX	{24567}	x xxxxx	P +2	1 2434222
T ₇ IX or T ₈ X	{(A) 0123} {01234 (5)}	xxxx x xxxx x	P +3 P +3	11212434223

Remarks.

Type is either "P", progressive, adding new pcs, or "E" embellishing, adding no new pcs.

Pc B does not appear; it first appears in measure 10, not part of a transform of X.

Pcs 5 and 7 are found in four of the five X-transforms.

The last transform is either T₇IX or T₈X, as only {0123} appears in the music.

The frequency of pcs 5 or A in the previous transforms supports either transformation (or both).

Respiration in Wolpe

Example 10 First instance of each pitch and pitch-class in the composition.

1 2 3 4 5 6

7 8 9 10 11 13 14 15 16 17

18 19 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 38

39 40 41--end

8va-

- = new pitch
- = new pitch-class (and pitch)

The next seven measures do not really continue the long-range registral trends just mentioned. An exception is the three eighth-note gesture in the piano in measure 10 shown in Example 11, which extends the music further into the bass. And at the end of the measure, as if to compensate for the introduction of the bass tones, the piano plays the same three sixteenth-note dyads in ascent and reactivates the high register abandoned in measure 4. Such three note progressions the same direction, which can be traced back to the piano gesture in measures 1 and 2 or the clarinet entrance in phrase 2, become more extended into four- and more-note “rockets” in the ensuing measures. But the registral promise of these two piano gestures will remain undeveloped until after measure 16, the point at which the middle section of the piece begins.

The two piano gestures of Example 11 have another function. They import B-natural, the last pitch-class needed to complete the aggregate, into the piece. This B, which also occurs in the clarinet in measure 10, does not fit well within the sequence of X-transformations, its function being mainly to complete the aggregate, but perhaps prematurely. Two measures later it will be absorbed into a clear transformation of X.

If registral expansion is not a major activity for measures 8-16, what is? The return to X in measure 8 launches a new opening—a second breath. The notes of measure 8 and 9 are only those of X. Measure 9 launches a new set of X-transformations with a concomitant push to aggregate completion culminating in measure 16. Example 12 follows the format of Example 9 and shows the sequence of X transforms from measure 10 to 16. The transforms shown in the example start with same opening transforms in Example 9, but then takes its own direction starting with the use of T_3I in the trumpet in measure 12, which introduces B-natural early in the process.

Along the way to measure 16 the musical surface briefly loses touch with X, because a new pitch configuration, not directly related to X, is clearly introduced. Example 13 provides the harp and clarinet’s presentation of this set, a hexachord I shall call W1 representing set-class 6-4(012456). W1 is singular in many ways. First, its presentation as an upward stride in even eighth-notes in the harp (and downward in the clarinet) with few local changes of direction continues the process of introducing an increasing number of linear contours. Second, Wolpe presents W1 by constructing it as major thirds built on the notes of major sevenths. This contrasts with X, which only has one major third. Moreover, no transform of W1 can contain X. Third, Hexachord W1 is Z-related; that is, W1’s set-class does not include the complement of W1. (The hexachord of *Form for Piano* also has this property.) And yet W1 is a logical outgrowth of the proliferation of X-transforms, for it can be generated as a subset included in the unions of transforms of X that yield set-class 7-1, an instance of which was shown in Example 6a. Furthermore, the first three notes of X {F, G, A}—of the piece—are also found within W1. The introduction of W1 provides a wonderful example of Wolpe’s dialectical play. X yields something that is not itself, thereby opening the musical space further than merely to the set-classes that include or are included in the set-class of X.

We can now understand why Wolpe places measures 1 to 16 at the end of his piece. The pitch-class process has come to saturation twice, which has two important aspects. First, with the entrance of all pitch-classes, total symmetry has been reached; this means all transformations yield pcs within the same set: closure. Second, it is in the second progression that aggregate completion gives birth to a pitch-class set that transcends the orbit of X. The music has fulfilled a purpose dear to Wolpe, to open to a world beyond itself without leaving its origins behind.

But Wolpe is not content only to open space; he wants to enter it and play. This occurs in the middle of the composition. Unfortunately, time does not permit any more than a brief look at the highlights of this section.

At measure 16 the music begins to follow that part of the sequence of time signatures shown in Example 1 that contain no anomalies. The result is a smoother rhythmic flow. The complete aggregate is now available to Wolpe, and he introduces new sets not related to X. For instance, see Example 14. Yet the middle section also contains passages built out of transforms of X. Now consider Example 15. This shows how the music in measures 18-20 can be parsed into X-transforms; X itself makes a brief appearance in the trumpet part. It is

interesting that almost all the X-transforms in this passage include the pitch-class G, a note that keeps asserting itself throughout the composition. Notes now occur in the neglected low and high registers with greater frequency as in measure 26 in the piano and measures 28 and 29 in the piano and violin.

At measure 31, the clarinet introduces a striding figure called W2, as shown in Example 16a. This is very much like the presentation of W1 in measure 14 and the two sets share four pcs. In a new move for the piece, all the other instruments play variations of W2. Although the introduction of this new texture might seem abrupt, it has been foreshadowed by the many shadowing gestures that began between the piano and harp, and have migrated to occur between and among other instruments. Besides, the notes of W2 have all been introduced in previous measures and W2 emerges out of the chromatic set-class 9-1. But W2 does bring in something new; it is an oblique contour that equates linear and vertical orderings, the result of a process begun by the previous three, then four note rockets, and the presentation of W1. These oblique contours tend to subvert a strong distinction between the horizontal and vertical orderings that were a feature of the presentation of X at the opening of the piece. The notes of W2 are members of set-class 6-2(012346) and include T_2IX , the first transform of X to appear in the piece in measure 3. Thus W2 connects to X, while its predecessor W1 does not. We can therefore possibly hear W2 as correcting W1 to conform to the transforms of X.

After successive truncations of W2 in measure 34 in the clarinet, the music returns to a literal repetition of the original statement of X in the piano, but two octaves higher as shown in Example 16b. A high violin tremolo followed by a loud three-note chord in measure 37 present the notes of X vertically. T_2IX dominates the next two measures, but without its G-natural. Example 16c shows three transforms of X at measure 40. The violin and trumpet present X, T_2IX , and T_1X . The music goes on to present these transforms plus T_4IX , exactly the ones that opened the composition. The resultant composite set-class is 9-1, all the chromatic notes from E to C. In measure 45, shown in Example 16d, the trumpet completes the aggregate over an oscillation of a perfect fourth in the piano. This poignant moment is highlighted by the C octave between the trumpet and piano. The trumpet notes come from the set-class of hexachord W2, 6-2, and the piano notes from the "outer notes" of T_4IX . This is confirmed by the complete presentation of T_4IX in the piano, clarinet and violin, playing the same sequence of pitches at different speeds, in the manner of the presentation of W2 in measure 31. The trumpet responds by playing T_AIX and then descends almost chromatically to F above middle C. Example 16e shows what happens next in measure 49. The harp plays X in its first form, but off the beat. The violin and piano shadow the harp with mutated versions of X at different speeds. But Wolpe won't let this elegiac return of events alone. He introduces a loud vertical statement in the low clarinet and cello based on T_3IX followed by what is given in Example 16f; a soft echo of the outburst closes the middle section on B-flat and ushers in the opening of the composition once more.

The progress of the middle section inverts the process of the first. It starts out with no holds barred but somehow returns to transforms of X as it goes along. The return of X in the highest register at measure 35 leads in turn to a second presentation of X in its original register and form at the end of the section. The transformations that accomplish this transition are exactly the same and in almost in the same order as those used from measures 10 to 16 of the first section of the piece. Thus the middle section parallels the first (and last), and the formal ABA label no longer seems apt. Rather, the form—the forming—keeps opening from and closing to X.

I hope it is now clear how the processes I have highlighted in this composition resemble respiration. Opening and closing gestures appear at all levels; every breath out is followed—even entailed—by a breath in and vice versa. The symmetry of in and out has to be presented in time just as the symmetries and dialectical processes in Wolpe's music take time to unfold. Breathing doesn't stop at the end of a breath. We must go on to the Second Part, to the other pieces in two parts, to all the pieces, to our reflections on these pieces and "From Here on Farther."

Example 11 Piano gestures in measure 10.



Example 12 Progression of Transforms of X in mm. 10-16

set	pcs	pcs from 0-B 0123456789AB	type	cumul. # of pcs, 0-B 0123456789AB	
X	{45679}	xxxx x		1111	1
T ₂ IX	{5789A}	x xxxxx	P +2	1212121	
T ₃ IX	{689AB}	x xxxxx	P +1	12222321	
T ₄ IX	{0789A}	x xxxxx	P +1	1	12233431
T ₁ X	{5678A}	xxxx x	E	1	13344441
T ₄ IX	{0789A}	x xxxxx	E	1	13344441
T _A IX	{13456}	x xxxxx	P +2	11	124444441
T ₉ X	{12346}	xxxx x	P +1	121234544441	

Remarks

T₄IX occurs twice; first as progressive then as elaborative.

T_AIX has no pcs in common with T₄IX; their occurrence late in the progression of X-transforms neutralizes their complementary relationship. Nevertheless, T_AIX brings in two new pcs.

T₉X completes the aggregate with pc 2, in measure 16.

Example 13 Clarinet and harp introduce W1 in measure 14.

clar.

harp *pp* *sub tone* *p* *pochiss.*

W1 = {5679AB} SC(6-4){012456}

Example 14 Sets in violin and clarinet in measure 16.

violin

clar.

{0346} SC(4-12){0236}

{047AB} SC(5-38){01258}

Example 15 Transforms of X in mm. 18-20.

The musical score for Example 15, "Transforms of X in mm. 18-20," is arranged for violin, clarinet, trumpet, cello, harp, and piano. The score is divided into three measures, with time signatures changing from 3/8 to 4/4. The motif 'X' is transformed in various ways across the instruments:

- Violin:** Measures 18-19 feature a triplet of eighth notes marked $T_4 X$ and *arco*. Measure 20 features a 7-note sequence marked $T_1 X$.
- Clarinet:** Measures 18-19 feature a triplet of eighth notes marked $T_5 X$. Measure 20 features a sequence marked X .
- Trumpet:** Measures 18-19 feature a triplet of eighth notes marked X and $T_9 X$. Measure 20 features a sequence marked *senza sord.* and X .
- Cello:** Measures 18-19 feature a triplet of eighth notes marked $T_2 X$, *pizz*, *arco*, ff , and p . Measure 20 features a sequence marked mf and pp .
- Harp:** Measure 20 features a sequence marked $T_3 X$ and mf .
- Piano:** Measures 18-19 feature a triplet of eighth notes marked $T_2 X$ and pp . Measure 20 features a sequence marked $T_4 X$ and f .

Respiration in Wolpe

Example 16a Set W2 at Measure 31.

clar.

p sub tone

W2 = {45678A} SC(6-2)[012346]

Example 16b Verticality including notes of X.

violin

clarinet

trumpet

cello

harp

X = {45679}

Example 16c Transforms of X at measure 40.

violin mf x x x x x x

$T_1X = \{5678A\}$

$\{45678A\}$ SC(6-2) [012346]

trumpet f x x x x x

$X = \{45679\}$

notes marked $x = T_2IX = \{5789A\}$

Example 16d Trumpet and piano at measure 45

trumpet mf $\{012346\}$ SC(6-2)[012346]

piano p

"outside notes" of $T_4IX = \{79AB0\}$

Example 16e Return of X in harp shadowed by violin and piano.

Musical score for Example 16e, measures 48-49. The score is in 4/4 time. It features three staves: violin, harp, and piano. Measure 48 shows the violin and piano staves with rests, while the harp staff has a melodic line starting with a *mf* dynamic. Measure 49 shows all three instruments with melodic lines. The violin and piano parts are marked *ppp* and feature triplet markings (3) over their respective lines. The harp part continues its melodic line.

Example 16f Echo at end of middle section.

Musical score for Example 16f, measures 51-52. The score is in 3/8 and 4/4 time. It features four staves: clarinet, trumpet, cello, and piano. Measure 51 is in 3/8 time, and measure 52 is in 4/4 time. The clarinet, trumpet, and piano parts have melodic lines. The clarinet and piano parts are marked *p*. The trumpet part is marked *pp* and *sf*. The piano part has a triplet marking (3) over its line. To the right of the piano staff, the text $T_3IX = \{689AB\}$ plus 5 is written. A double bar line with a fermata symbol is at the end of the score.

Association and the Emergence of Form in Two Works by Stefan Wolpe¹

Dora A. Hanninen

Wolpe's works of the early 1960s strike a remarkable balance between freedom and clarity. Lightning change and multidimensional reference, crystal symmetry and kinetic asymmetry, pitch-class eddies and complementation, semblance and paraphrase, bring moment to moment. Form becomes a trajectory of tangents that introduce, mull over, contrast, deconstruct, reconstruct, enhance, recollect, and reconsider material, but rarely repeat or develop it in a traditional sense. This is music that engages in a kind of rhetoric without argument—even without a distinct subject, for Wolpe rarely uses “themes” or “motives” as such. Anything can happen, yet the flow remains clear and convincing. How does this work? How *can* it work? How does Wolpe achieve both freedom and clarity in original musical forms?

The answer is simple, but its implications are profound: the freedom and clarity of Wolpe's music have a common source. A single fundamental mechanism—association among segments—has diverse emergent effects; the associative mechanism and its emergent effects involve different levels of musical organization and analysis. The associative mechanism is low level; it relates segments at least in pairs and correlates with a general cognitive tendency toward categorization that facilitates information storage and retrieval. The emergent effects of musical form and texture are high level; they arise through complex and cumulative interactions among segments, the criteria for association active or available, and temporal disposition, in the context of particular passages and compositions. In other words, form and texture are emergent effects of “associative organization” and can be studied as such. In this paper, I offer detailed analyses of associative organization in the opening passages of the *Piece for Two Instrumental Units* (mm. 1–23) and *In Two Parts* (mm. 1–16). I suggest that these two opening passages employ different strategies for the emergence of form, and that these strategies inform the works overall.

Completed in March 1962 and premiered a few weeks later on April 11 in New York, the *Piece for Two Instrumental Units* (1962) is an essay in musical contrast—stasis and motion, one and many, definite and indefinite (Example 1).² The piece is scored for seven players, conceived as “two units”: a trio of flute, cello, and piano (originally Harvey Sollberger, Joel Krosnick, and Charles Wuorinen), and a quartet of oboe (Josef Marx), violin, contrabass, and percussion.³ Wolpe marks some passages “seven inactivities” and others “seven changes”; according to Austin Clarkson, these indicate “organization of the time field by seven-bar units of the 3/4 meter” (Wolpe 2000, iv).

¹A version of this paper was presented at the Stefan Wolpe Centennial Symposium sponsored by the Stefan Wolpe Society and the City University of New York Graduate Center in New York City on March 15, 2003.

²In Wolpe's words, “Whatever distances can be composed between two units, I think I did them” (Wolpe 1999, 406).

³Austin Clarkson identifies these players as the original oboist and trio in his preface to the score (Wolpe 2000, iv).

Series: <G, B, C, D^b, A^b, D, A | F, G^b, E, B^b, E^b>

Piece for Two Instrumental Units

Stefan Wolpe
(1962)

♩ = 120 - 126

Flute

Violoncello

Piano

♩ = 120 - 126

Oboe

Violin

Contrabass

Percussion

Seven inactivities

5

Fl.

Vc.

Pf.

5

Ob.

Vn.

Ch.

Pc.

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2

⑩

Fl. *B12* *Seven changes* *ff* *pizz.*

Vc. *ff* *ff*

Pf. *f* *ff* *pp*

Ob. *f*

Vn. *f*

Cb. *p* *Seven changes* *pp* *col legno*

Pc.

FL. *B13* *B15* *B17*

Vc. *arco* *B14* *B16* *pizz.*

Pf. *pp*

Ob. *Seven inactivities (slightly shortened)* *pp*

Vn. *normale* *col legno* *normale*

Cb. *normale* *col legno* *pp*

Pc.

Association and the Emergence of Form in Wolpe

3

(B17, cont.)

B19 B21

Fl.

Vc. arco pizz. arco

B18 B20 B22

Pf.

Ob.

Vn.

Cb. col legno normale col legno normale

Pc.

20

Fl.

Vc. pizz. f

Seven changes

Pf.

20

Ob.

Vn. pizz. arco

Cb. pizz. col legno arco

Pc. staccatissimo

Association and the Emergence of Form in Wolpe

Inactivities usually involve a note sustained in one instrument, sometimes a tremolo; changes most often involve dynamics, articulation, or pitch-class reordering. Wolpe's own comments on *Two Units* indicate that the seven-bar units that govern the work's temporal organization stem from an "arbitrary decision."⁴ Most intriguing with respect to associative organization is Wolpe's idea that the piece moves in a way that is not unary, but multidimensional:

The content exists on several levels, the same musical idea is entertained in many different ways, so that one has a simultaneity of these levels, meaning: extensions, ramifications, multiple echoes, or in reverse, contractions, focalizations, and destruction of musical articulation. . . . To make this procedure possible, you need multidimensional space and must abandon focal points in favor of multifocal points as well. For my music does not [go] only in one direction, but simultaneously in a variety of directions.⁵

Two Units is based on a twelve-note series. In his preface to the score, Clarkson gives the series <G, B, C, Db, Ab, D, A | F, Gb, E, Bb, Eb> in two units, seven plus five, as shown at the upper right of Example 1. While pitch-class content of mm. 1–26 is limited to the first seven notes, these bars cover much ground in terms of associative organization and set up a spectrum of possibilities for the piece as a whole.

The piece begins with two pairs of symmetric chords in the piano; these flank a semblance of inversion between flute and cello. Rests, instrumentation, and simultaneity suggest the six segments shown in Example 2. (Layout resembles a cutaway score; vertical alignment indicates simultaneity.) All six segments are interrelated by pitch-class content: only the first five notes of the series (<G, B, C, Db, Ab>) are in play. Stronger associations obtain both between the right and left hand of the piano: A1 and A2 share two pitches (B3, Ab4) and pitch intervals under inversion (<9, 4> and <4, 9>) and similarly for A3 and A4. Within each hand, A1 and A4 associate through pitch proximity and register exchange for C and B, as do A2 and A3, for G and Ab.

Pitch inclusion and pitch interval inversion are just two of many ways material may be repeated from one segment to another. I call such repetitions, which may involve inversion, retrograde, or inclusion, *contextual criteria* for segmentation; contextual criteria model the fundamental mechanism of association. Contextual criteria recognize segments at least in pairs; they identify a potential for association among segments with a property of segments. I notate contextual criteria with a capital C, followed by a subscript that gives the contextual subtype ("pitch" for pitch inclusion, "pc" for pitch-class, "ip" for pitch intervals, "SC" for set-class, "CAS" for contour adjacency series),⁶ followed by the individual criterion (e.g., *which* pitches (B3 and Ab4), *which* intervals (<9, 4>), and so on). Pitch-class integer notation begins with 0 for C, up to 9 for A-natural, A for Bb (or 10) and 11 for B-natural (or 11). (For readers' convenience, a glossary of terms and summary of abbreviations and notational practices follows the text.)

Contextual criteria do two things: they support individual segments; they also motivate largercognitive groupings of segments I call *associative sets*.⁷ An associative set is a set of segments

⁴"The activity of this work is in many instances regulated by an arbitrary decision concerning its syntactical order. In this particular case, a seven-bar period [is] like a basic unit of activity and used like a writer who might dictate to make each sentence of his prose consist of so many phrases" (Wolpe, 1964 program notes, The Stefan Wolpe Collection, Paul Sacher Foundation).

⁵Wolpe, 1964 program notes, The Stefan Wolpe Collection, Paul Sacher Foundation.

⁶Michael Friedmann defines Contour Adjacency Series (CAS) as "An ordered series of +s and -s corresponding to moves upward and downward in a musical unit. For example, the theme of the finale of Mozart's 'Jupiter' Symphony has a CAS of <+, +, ->" (Friedmann 1985, 246).

⁷Associative sets are defined and developed in Hanninen 1996. For an analytic application to Stefan Wolpe's *Form* and *Form IV*, see Hanninen 2002.

interrelated by contextual criteria. In Example 1, associations by contextual criteria suggest we might divide the segments into two associative sets, *A* and *B*. In this case, members of set *A* happen to be chords, associated by pc content (every chord shares two pcs with every other), pitch inclusion and pitch interval inversion. Members of set *B* are lines; *B1* and *B2* share five pcs and are loose contour inversions of one another. Two key points about associative sets in general. First, associative sets are categories based on family resemblances, not necessary or sufficient conditions for membership. Set boundaries may be fuzzy or overlap; internally, sets often have graded structures, such that some segments are more central—that is, more essential and characteristic—than others.⁸ Second, associative sets are not classification schemes, but categories analysts develop and explore for their heuristic value: they are not ends, but *means* to refine and represent musical interpretations.

To get at the emergent effects of association analysts call form and texture, one can study *associative organization*—the content, internal organization, temporal disposition, and combination of associative sets. The internal organization of associative sets can be complex. Some sets have *associative subsets*—sets of two or more segments embedded within a larger set and distinguished from its full membership by additional, often stronger, contextual criteria. In Example 2, inversional symmetry between *A1* and *A2*, and *A3* and *A4*, recommends these pairs as associative subsets. Here, boxes enclose associative subsets; thicker lines indicate stronger associations as per the key at lower left. This associative organization in the abstract is articulated by temporal order in the music: segments within each of the three symmetric pairs *A1–A2*, *B1–B2*, and *A3–A4* are temporally adjacent; the move from set *A* to *B* and back shapes the six segments into an introductory gesture. The situation exemplifies what I call *high-profile* associative organization—clear segments are apportioned among disjunct associative sets or subsets, articulated by temporal adjacency.

The emergent effect of abstract associative organization is highly conditioned by segments' disposition in time and among instruments. As an illustration, consider the opening of the *Piece in Two Parts for Flute and Piano* (1960) (Example 3a).⁹ As in *Two Units*, clear symmetries and limited pc content define four associative subsets: *A1* and *A3* are pitch retrogrades, as are *A2* and *A4*. *A5* and *A6* associate through partial ordering, supplemented by instrumentation, dynamics, and rhythm; *A7* and *A8* are four-note chords that include Eb6. Here too, the *abstract* associative organization is high-profile; contextual criteria apportion segments among four disjunct and relatively inert associative subsets arranged in a sort of four-part counterpoint. But this seems an odd way to hear the passage: gone is the energetic exchange between flute and piano in time. Example 3b represents a different hearing, in which temporal order traces a single line of associations that fluctuate in strength.¹⁰ The strongest associations (modeled by associative subsets) are no longer static; they have become kinetic: *A1* unfurls into *A2*, which snaps shut in *A3*. Temporal disposition energizes the retrograde equivalence of *A1* and *A3*: *A3* becomes a response to a response, a springboard for continuation instead of a staid partner to *A1*. Thus the basic

⁸Associative sets amount to basic level categories as defined by psychologist Eleanor Rosch (Rosch 1973, 1978)—that is, associative sets model the level of categorization that is a best compromise between efficient access to information and maximum content. Associative sets *A* and *B* could be combined into a larger, more general, category, because their members are interrelated through the first five notes of the series. But representing them as distinct sets is more convenient and revealing in that it facilitates a more refined study of associative subsets.

⁹Hasty 1978 provides a detailed analysis of mm. 1–22.

¹⁰I call this kind of representation an *associative path*. An associative path corresponds to an ordering of segments traced on a contextual association graph. Such a path can accord with score chronology, or with some other chronology such as, for example, the order of segment recognition in the process of analysis. Associative path is defined in Hanninen 1996, 96–97 and is similar to a walk on a transformational network (Lewin 1987, 1993) or within a compositional space (Morris 1995a).

Example 2. Six Segments and Associative Organization in the *Piece for Two Instrumental Units*, mm. 1–4

Set A

A2, m. 2
Pf. C(register exchange, {0, B})
incl C(pitch {B3, Ab4});
C(ip I <9,4>); C(SC [014])

A1, m. 1
Pf. mf C(register exchange, {7, 8})

A3, m. 3
Pf. f
incl C(pitch {C4, G4}); C(ip I <7,4>);
C(SC [015])

Set B

B1, m. 2
Fl. ff C(pc {0178B}); incl (C pc <{7B} {18}>);
incl C(CAS I<+,-,+,+,->)

B2, m. 3
Vln. ff

Key:

stronger associations

weaker associations

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Example 3a. Associative Organization of Eight Segments, *Piece in Two Parts for Flute and Piano*, mm. 1–5

Set A

Associative set A: C(pc {39AB})

A1, m. 1
Pf. *pp*

A2, m. 1
Fl. *p*

A3, m. 2
Pf. *mf*

A4, m. 2
Pf. *p*

A5, m. 2
Fl. *ff*

A6, m. 3
Pf. *fff*

A7, m. 3
Pf. *mf*

A8, m. 5
Fl. *ff* *pp*

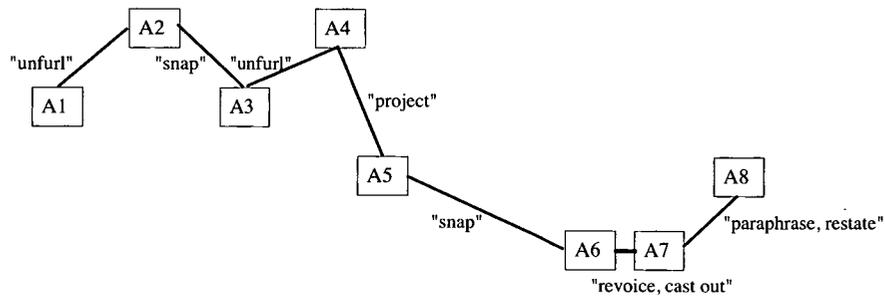
C(pitch R <Eb4, Bb4, A4, B4>)

C(pitch R <{A3,Eb4} {Bb3,B4}>)

C(pc {3 <B9A>}); C(pitch {Eb6})

C(chord, 4 tones); C(pitch Eb6)

Example 3b. Associative Path, Set A, *Piece in Two Parts for Flute and Piano*, mm. 1–5



mechanism of association is neutral with respect to emergent effect: association can serve complementary ends, be static or kinetic, close or open, reify or motivate.

Returning to *Two Units*, we continue past the introductory gesture to m. 12. Example 4 shows thirteen more segments of associative sets *A* and *B*, again distinguished by instrumentation and realization as chords or lines, in conjunction with associations via pitch intervals and pc content. Within set *B*, pitch intervals and pc content apportion segments among three associative subsets: two involve exchanges between oboe and cello in mm. 4–8; the third, imitation between oboe and bass in mm. 10–11. Piano chords *A5* through *A9* associate through pc content, register exchanges, and transposition. Sets *A* and *B* are distinct in this passage, but they also work together: after four bars' silence, the return of the piano in m. 9 recalls the segments and symmetries of *A1* through *A4* and sets up a similar connection involving the imitation between oboe and bass in mm. 10–11 and between flute and cello in *B1* and *B2*. Repetition of the pitch dyad <Db4, C5> between *B2* and *B4* also forges a direct connection between the introductory gesture and bars that follow. As in mm. 1–4, the associative organization in mm. 4–12 is high profile, but the segments' disposition in time and instruments modifies the emergent effect. Temporal order suggests a loose retrograde of associative subsets around the silence of m. 6 (*B4* and *B7* flank *B5* and *B6*), but the exchanges between oboe and cello cut across this, connecting m. 4 through to m. 8. Subtle flexing in rhythm, both of note values and the pacing of segments, also encourage a fluid and directed hearing that nicely balances the “seven inactivities” of the violin's sustained Db.

Starting in m. 13, two factors contribute to a significant change in associative organization (please return to Example 1). First, segmentation in bass, oboe, and piano becomes indistinct. In m. 12, the bass begins a unit of “seven changes” in which frequent, largely uncoordinated and often conflicting changes of register, dynamics and articulation resist definitive segmentation; in m. 15 the oboe starts “seven inactivities” with its held A, doubled by the piano. Second, as the flute (and cello) enter a unit of “seven changes,” segmentation in these instruments remains clear, but associative organization becomes fuzzy. Rests, in conjunction with contour, suggest the twelve segments *B11* through *B22* bracketed in flute and cello in mm. 13–19. All twelve share pc content given by the series, but no further contextual criteria recommend associative subsets. Indeed, the “seven changes” realized as persistent but uncoordinated fidgets in pc content, order, pitch intervals, contour, rhythm, dynamics, and articulation in flute and cello seem to frustrate any search for significant associative subsets.

Here, we leave behind the high-profile associative organization of mm. 1–12. But without associative subsets, what can we say about the associative organization of mm. 13–19, about the connection between the associative mechanism and its emergent effect? Suddenly the way to proceed seems unclear. To get a handle on the situation, we need to change our approach, even our way of thinking. For now this is work in progress; but, as a significant start in this direction, I'll focus on conceptual issues and sketch a possible approach.

First we need a clear—and sufficiently general—understanding of the various factors that contribute to associative organization. Associative organization involves at least five things: (1) associations among segments modeled by contextual criteria (that is, a way to grasp relations among segments, not only properties of segments); (2) a range of variation among contextual criteria; (3) a distribution of criteria with respect to strength and frequency;¹¹ (4) mappings between criteria and

¹¹Note that the relative strengths of contextual criteria are not absolute and context-free but (largely) relative and context-dependent. The strength of a contextual criterion is, in practice, its *active* strength in a specified context that takes into account all other criteria available of same or different subtypes and the coincidences or conflicts among criteria that yield segments and associative sets. This idea that the strength of a contextual criterion is not absolute but context-dependent significantly complicates and challenges the use of similarity relations in analytic practice.

Example 4. Thirteen Additional Segments of Associative Sets A and B, *Piece for Two Instrumental Units*, mm. 4–11, page 1 of 2

Set A

A5, m. 9 Pf. *mf*

A6, m. 9 Pf. *mf*

A7, m. 10 Pf. *f*

A8, m. 11 Pf. *mf*

A9, m. 11 Pf. *ff*

Set B

B3, m. 4 Cb. *pp*, Vln. *pp*

B4, m. 4 Ob. *f*

B5, m. 4 Vc. *p*, B6, m. 7 Ob. *f*

B7, m. 8 Vc. *ff*

B8, m. 8 Fl. *ff*

B9, m. 10 Ob. *mf*, B10, m. 11 Cb. *p*

Subset criterion:
C(pitch <Db4, C5, B5>)

(C(pitch <Db4, C5, B5, C5>))

(C(pitch <Db4, C5, B5, G4>))

incl start C(ip I<+7, -8>);
incl end/start C(SC [015]);
C(pc {012789})

segments (that is, do several contextual criteria work together to define groupings of segments, or do they conflict? do segments partition among associative subsets, connect in a loose network, or what?); and (5) segments' disposition in time or among instruments. High-profile associative organization focuses on the first, fourth, and fifth factors: associations among segments via contextual criteria, mappings between criteria and segments, and temporal disposition. To study passages like mm. 13–19, we must shift our focus to the second and third factors—the range of variation available among criteria, and their distribution with respect to strength and frequency. This shift challenges current analytic methods and ways of thinking; it focuses on *sets of criteria for association*, and how these criteria are *distributed* with respect to sets of segments. What is required is a shift from an interest in individuals to one in groups—a move toward what evolutionary biologist Ernst Mayr calls “population thinking” (Mayr 1988, 15 and 346).

As a start in this direction, Example 5a lists three attributes—pitch-class content, order, and pitch interval ordering—for the twelve segments *B11–B22*.¹² As a group, these segments yield a wide range of variation for all three attributes. No pitch interval ordering is repeated, even to within inversion or retrograde. Two pairs share pc content (*B14* and *B18*, and *B16* and *B20*) but both involve reordering, and neither is temporally adjacent in the music. The situation contrasts with that in mm. 1–4, where pc repetition and pitch-interval inversion are available and articulated by temporal disposition. The table is a start, but its value for a study of associative organization is quite limited. Associations via inclusion, or nonadjacency within ordered sets, are only implied. A more serious limitation lies in the fact that it shows only attributes of individual segments: what we really need to see is the range of contextual criteria that might associate pairs of segments.

So we take a different tack; for practical reasons, I limit this sketch to one contextual subtype (C_{pc}). Example 5b is an *association matrix*, a comprehensive display of pairwise comparisons among segments with respect to a given contextual subtype. An association matrix can help analysts identify the largest common psubset that might serve as a contextual criterion in each case, and so suggests the range of variation for C_{pc} criteria among the twelve segments.^{13, 14} Individual cells identify, on the second line, the largest psubset shared by the pcsets at left and above; the first line gives the size of the largest shared subset, followed by a slash and the sizes of the two pcsets in question (at left and top, respectively), useful for calibrated similarity measures.¹⁵

Example 5c tallies the number of times each C_{pc} criteria in the matrix occurs. The distribution has several peaks: among trichords, {178} is a peak, as are {019B} and {078B} among tetrachords. Two points: {178} is not included (literally or abstractly) in either tetrachord, but shares pcs with both; also, the two tetrachords share the dyad {0B}. Among the four pentachords, the flat frequency distribution suggests that all are equally viable as contextual criteria; given the series, they also share pc content. Connecting these summary findings with the second and third of the five factors in associative organization listed earlier, we see that the twelve segments *B11–B22* offer a wide

¹²Certainly, such a table could be expanded to include aspects of contour, rhythm, articulation, and so on. The three criterion types noted here suffice for a suggestive illustration.

¹³Robert Morris provides a similar matrix that registers the results of similarity relations deduced from all pairwise comparisons among segments in Morris 1995b, 228.

¹⁴Remember that the pcset criteria shown in this table are *potential* C_{pc} criteria. The *actual* agency of each potential criterion is subject and relative to each analyst's interpretation of the agency of all other contextual criteria of same or different subtypes, and to the contributions of sonic criteria.

¹⁵Some features of the tables in Examples 5b and 5c are artifacts of differences in cardinality, an important point I can only touch on as detailed discussion would lead too far afield. For instance, the bias toward larger sets as those eligible for the strongest contextual criteria (all else being equal, larger common subsets are stronger criteria) and the apparent focus on larger segments that include smaller ones. Constructing a companion table with similarity relations calibrated to compensate for these might offer some perspective on how best to interpret relative frequencies of criteria of different cardinalities.

Example 5a. Some Attributes for Segments B11–B22, Piece for Two Instrumental Units, mm. 13–19

Segment	Pc content	Pc order	Pitch intervals
B11	{0179B}	<1B907>	<+10, +10, -9, -17>
B12	{12789}	<289179>	<+6, -11, -8, -6, +14>
B13	{02789B}	<20B987>	<+10, +11, -14, +13, +8>
B14	{019B}	<B9(9)01>*	<+10, 0, +3, -11>
B15	{01278}	<17802107>	<+6, -11, -8, -10, +11, +11, -17>
B16	{178}	<781>	<-11, -7>
B17	{012789AB}**	<9B0A18729B07>	<-10, -11, +10, +15, -17, +11, -5, +7, -10, +13, -17>
B18	{019B}	<(1)B09>	<+10, -11, -3>
B19	{012789B}	<(B)81(0)9072>	<+9, -7, -1, +9, -9, -5, -5>
B20	{178}	<871>	<+11, -6>
B21	{0178B}	<18807(7)B180>	<-5, 0, +4, -5, 0, +16, -10, -5, -8>
B22	{078B}	<(8)7BB0>	<+11, -8, 0, -11>

*Parentheses enclose grace notes.

**Pitch-class A (i.e., Bb) is from the second, five-note, part of the series.

Example 5b. Association Matrix of Potential C_{pc} Criteria for Segments B11–B22

	B11 {0179B}	B12 {12789}	B13 {02789B}	B14 {019B}	B15 {01278}	B16 {178}	B17 {012789AB}	B18 {019B}	B19 {012789B}	B20 {178}	B21 {0178B}	B22 {078B}
B11 {0179B}		3/5,5 {179}	4/5,6 {079B}	4/5,4 {019B}	3/5,5 {017}	2/5,3 {17}	5/5,8 {0179B}	4/5,4 {019B}	5/5,7 {0179B}	2/5,3 {17}	4/5,5 {017B}	3/5,4 {07B}
B12 {12789}			4/5,6 {2789}	2/5,4 {19}	4/5,5 {1278}	3/5,3 {178}	5/5,8 {12789}	2/5,4 {19}	5/5,7 {12789}	3/5,3 {178}	3/5,5 {178}	2/5,4 {78}
B13 {02789B}				3/6,4 {09B}	3/6,5 {028}	2/6,3 {78}	6/6,8 {02789B}	3/6,4 {09B}	6/6,7 {02789B}	2/6,3 {78}	4/6,5 {078B}	4/6,4 {078B}
B14 {019B}					2/4,5 {01}	1/4,3 {1}	4/4,8 {019B}	4/4,4* {019B}	4/4,7 {019B}	1/4,3 {1}	3/4,5 {01B}	2/4,4 {0B}
B15 {01278}						3/5,3 {178}	5/5,8 {01278}	2/5,4 {01}	5/5,7 {01278}	3/5,3 {178}	4/5,5 {0178}	3/5,4 {078}
B16 {178}							3/3,8 {178}	1/3,4 {1}	3/3,7 {178}	3/3,3* {178}	3/3,5 {178}	2/3,4 {78}
B17 {012789AB}								4/8,4 {019B}	7/8,7 {012789B}	3/8,3 {178}	5/8,5 {0178B}	4/8,4 {078B}
B18 {019B}									4/4,7 {019B}	1/4,3 {1}	3/4,5 {01B}	2/4,4 {0B}
B19 {012789B}										3/7,3 {178}	5/7,5 {0178B}	4/7,4 {078B}
B20 {178}											3/3,5 {178}	2/3,4 {78}
B21 {0178B}												4/5,4 {078B}
B22 {078B}												

Bold type highlights pairs with literal inclusion of the smaller set in entirety; bold type with asterisk indicates identity of pc content for sets of same size.

Example 5c. Frequency of C_{pc} Criteria among Segments B11–B22

Pcset (C _{pc} criterion)	Frequency	Pcset (C _{pc} criterion)	Frequency
{1}	4	{0178}	1
{01}	2	{017B}	1
{0B}	2	{019B}	7
{17}	2	{078B}	5
{19}	2	{079B}	1
{78}	5	{1278}	1
		{2789}	1
{017}	1	{01278}	2
{01B}	2	{0178B}	2
{028}	1	{0179B}	2
{078}	1	{12789}	2
{07B}	1		
{09B}	2	{02789B}	2
{178}	12		
{179}	1	{012789B}	1

range of C_{pc} criteria, conjoined with flat frequency distributions and a network of pcset intersections that make these criteria difficult if not impossible to prioritize.¹⁶ The pc intersections are particularly interesting, for they indicate the C_{pc} criteria available *cannot* definitively partition segments among discrete associative subsets; rather, these C_{pc} criteria imply a network of associations among sets and subsets.

All told, our analysis suggests several points of contrast between the associative organization of mm. 1–12 and mm. 13–19. In mm. 1–12, associations via ordered pitch intervals and pitch content tend to associate segments in their entirety; here, weaker associations via pc content usually involve inclusion. There, a few criteria emerge as strongest and most active; here, there is a wide range of criteria and their relative priority is unclear. There, pairings induced by contextual criteria tend to partition segments among distinct associative sets and subsets (or “associative tuples”). Here, these pairings often conflict and overlap; the segments connect in a loose network that only grows in complexity as we take more contextual subtypes into account. In these bars, associative organization is like a journey through clouds, constantly changing, but virtually indescribable.

I call this kind of associative organization “low profile”; it is similar to a color field in painting, where scale is essential to reveal nuances in hue and shading. Writing on nuance in musical performance, the philosopher Diana Raffman (1993) notes the experiential import of subtle differences in intonation, metric placement, and duration, and our difficulty conceptualizing them. With such nuances, she says, “we are hearing differences within—that is, more fine-grained than” (Raffman 1993, 65) the categories referenced by score notation and used for mental representation. Raffman’s insight applies nicely to passages of low-profile associative organization and their effect. We may hear and even focus on nuances of individual segments, but unless the nuances are replicated among segments they defy categorization. We cannot think with them; they elude conceptualization and verbalization.¹⁷ Low-profile associative organization, then, is not incidentally but *inherently* difficult to talk about. It is essentially the problem of segmentation, at a higher level. In mm. 13–19, organization is clear at two levels—individual segments and all of set *B*. But there is no intermediate level; there are no “bite-size” categories of associative subsets. The associative organization of segments *B11–B22* proves irreducible: the structural description remains at a high level and the particulars slip away.

Low-profile associative organization frustrates attempts at conceptualization and verbalization, but one must recognize that these are problems of theorists, not listeners. When mid-level associative organization is suspended, listeners may be drawn to nuance and the flow of detail in a refreshing shift of perspective that sharpens aural attention. Passages with low-profile associative organization are common in Wolpe’s music; in *Two Units*, they may even be used strategically to prepare

¹⁶An appeal to the combined activity of contextual criteria in many subtypes often clarifies the situation, fortifying and privileging certain associations among segments over others, and elevating those pairings that involve the strongest or greatest number of criteria and demoting others. But in this particular case such an appeal is unsuccessful: the activity of criteria in other contextual subtypes such as contour and pitch intervals tends only to complicate things as it offers new grounds for association between *different* pairs of segments. For example, *B13* and *B15*, two temporally adjacent segments in the flute related by the maximally *weak* C_{pc} criterion that they share the pc trichord {028}, associate with one another quite strongly by contour inclusion—the first four notes of *B13* relate to the last four of *B15*, through the shared contour <0231>, the slur on the final dyad, and their semblance in rhythm.

¹⁷Raffman writes, “The nuances are not captured in the structural description . . . I shall call this nonstructural level of representation . . . the ‘nuance level,’ or ‘N-level’ for short. The N-level is presumably the shallowest (hence most ‘raw’) representation of the signal to whose content the listener has conscious access” (Raffman 1993, 67). Translating her insight to the matter at hand, Raffman’s “structural description” becomes “associative set and subset structure” in mm. 13–19. “Nuance” refers to features of “the individual segments” not replicated among segments; it is necessarily related to the way of looking and level of description the analyst invokes. Nuances with respect to one system of categorization may be nested in, or conflict with nuances with respect to a different category system, fostering complex and multidimensional hearings of particular passages, and sets of segments and relations with one another.

significant moments: for instance, the passage in mm. 13–19 heightens the effect of the fleeting return in m. 23; another low-profile passage, starting in m. 145, sets up the section boundary at m. 164. Just how Wolpe may have thought of such passages I can't say, but in the early essay "To Understand Music," he offers an insight tantalizingly pertinent to the way low-profile associative organization frustrates attempts to categorize, conceptualize, and verbalize. He writes: "Everything that floats about a page of music is vague and indefinite. But if it is impossible for us to define, that is not because its significance is too vague and general. On the contrary, it is because it is too concrete" (Wolpe 1982, 13).

This analysis of the opening of *Two Units* reveals a significant shift from the high-profile associative organization of mm. 1–12 to the low-profile organization of mm. 13–19. The limited pc content ensures continuity through the recall at m. 23, while the move from high- to low-profile organization opens up a wide range of possibilities to explore in the piece as a whole. Similar, if less pronounced, shifts occur later (as in mm. 130–145 to 145–163), with these often being linked to the start of "seven inactivities" or "seven changes." The oppositions implied by the title and Wolpe's "arbitrary decision" to designate some passages "changes" and others "inactivities" thus have many more subtle manifestations in associative organization and subtle aspects of form.

Wolpe began work on *Two Units* in the summer of 1962 as a companion piece to *In Two Parts* (Wolpe 2000, iv). While chronological neighbors, the two pieces employ different formal strategies. *Two Units* begins with a move from high- to low-profile associative organization and explores much terrain in between; *In Two Parts* takes a more consistent middle road, in which a number of focal melodies linked by the series and multidimensional associations gradually migrate through various members of the set-class given by the series (SC 5-2[01235]). Wolpe put it this way: "The resultant continuity of this puzzle of events is a chain-like succession of autonomous units, all parts of an integrated whole."¹⁸ What follows is a detailed analysis of associative organization in mm. 1–16 of Part One that identifies Wolpe's "chain-like succession" with musical particulars and shows how multiple lines of association interweave in an "integrated whole."

In Two Parts begins with a six-note melody in the clarinet, <A, F, G, F#, E, F> in even quarter-notes and close register (see Example 6). This bland melody introduces the series at its main transposition level (the chromatic set that spans from E to A except for Ab, a member of SC 5-2[01235]) and inspires much of what happens in the composition. Contour reversals parse the melody into three dyads, "down, down, up." The repeated angled contour <201> suggests a 3+3 interpretation, supported by the timing of events in the accompaniment—the three-note chord in violin, trumpet, and cello cuts off with the melody's third note, while the dyads {F, F#} and {E, G} in the complementary ensemble of piano and harp double F#4 and E4, its fourth and fifth. Pitch-class content in the accompaniment suggests two more interpretations: 4+2 and 2+4. The A–F–F# in the violin, trumpet, and cello chord grasp the first, second, and fourth notes of series, skipping the third (i.e., 4+2); while the piano and harp dyads take in its last four pcs (2+4). The repeated F4 suggests a fifth possibility, 1+5, in which A leaps to a turn figure, <F, G, F#, E, F>. There is no need to decide among these interpretations. Rather, as Lewin explains and Hasty exemplifies in his work on Wolpe, each identifies a different aspect with a specific musical context (Lewin 1986; Hasty 1978, 1981). The bland opening statement is rife with possibilities and does not privilege one over another.

¹⁸Wolpe, 1964 program notes, The Stefan Wolpe Collection, Paul Sacher Foundation.

Example 7 renders our analysis of the melody concrete, as segments and associative organization in mm. 1–3. The melody is segment A1 (halfway down, at left). Segments A2 (top box, middle row) and A3 (just above A1) accompany A1. A4, to the right of A1, is the clarinet line in m. 3. Each aspect of a segment with distinct associative function is shown as a named (sub)segment: for example, A1c in the top box, and A1d in the bottom box, recognize the first four, and last four, notes of A1 as segments, based on associations with chords in the accompaniment and parts of A4.

Rests, and changes in rhythm, register, and line shape, suggest that the opening melody and its accompaniment in mm. 1–2 form an introductory gesture, just as in *Two Units*. But a study of associative organization in mm. 1–3 substantially reinterprets this view. Shifts from *mezzo-forte* to *piano* and even eighths to triplet sixteenths within A4 help bring out associations between parts of A4 and A1. A4a (bottom box, middle row, right), repeats the four pcs <7645> of A1d in order, but turns contour and intervals inside out as pitch intervals –1, +1 given by the dyads <G4, F#4> and <E4, F4> in A1d, become +11, –11 with <G3, F#4> and <E5, F4> in A4a (the slur from E to F in A4a helps to articulate these two dyads). Meanwhile, the piano and harp dyads {F, F#} and {E, G} of A3, which accompanied A1d, are reoriented in A5, to become the lines in trumpet (<EG>, highlighted by a slur) and cello (<F#, F>) that accompany A4. The second part of the clarinet line in m. 3, segment A4b (top box, lower right), finds comparable precedent in A1c. A4b and A1c both have pc content {5679}; the first three notes of A1c return in retrograde, an octave higher, as the last three of A4b.¹⁹ To hear A1 and A4 not one after another but *through* one another in this way implies that neither mm. 1–2, nor m. 3, can be heard fully in isolation. The network of associations at work involves *all* of mm. 1–3; neither mm. 1–2, nor m. 3, nor even A1 and A4 alone, will do. In contrast to the crystal symmetries that begin *Two Units*, where the strongest associations operate *within* mm. 1–3 and *versus* m. 4 and after, in *Two Parts* segment A1 has strong associations with parts of A4, *outside* mm. 1–2. Although *Two Units* and *In Two Parts* both begin with introductory gestures, in context these have different formal functions.²⁰ To adapt Rothstein’s (1989) terms for a distinction in Schenkerian theory to our purposes, the opening bars of *Two Units* and *In Two Parts* have similar outer forms—introductory gestures delineated by sonic criteria such as rests and changes in register—but different inner forms, understood as associative organization.²¹

The violin arpeggio in m. 4 introduces contrasting material and sets the process of pitch-class migration among members of SC 5-2[01235] in motion. Example 8 replicates A4 and A4a (top left), but focuses on the associative organization of new material in mm. 3–6. Three segments are most prominent: the two violin arpeggios in m. 4 and m. 6 named A7 and A11 (bottom left and right of the boxed associative subset), and the clarinet line that begins in m. 4, named A8 (mid-page, above the box). At first, A7 sounds like an embellishment of A4, for it maintains the same high and low points (A5, G3), with the two new pcs Ab and Bb tucked inside. But in the context of mm. 1–6, A7

¹⁹The retrograde covers four notes if one hears the F# in the thirty-second note triplet as a focal point for its eighth-note span.

²⁰William Caplin defines “formal function” as: “The specific role played by a particular musical passage in the formal organization of a work. It generally expresses a temporal sense of beginning, middle, end, before-the-beginning, or after-the-end. More specifically, it can express a wide variety of formal characteristics and relationships” (Caplin 1998, 254–255). I prefer to use “formal function” in a more refined version of Caplin’s second, more specific sense—that is, to indicate not temporal placement, or formal functions such as introduction, development, or transition, but rather just how a passage we may call an introduction, development, or transition fits into the associative organization of a larger passage or composition as a whole.

²¹Rothstein defines inner and outer form thus: “The thematic aspect of a piece, as well as its layout into phrases and periods, I will term collectively the *outer form* (instead of ‘design’). The tonal dynamic of a work—its large-scale harmonic and linear layout—I will term *inner form* (rather than simply “form”)” (Rothstein 1989, 104). Rothstein relates his use of the terms to Felix Salzer’s trifold distinction among structure, form, and design (Rothstein, 104). Questions of “structure” and “design”—both the distinctions and relations between them—are central to much of the analytic work of John Rothgeb and David Beach.

Dora Hanninen

Piece in Two Parts

Stefan Wolpe 1961/1962

J = 72

Part One

1

Violin *ppp* *pizz.* *f* *arco* *p*

Clarinet *pp* *mf* *pp* *f*

Trumpet *con sord.* *ppp* *(ppp)*

Cello *ppp* *(ppp)* *ppp*

Harp *ppp*

Piano *f* *pp* *sfz* *f*

[Mitschlag]

5

Vln. *pizz.* *arco* *mf* *f* *pp*

Clar. *p* *pp* *p* *f* *sfz*

Tpt. *pp* *f* *fp*

Vcl. *pizz.* *pp* *arco* *f* *sfz*

Hp. *pp* *f* *mf*

Pno. *p* *f* *f*

Association and the Emergence of Form in Wolpe

8

Violin: arco, *f*, *ppizz.*, *ff*, arco, *mf*

Clarinet: *mf*, *f*, *più f*

Trumpet: *sfz* > *pp*, *mf*, *p*, *senza sord.*

Violoncello: *p*, *mf*, *mf*, *pp*

Harp: *p*, *mf*, *f*

Piano: *mf*, *pp*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *p*

[Mitschlag] [Vorschlag]

Detailed description: This system of musical notation covers measures 8 through 12. It features six staves: Violin, Clarinet, Trumpet, Violoncello, Harp, and Piano. The Violin part includes markings for 'arco' and dynamic changes from *f* to *ppizz.* to *ff* to *mf*. The Clarinet part shows dynamics from *mf* to *f* to *più f*. The Trumpet part starts with *sfz* > *pp*, then *mf* and *p*, and includes the instruction 'senza sord.'. The Violoncello part has dynamics *p*, *mf*, *mf*, and *pp*. The Harp part has *p*, *mf*, and *f*. The Piano part has *mf*, *pp*, *p*, *f*, *p*, and *p*. There are also performance instructions like [Mitschlag] and [Vorschlag] at the bottom.

13

Violin: *pp*

Clarinet: *pp* subtone

Trumpet: *f*

Violoncello: *p*, *mf*

Harp: *p*, *pochiss.*, *mf*

Piano: *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *(mf)*, *f*

Detailed description: This system of musical notation covers measures 13 through 17. It features six staves: Violin, Clarinet, Trumpet, Violoncello, Harp, and Piano. The Violin part has a dynamic marking of *pp*. The Clarinet part has *pp* subtone. The Trumpet part has a dynamic marking of *f*. The Violoncello part has dynamics *p* and *mf*. The Harp part has *p*, *pochiss.*, and *mf*. The Piano part has *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *(mf)*, and *f*.

16

Vln. *f* *p*

Clar. *f* *mf*

Tpt.

Vcl. *pizz.* *f* *arco* *f*

Hp. *f* *ff*

Pno. *poco* *mf*

Detailed description: This musical score page shows measures 16 through 18. The Violin part (Vln.) begins at measure 16 with a forte (*f*) dynamic, playing a melodic line that transitions to piano (*p*) by measure 18. The Clarinet (Clar.) part also starts at measure 16 with a forte (*f*) dynamic and moves to mezzo-forte (*mf*) by measure 18. The Trumpet (Tpt.) part is present but contains no notes. The Violoncello (Vcl.) part uses *pizzicato* (*pizz.*) in measure 16 with a forte (*f*) dynamic, then switches to *arco* in measure 17, maintaining a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Harp (Hp.) part features a forte (*f*) dynamic in measure 16 and a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic in measure 17. The Piano (Pno.) part starts at measure 16 with a *poco* dynamic and reaches a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic by measure 18. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

largely contrasts with A1 and A4 through instrumentation (violin vs. clarinet), shorter note values, its strong arch contour, and pc content. The primary association for A7 is with A11, which maintains its pc ordering and registral compass, contour, and near-retrograde arch. This strong association between A7 and A11 reifies both and establishes a contrasting associative subset. The move to a new pcset instigated by the violin in A7 is corroborated by the clarinet in A8, which transforms the pcset {45679} from m. 1 by T₂I to {5789A}.²² Within A8, the *pianissimo* staccato at E4 marks a boundary between two shorter segments, A8a and A8b, that share the successions G4-Ab3 and <Bb4, F4>. A8a and A8b, however, have different associative lives: pitch and pc content link A8a with the two violin arpeggios A7 and A11 and pcset {5789A}; A8b recalls the pitch ordering <E4, F#4, G4> in A1d under retrograde, and the original pcset {45679}. Together, A8a and A8b conjoin in the longer, multireferential segment A8 that is one link in a chain-like succession of events.

Associative organization in *Two Parts* is often based on such relations among parts rather than wholes. I suspect that this reflects an aesthetic stance implemented as compositional strategy, for in his writings Wolpe often refers to “multidimensionality” and “simultaneity”—the idea that a single event can have many facets and can act in and evoke many dimensions at once. In the “Lecture on Dada,” for example, he says: “I put things together in what one would call today a multifocal way” (Wolpe 1986, 209). To associate segments in parts renders them multidimensional: a long segment can reference multiple contexts through the associative lives of its subsegments. Coordinated with temporal disposition, the multidimensional associations of long segments produces the chain-like organization Wolpe describes.

After the ensemble activity of mm. 5–6, a sudden focus on the piano in m. 7 isolates a pitch retrograde between the four eighths <F#4, G4, F4, A4> and the first four notes of A1 (skipping over Example 9 for the moment to Example 10, compare A15 with A1c).²³ This retrograde anchors an unmistakable association with the opening that extends from m. 7 at least through m. 10. As in mm. 1–3, the associative organization in mm. 7–10 is tight and involves many small segments associated by pitch-class content (the set {45679} and its subsets), refracted by changes in register, ordering, contour, and dyadic subsets.

The chain-like associative organization of *In Two Parts* is particularly evident in the approach to A15, where two other lines of association at work in mm. 4–7 bring out subsegments of A15 (Example 9). One (in the top box) involves forms of the pitch interval ordering <+2, -1>; these focus attention on the turn fragment <F#, G, F> in A15a grasped by Wolpe’s pedal marking. The fragment recalls the five-note turn latent in the 1+5 interpretation of A1. In m. 7 it is easily heard, given A10 and A13 as precedents in m. 6. A10 introduces the turn with the pcset {24567} that retains the four pcs associated with the turn in the original series, but falls by fourth to a new note, D-natural. A13 introduces pcs 0, 1, and 3 (these complete the aggregate); subsegments A13a and A13b involve the turn fragment. The association between A13b and A15a is enhanced by attaching a fourth note to produce a member of SC 4-2[0124] (i.e., add the F#4 in A13b, and A4 in A15a). Segment A15b has different associations (see bottom box). The grace-note dyad {Bb5, Ab4} in A15b repeats two pitches of A11 and fits into a network of associations around the pcset {5789A} that takes in both violin arpeggios (A7 and A11), part of the clarinet melody in m. 5 (A8a) and

²² There is a hint of a pitch-class retrograde around the high Bb5 projected up an octave from A7 to A8; the retrograde draws notes from both segments, <9A8 | A89>. Bb5 further becomes a link to A11, which maintains the same high point.

²³ The numbering of examples 7 through 10 from *In Two Parts* follows score chronology. My desire to frame the passage in Example 9 as an approach to the passage in Example 10 motivates the reversal in example references.

Example 7. Segments and Associative Organization, *In Two Parts*, mm. 1–3

Associative subset criterion: $C(pc \{5679\})$

A3a, m. 1
Pf. *f pp*

A2, m. 1
Vln. *ppp*
Trp. *ppp*
Vc. *ppp*

A1c, m. 1
Cl. *pp*

A4b, m. 3
Cl. *pp*

$C(pc \{569\}) = \text{registral order } \langle 012 \rangle$

incl $C(pc R \langle 9576 \rangle) = C(ip RI \langle -4, +2, -1 \rangle)$

Associative subset criterion: $C(pc \{45679\})$

A3, m. 1
Pf. *f pp*
Hp. *sf ppp*

A1, m. 1
Cl. *pp*

A4, m. 3
Cl. *mf pp*

$C(\text{pitch } \langle F\#4, E4 \rangle), \text{ simultaneous}$

A1a, m. 1
Cl. *pp*

A1b, m. 1
Cl. *pp*

$C(\text{cseg } \langle 201 \rangle)$

A5, m. 3
Trp. *ppp*
Vc. *ppp*

A1d, m. 1
Cl. *pp*

A4a, m. 3
Cl. *mf pp*

A3b, m. 1
Pf. *sf ppp*
Hp. *ppp*

incl $C(\text{pitch } \langle F\#4, F4 \rangle)$

incl $C(\text{pitch } \{F4, F\#4, E5\})$

incl $C(\text{pitch } \langle F\#4, F4 \rangle)$

incl $C(\text{pitch } \langle F\#4, E4 \rangle)$

incl $C(\text{pitch } G3, F\#4)$

incl $C(\text{pitch } \langle F\#4, F4 \rangle)$

$C(pc \{56\}, \{47\})$

Associative subset criterion: $C(pc \{45679\})$

Example 8. Segments and Associative Organization, *In Two Parts*, mm. 4–6

A4, m. 3

Cl.

A4a, m. 3

Cl.

incl C(pc R<764>); incl C(CAS <+, +, -> at start)

A8b, m. 5

Cl.

incl C(pitch {<Bb4, F4> <G4, Ab3>})

A8, m. 4

Cl.

Associative subset criterion: C(pc {5789A})

A8a, m. 4

Cl.

incl C(pitch R <Bb4, Ab4>)

A6, m. 3

A9, m. 5

Trp.

Hp.

incl C(pitch {Bb4, G4, Ab3})

incl C(pitch {Bb5, Ab4})

A7, m. 4

Vln.

incl C(pitch {A5, Bb4})

C(pc {789A}); C(rhythm 7:8 64ths);
C(cseg <012321> = interval sizes <large, small, large, small, large>)

A11, m. 6

Vln.

Example 9. Additional Associations for Segment A15, *In Two Parts*, mm. 5-7

A10, m. 5
Pf. *p* *f*
Red. *

incl C(pitch { {F4, F#4, G4}, D4})

A13, m. 6
Pf. *f*
Red. *

A13a, m. 6
Pf. *f*
Red. *

A13b, m. 6
Pf. *f*
Red. *

A15a, m. 7
Pf. *f*
Red. *

A15, m. 7
Pf. *f*
Red. *

C(SC [0124]=
C(ip {+4, <+1, -2>}))
(= <D4, F#4, G4, F4>
to <F#4, G4, F4, A4>)

Associative subset criterion: "turn" = C(ip I, R, RI <+2, -1>)

Associative subset criterion: C(pc {5789A})

...
A11, m. 6
Vln. *mf*
7:8

A12, m. 6
Hp. *mf*

A14, m. 6
Vln. *pizz.* *fpp*
Vc. *fpp*
C(pc {5789A})

A15b, m. 7
Pf. *ff*

incl C(pitch {Bb5, Ab4})

Example 10. Segments and Associative Organization, *In Two Parts*, mm. 7–10

A1c, m. 1
Cl. *pp*

A15, m. 7
Pf. *mf* *pp*

A16, m. 8
Hp. *p*

A17, m. 8
Pf. *mf* *pp*

A18, m. 9
Vln. *f*

A19, m. 9
Vc. *p*

A20, m. 10
Pf. *p*

A22, m. 10
Pf. *p*

A23, m. 11
Vln. *pizz.*
Vc. *mf*

C(pitch R<F#4, F4, A4>)

C(pitch {A4, G5})

C(pitch <A4, G5, F4, {F#4, E3}>)

C(pitch R<A4, F4, G4, F#4>)

C(pitch R<F#4, F4, A4>)

C(pc {4567}); incl C(pitch F4, G4)

incl C(pitch dyad {F4, F#3})

C(pc <{45}, {67}, {9AB}> = pitch intervals <11, 11, {14, 11}>)
C(overall contour of dyads 1<210>)

4:3

[Mitschlag]

Example 11. Associations Between A4 and A21

A7, m. 4
Vln. *p*

A4a, m. 3
Cl. *mf* *pp*

A21a, m. 10
Cl. *mf*

A4, m. 3
Cl. *mf* *pp*

A21, m. 10
Cl. *mf* *f* *piu f*

A4b, m. 3
Cl. *pp*

A21b, m. 10
Cl. *f* *piu f*

7:8

C(ip semblance of I: <+11, -11> becomes <-10, +10>)
C(SC [0123])

C(pc {89A})

incl C(pitch R<G5, F5, A5>)

Example 12. Chaining in Associative Organization and Pitch-Class Set Migration, *In Two Parts*, mm. 1-16

A4, m. 3
pcset {45679}
(E-)(A span) =
C(SC [01235])
 Cl. *mf* *pp*

A21a, m. 10
pcset {5789A}
(F-)(Bb span) =
C(SC [01235])
 Cl. *mf*

A21b, m. 10
 Cl. *f* *fpiu*

A24, m. 12
pcset {79AB0}
(G-)(C span) =
C(SC [01235])
 Trp. *mf* *p*

A25, m. 12
 Vln. *mf*

A1, m. 1
 Cl. *pp*
C(ip R<-4, +2, -1, -2, +1>)

A26, m. 13
 Trp. *f*
incl C(ip <+4, <-2, +1>);
incl C(cseg <14230>)

A27, m. 14
 Hp. *p*
C(pc <{9A0} {7B} >) = coordinated
with move from 32nds/16ths to 8ths

A28, m. 14
 Cl. *pp* *sub tone*
C(pitch <B3, G3>, in unison
C(pitch R<F#4, Bb4, A5>)
C(pitch R<F#4, F5>)

A29, m. 15
 Pf. *pp*
C(pitch <F#4, E5>); C(pc {346})

A30, m. 15
 Pf. *pp*
pcset {13456}
(C#-)(F# span) =
C(SC [01235])

pcset {12346}
(C#-)(F# span) =
C(SC [01235])

{69AB} = subset of
pcset {689AB}
(F#-)(B span) =
C(SC [01235])

Note: In this example, vertical alignment (as well as horizontal alignment) usually indicates similarity rather than simultaneity.

accompanying material. The grace-note dyad in A15b is ornamental, but significant, for it ties A15 not to another aspect of the opening melody, but into a stream of *contrasting* material. A15 exemplifies Wolpe's idea of multidimensionality: all told, A15 references and connects three streams of association and four temporal contexts: the retrograde between A15 and A1c activates mm. 1–2 and prepares mm. 7–10; the turn fragment in A15a recalls the piano turns in mm. 5–6; and the grace note dyad in A15b relates to the violin arpeggios and other contrasting material in mm. 3–6. A15 becomes a highly suggestive instance of how Wolpe's multidimensionality can activate different aspects of a thing *and* forge links between different things, making all parts of an “integrated whole.”

As the piece goes on, the clear retrograde between A15 and A1c sets up a more subtle association between the clarinet's segments A21 in m. 10 and A4 in m. 3 (Example 11). This association extends the recollection of the opening and initiates a chain of events that continues through m. 15. Like A4 and A15, A21 is multidimensional. The pc content of A21a ({89AB}) recalls the violin arpeggios A7 and A11, the grace-note dyad of A15b, and their associates; its intervallic disposition recalls A4a (that is, $\langle +11, -11 \rangle$ in A4a becomes $\langle -10, +10 \rangle$ in A21a), a segment with contrasting pc content. A21b recalls A4b, through a combination of pitch retrograde (for $\langle A5, F5, G5 \rangle$), rhythm, and contour. The contour $\langle 021 \rangle$ given by $\langle G5, Bb5, A5 \rangle$ in A21b is the RI of that for $\langle G5, F5, A5 \rangle$ in A4b; both begin on G5 and coincide with a move to eighth-notes.

The association between A4 in m. 3 and A21 in m. 10 via their parts is a critical link in a chain of associations that migrate through different members of SC 5-2[01235] in mm. 1–16 (Example 12). A4 preserves the pc content of A1, {45679}. Starting in m. 4, there is a move to the pcset {5789A} (the span F to Bb) with the violin arpeggios A7 and A11, clarinet line A8a, and their associates (as we saw in Example 8). A15 and its associates in mm. 7–9 return to the original E–A span (as we saw in Example 10). A21 initiates a second move to the pcset {5789A} and this time there are consequences: contour and intervals link A21 with the trumpet's segment A24 in m. 12, which introduces a new pitch-class span, G–C. This span is active through m. 13, where the trumpet's rapid-fire Cs launch a transposed retrograde of A1 (A26). Pc migration resumes in m. 14, with a move to the F#–B span in A28, and finally, the C#–F# span in m. 15 with A29 and A30. Throughout mm. 1–16, the series introduced by A1 informs the harmonic content of the most prominent melodic lines in the texture. These lines explore different “dimensions” of the series's content and ordering, extended and diversified by transposition, changes in intervallic configuration, rhythm, and so on. By m. 16, we come to understand the opening melody as an introduction in a deep sense—the first statement of a series with many facets, visited in succession and linked through multidimensional associations as the piece unfolds.

Closing Remarks

This analysis of the openings of *Two Units* and *In Two Parts* suggests the remarkable diversity of associative organization to be found in Wolpe's music, even in short passages. Some moments are etched in brilliant clarity, with symmetries in pitch and time that define clear subsets and high-profile associative organization as in mm. 1–12 of *Two Units*. Elsewhere we find hazy textures and shifting landscapes—emergent effects of an irreducible range of variation and low-profile organization as in *Two Units*, mm. 13–19. Many passages are somewhere in between. In *Two Parts*,

we find associative chains; here, material is differentiated, but the complexity of connection defies any neat partition or sole interpretation.

Wolpe employs a series as a partially ordered set and multidimensional resource in both pieces, albeit with some important differences: in *Two Units*, the seven-five division of a twelve-note series limits pc content past m. 23; in *Two Parts* (Part One being about one-fourth the length of *Two Units*) a six-note series (with one repeated note) is treated as a harmonic unit transformed so as to introduce new pcs as soon as m. 4. The prominent series statement that begins *In Two Parts* suggests an important question: how does the series relate to associative sets? To borrow some words from Wolpe's "Lecture on Dada," I think of the bland opening melody as "a kind of multiple exposure, a superimposition of various different aspects of the same thing" (Wolpe 1986, 211). While the initial series statement *can* be understood as a segment that serves as a prototype for an extensive and diverse associative set *A*, I also think of it as a pointer to the *series-as-abstraction*—a multidimensional, multifaceted musical potential that, once set in the medium of musical time, can be explored only gradually, by successive revelation and refinement of individual facets. Individual segments may be nearer or farther from the prototype, but with respect to the series-as-abstraction they are but different facets, each a significant contributor. Paradoxically, then, set *A* as a whole, with all the particularity of its individual segments and their complex associations, may be our best approximation of the series-as-abstraction.

To think of set *A* this way—as a shadow of the series—suggests that associative sets may be seen as wholes, and not only as collections of parts. Again we confront the need for a conceptual shift, from a concern with individual properties, segments, and associations, to a range of variation and its distribution; from a reductive view with necessary or sufficient conditions for set membership, to a holistic one; from an interest in individuals and collective properties, to sets or "populations" with emergent properties.²⁴ Just how to negotiate this shift conceptually and methodologically is a serious challenge for theorists with implications and applications to much contemporary music and beyond. For listeners, however, the "problem" of the series as a multidimensional entity evaporates in Wolpe's words, "The supreme eye, the supreme ear grasps the whole!" (Wolpe 1978, 306).²⁵

²⁴The essential difference between collective and emergent properties is that emergent properties involve interactions among individuals within a population. Craig Loehle and Joseph Pechmann distinguish collective and emergent properties as follows: "A collective property of a system is one that is simply the sum of properties of its components (e.g., total site biomass is additive). A true system or emergent property is one that results from interactions among system components and is qualitatively different from the properties of those components. Alternatively, an emergent property can be defined as a property of a system that is not predictable from studies of isolated system components (but see Edson et al. 1981)" (Loehle and Pechmann, 306–307). In Hanninen 2003 I consider the relevance of populations to the analysis of Morton Feldman's music, and apply them to two passages from his *Coptic Light* (1985).

²⁵Wolpe continues, "The singular situation, supporting the never-vanishing axes of the whole, is alien to itself, yet, inside the whole, its identity is deeply proven and vivified. It is the unfolding of adjacent opposites. A world where all aspects are available to themselves in any given stretch of a continuum of time or in its instant conversation into the all-inclusive moment" (Wolpe 1978, 306).

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Association and the Emergence of Form in Wolpe

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Glossary

segment: a grouping of tones recognized by an analyst as a readily audible unit.

criterion: A rationale for cognitive grouping of musical events. Criteria support segments.

contextual criterion: a criterion that identifies the means for association between two groups of notes. For example, "repetition of the ordered pitch-class set <C#, D, E, F>" is a contextual criterion. Contextual criteria are notated in shorthand: C for contextual, followed by a subscript that indicates first the type of association (pitch-class, set-class, rhythm, etc.), then the specific means for association. For example, C_{pc} <C#, D, E, F> denotes the contextual criterion described above.

associative set: an unordered collection of two or more segments interrelated by contextual criteria. Each segment in an associative set relates to at least one other by one or more contextual criteria; conversely, every contextual criterion shown to contribute to the set must support at least two of its segments. Associative sets are named with letters, e.g., associative set A; individual segments, with the set name followed by a number that reflects chronology in the score, e.g., A1, A2.

associative subset: a set of two or more segments embedded in a larger associative set and distinguished from its total membership by the action of additional, often stronger, contextual criteria.

associative organization: the content, internal organization, temporal disposition, and combination of associative sets.

high-profile associative organization: in the strongest cases, associative organization in which clear segments are apportioned among disjunct associative sets or subsets articulated by temporal adjacency. *low-profile associative organization*: in the strongest cases, associative organization in which there is a wide range of variation available among contextual criteria, flat frequency distribution among active criteria, or active criteria do not partition segments among associative sets or subsets, but instead connect them in a loose network.

Notation and Abbreviations in Criteria

{ . . . } : braces enclosed unordered sets.

< . . . > : angled brackets enclosed ordered sets.

pitch: pitch, registers designated in ASA notation (C4 = middle C).

pc: pitch-class (pc integer notation begins with 0 for C, up to 9 for A-natural, A for 10 or Bb, and B for 11 or B-natural).

ip: pitch interval, measured in semitones, with direction (e.g., +7 = an ascending perfect 5th).

INT: pitch-class intervals (in a mod-12 space, pc intervals range from 1 to B, for eleven).

ic: interval classes (six ics, 1–6).

SC: set class, written as Forte name followed by prime form enclosed in square brackets (e.g., SC 5-2[01235]) except in contextual criteria, which show prime form only.

CAS: contour adjacency series. Michael Friedmann's (1985) CAS registers successive ascents (+) and descents (–) within a line.

cseg: contour segment. Marvin and Laprade's (1987) cseg notates contours as ordered sets of contour pitches (e.g., <A4, F4, G4> = <201>).

.KIVA¹ no colon)²

Christopher Williams

“In 1886 brothers Robert and Alf Taylor ran against each other for governor of Tennessee. Their public debates culminated in one-on-one fiddling contests.”³

¹“Founded in 1975 at the University of California, San Diego by John Silber, Jean Charles Francois, and Keith Humble as a Performer Collective, it saw music creation as a total creation and origination in performance... In addition to the founders, there was a number of musicians who integrated into the group over time; Mary Oliver, Brad Dow, Xavier Chabot, and Ute Wasserman were particularly important members... Additionally dance, film, video, theater and technology were added to the group at times... in this the trance dancer Hi-ah Park was of particular importance in insight and creation...” (From *KIVA GROUP, that/ learning lab for collaborative art in/ What is there/ is there*, among papers given to the author by John Silber).

²Thanks to John Rahn, Sara Arsham, and Benjamins Boretz, Carson, and Piekut for their help in the volution of this paper.

³Nick Tosches, *Country: The twisted roots of rock 'n' roll* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1985): 128.

I have never been part of a live KIVA performance, so to write (about) its history, nature, and listening experience proposes some serious archaeology. KIVA, per se, ceased to exist ten years ago, and violently so; after nearly twenty years of performance and search and re-search, it vanished with barely a bread crumb behind. Its quest for radical temporality succeeded, inasmuch as no commercial recordings and few other pertinent documents remain in circulation – even within its essential collegial circle, at UCSD and elsewhere. {What does remain} includes several cassette tapes, presumably for private review and sharing among friends. The four in my possession (gifts of John Silber) compose an aural illegality of subtle and cryptic power, like family recipes scribbled down for personal reconstruction. For a distant relative such as myself, their curiosity as relics and musical realities is a source of both intrigue and frustration.

This ambivalence, not intrigue alone, motivates me to write. “I” am moving in this effort... or am being moved, or something has changed the initial relationship of this observer to the observed, such that listening to a selection of these tapes no longer requires me to inhabit the prefabricated time- and placelessness, the myth of universal adaptability, attempted by most recorded music. I do not expect that KIVA will speak to me through a disjunction of epochs and media, and clearly they never expected this of me.

A functional *distance* constitutes the excavation site of this project. The distance is electric, and many-splendored, playing not only a generalized contained-container game but even seeming to address these specific containeds and containers, me and you and the night and the music. But “the substance” as something independent of (to be argued or classified at the conclusion of) the game is still, poignantly, out of reach. Thus, I have resolved that my task be introverse: I disinter, or reimagine, my listening alongside whatever the music may turn out to be. In the words of KIVA,

“no planning,
no wishes,
no apologies...”

BUT

The space of our first meetings is, as advertised,

unformed,
undesired,
offensive...

KIVA noodles and grunts and stops and processes, interrupted; Antonin Artaud begins, we hear, and ends, we maybe don't, “... le capitalisme,” “... americaine,” and cliché drafts the distance. Even when the stopping and grunting and noodling stops, the rhetoric of abstinence remains; silences, refined textures, and direction are available, but stay cloaked... neglect? No, something else. For even at the murkiest of times -- John Silber shmearing a violin that “is not [his] instrument by training, but search” *tremolando sul ponticello* while Keith Humble (conductor, composer, performer, and musician’s musician *par excellence*) fakes klangfarbenmelodie on a piano he knows better than that -- we manage to circumvent the potentially gross self-indulgence afoot: a moment of meta interdicts the antisocial fabric. Intimations of musical perspective keep me listening, open to this elusively dimensional clumsiness. †

At various levels, the tapes leave a bitter taste, a wanting ear; unavailable energies and theaters abound. The bitterness focuses my hunch that the theaters and energies are *made* unavailable. Left in abstentia, they might be sweetly desired – imagining, rather than negating, a meeting space for the music and its audience – but signs of deliberate encryption sour our collaboration. In some cases, I have the impression that the tapes are to be performed as tapes: I press the go button and divine them, as a thirteen-year-old violinist channels Mozart. In others, I have the impression that their value is as an experiment in pure documentation. But in either case, I, as I, am bypassed, woefully unable to navigate the listening spectrum

which, to the best of my knowledge, is uniquely, rightfully mine, as the listener... and THAT, neighbor, gives me great discomfort.

Almost all recorded music I know in some way invites me to explore my position, over here, to it, over there; this is, after all, why and how I choose to occupy the spectrum – as an auditor.

“

At one extreme I can be passive. As such a passive listener, I may take great pleasure in my daily commute or my mastery of Napster. In my car or on my computer, the scope of my awareness is that which makes me a receptacle, identifying mutely with the act of receiving. This can be nice.

OR

At the other extreme I can be active. As such an active listener, I may take great pleasure in King Tubby's overripe reverb or the rarity of 1920's-era hammered dulcimer music. From the perspective of a listener who engages with the mechanics of a recording, either real or imagined, the scope of my awareness is that which makes me an agent, identifying discursively with the act of transformation. This can also be nice.

In between these two poles I might gravitate to major chords or voices of (real or imagined) single white female vocalists, or the vinyl medium; the production of whatever sensation I pursue and/ or experience in these recordings presupposes my eventual occupation of certain collaborative absences in the recordings, and that occupation – despite the fact that the desire for it may be explicitly manufactured by the recording itself (as an alternative to the notion that I have some previous, *a priori* need to be a part of this thing) – is an affirmation of me, different from and/ yet constituting it.

“

KIVA does not provide for such an affirmation; the tapes feel simply monadic. Are they are built for me to know them in this frame of mind? Some help?

{What does remain} also includes a handful of concert programs, manifesti, and other written tidbits in private repose. They are noteworthy for their combination of whimsical poetry and exaggerated positionality, and as such provide a useful glimpse into a field of reference which has since vanished. Although they do not provide the occasion for a comprehensive examination of lost practices (as a selection of gifts from John Silber, they represent a subjectively removed construction of those practices), in the context of my efforts to live and relate an alternately subjective resonance of KIVA as much as to posit the objective qualities of the resonator, it is just as well.

Of the nine unbound, photocopied pages in my collection of KIVA papers, three list a set of recordings, and one lists the performers who recorded them. Each shares a similar typography and displays poetic reflections on the list(s) beneath which it lies. The performer list page appears as such:

THE IDENTITIES

KH: Keith Humble, piano, synthesizer, celeste

JCF: Jean-Charles Francois, percussion, piano
JS: John Silber, trombone, violin*
MO: Mary Oliver, violin, viola, voice
UW: Ute Wasserman, voice-flute

KIVA GROUP

no planning
no wishes
no apologies
performer-creation art
the unthought thought
who speaks, who listens
form of form
that more open compass
on body and soul
that search for other truths
and instruments

music which evolves rather than develops⁴

*the violin is not my instrument
by training but search - John Silber

The first element of this text that provokes me, in relation to KIVA's music as set forth in the preceding paragraphs, is its ardent DIY (Do It Yourself)-ness. Printed as Xerox copies from a bound, unpublished collection, the performer and piece lists are a mixture of typed fonts (mostly in 12-point Times New Roman), neatly handwritten fragments, scribbles and Xs, and other small postproduction revisions apparently performed with white-out and pen. The eclectic layout creates the look of a fanzine as much as it does the documentation of a 20-year project backed by university funding. However its attention to detail – properly (handwritten) accentuated French words, font occasionally emboldened or changed as the case requires, and corrections of particular pieces' durations or personnel – shades the texts a bit. This casual flavor then reflects not a conscious, extroverted stylistic choice (as would, for instance, a punk rock monthly), but rather an indifference to conventional market-oriented (or historical) permanence. Thus, despite the irony that they are the most usefully and straightforwardly documentary of the bunch, these pages all exhibit signs of inadaptability to promotion or narration outside of KIVA's immediate circumstances.

Another element of KIVA's music that comes to light through the text is a distinction between "THE IDENTITIES" from "KIVA GROUP". However latent, this separation of the individual and the collective is problematic: especially as regards music which is not precomposed, what is the substance of the group if not its identities – the diverse histories and memories that KH, JCF, JS, MO, and UW bring to the "performer creation art"?

The text suggests to me that the work of "THE GROUP" is a pure expression of collective music born solely of the moment, a poetic ideal "offset" from its expressors; that "the band" exists outside its unique, defining constituency of personalities and instruments; that KIVA is somehow an ontologically

⁴ This line of text, significantly, is handwritten in cursive at approximately the same size (relative to the word-processed typography) as it appears in this citation. It appears among smudges in the background, as if another line or set of lines had been erased before this line was inscribed.

independent entity, a “form of form/ that more open compass”. It reflects a paradoxical aversion to concerted musical agency found elsewhere in the papers. *KIVA GROUP, that/ learning lab for/ collaborative art in/ What is there/ is there* (paraphrased in fn. 1), for instance, includes reference in its final line to “this Performer Creation Art in which KIVA engaged... the death of the auteur”. Detailing the historical and philosophical “platform” of proper names, the paragraph equates an exclusive, capitalized Musical Culture with the resistance of the very institution it inhabits. *KIVA: a performance group*, a page of program notes for a 1987 concert at California State University, Fresno, embodies this tension even more precisely. In stating that “The group has focused on new immediate musical expression... its interests hav[ing] been directed to abstract, non-literary, and ‘deconstructive’ forms of thought and how they apply to music”, it cements the logical friction of KIVA’s proposition: these three forms of thought are incompatible, literature being essentially abstract (subjectively representational), deconstruction by nature literary (text-analytic), and none of the three applicable to music made in the moment by and for a single group – which has no choice by this method but to work within a refined literature of past performances.

It must be said, however, that logical friction in the verbal domain does not necessarily hurt, or for that matter even touch, the music. When I consider that KIVA’s most significant claim in these papers is that their work was/ is *medium-specific*, as demonstrated both in words (“total creation and origination in performance”) and deed (texts which act by typography and other poetic concerns as texts in themselves), we are none the worse for an acceptance of paradox. In a sense, this ambiguous problem-space is where the most provocative, most fruitful listening occurs. I follow in suit.

Don’t Blame Me (KH: keyboards, JS: trb. + vln.)

How different is the silence which begins the tape from the silence which constitutes the tape? The

The initial 10’30” of DBM is rich, piece-like, and direct. “More” **exaggerated panning of JS to my left and KH to my right confuses a sense of foreground and background not**

happens in terms of material interaction here than in the entire 30’

born solely of convention, but the tape as well: a proposal of imitation, sputtering rubbed marimba bottoms

that follow. KH begins with softly plodding Feldmanesque dyads in the **and JS’s fork(s) in the road, teasing a continuity from the piano keys, strings, wet fingers. A unison – then**

marimba’s lower register which are interrupted by the entrance of JS’s **it’s gone – that world, that instrument. A seamless (seemingness) forfeit of sympathetic dev||| ...**

bratty, nasal trombone a few seconds later. KH briefly transplants

is it really development, or isn't it something less controversial?

the dyads with a rough touch to the lowest octave of a piano; the change

**Out the trombone, in that violin *tremolando sul ponticello*, out that violin,
in the crumpling paper,**

is mildly arresting, difficult to anticipate without the availability of
this line of growing closer and CLOSER, but somehow much, much more distant.

I can't expect an aural

visible performer movements – something corporal. He rounds off the

**totalism, a total entry into the narrative, and furthermore I *really* want to be
mistaken, to hit the medium**

phrase by a warmly but loudly strummed cluster on the inside of the

**membrane hard, but this dimensionality seems manipulative – I should delight
in the violence of these lacunae?**

instrument, whose resonance recalls electronically-generated sinetones

The actors aren't exploring the space, but the fall into the space.

more acutely than the theatrical, very physical technique I presume he
actually employs. This tape-specific confusion persists as KH returns

HERE COMES MODERN MUSIC!!!

But I Can Blame You!

to the marimba plods, JS all the while warbling and carrying on (having
never stopped, for that matter) into the piano: where are the

**Again the violin (*tremolando sul ponticello*), as if to parody the seeds of form
– right there, up in the**

performers, their feet, their instruments, and what are they doing?

microphone while piano spook rambles right along.

The piano remains open. JS engages a mute, and at times the compound

We can narrate, but choose not to/

We cannot narrate, but we choose to

timbre of sympathetically vibrating piano strings and trombone becomes

...that is, to find a Lisztian flourish just barely isolated by measure of resonance, completely isolated in the

indistinguishable from (what seems to be) KH's wet finger-rubbed

speakers, while JS punctuates plummy harmonies (as if) by accident, now forking again, finally bleeding

marimba. Warbling trombone, now singing a fifth above becomes tired,

into the right speaker, now taking it over, now receding, now pedal down,

coughs, gives up. Piano strings blossom.

spooking. I see another ditch up ahead and I refuse to be there, going there.

A short percussive crack on the piano soundboard (pins, perhaps) marks the end of the beginning. JS assumes his violin, *tremolando sul ponticello*, as if to negate the subtlety of what came before: the tight, timely gestures of former times melt into an uncomfortable generality. Too many instrument swaps lose their charge, maybe even their interest; a tiring number of long silences effect an atmosphere of neglect. (As it is made clear throughout, the interpersonal energy of a live performance which might sustain this strategy is irrelevant: we're listening to music for playback.) After one piano solo, pause, then a trombone, or a violin, or a toy mouth organ, pause, etc., it appears we've trailed off into big blocks of filler.

Plugged (KH: kbd. synth., JCF: perc. + computer, JS: trb. + vln.)

A rounder way to the physical: KH, on the keyboard synthesizer, makes the noodles more noodley, the

We begin the tape as if the realtime "Plugged" were already in mid-**spooks more spooky, such that cliché is more a real language – maintaining**

its interpretive flexibility – than a

stride: a thick texture of goofy 80's consumer synthesizer sounds,

currency of elusive, ironic jargon. An opening, a breath manifests. Perhaps the absurdity, the (real or imagined)

unpitched percussion (pipes, bass drum, muted cymbals), and violin

nod to punk rock, is what was missing from other pieces.

squeaks which dissipate rapidly, from some climax that happened before

OR,

the recording tape was rolling. As the crashbangboom fizzles out, JS's

JS's violin has a home amongst circusy percussive mishaps and kerplunkety sounds of the 1980's. Perhaps

squeaks take shape, assuming a subtle grain against the broadening pace

the presence of history as a partner – not a subject – is what was missing from other pieces. When KH

of KH's noodles, whose now more limited pitch gamut coincides with the

moves back to the *pianoforte*, I am underwhelmed,

cheated, put in a place that would have

violin's. The decreased density and volume invite JCF to warm up his

me trying to unearth something whose address is, frankly, too far out of my way to justify

camouflaged computer while punctuating the *tutti allargando* with bits of

its search.

woodblock and cymbal. (In truth, I am not sure this is the computer at

I WANT MUSIC, DASHITALL!!!

inside!

all, but the periodic intestinal rumblings resembling reel-to-reel tape at quarter-speed seem outside the vocabulary of a Yamaha DX-7. KH resumes the

Stop giving me “|||”

It's oh-ver...

chatter, but with a momentarily different patch (somewhere between “rubber
**Why do I need so desperately for it to be it, me to be me, I to be I? Can I be me, or it
be me, constituted by**

...I?

At

band” and “dental floss”) along a single microtonal line sitting comfor-
**the very moment of maximum perturbation, everything, magically, musically stops.
More than a grammatical issue. The**

tably within a major third. Sparseness at the breaking point: one minute
**need to write such things is strong, basic, but kind of impossible to approach as such,
or only possible as an approach to**

has passed.

such: I'm looking away, searching

JS pops the balloon via JCF, a possibly ring-modulated pizzicato a
**way back to through the delicacy of relating(s) that cannot
withstand being**

chord; we later learn that the violin is being sampled as well. KH hovers

left

noodling, but barely, with minimal volume and exaggerated, deformed tuning-

for

wheelglissandi. As JS's grain persists, at high volume and with long

dead must

energize, be

sustain, the signal-processing controlled by JCF leaves its hiding place.

energized. Says

Charles Olson:

We hear one electric violin, one acoustic, and before long a piano joins the
mounting cacophony. This moving dichotomy is what potentially produced

**"A poem is energy transferred from where the poet got it (he
will have some several causations), by way of the poem itself
to, all the way over to, the reader. Okay. Then the poem itself
must, at all points, be a high energy-construct and, at all
points, an energy-discharge... From the moment he ventures into
FIELD COMPOSITION – puts himself in the open – he can go by no
track other than the one the poem under hand declares, for
itself. Thus he has to behave, and be, instant by instant, aware
of some several forces just now beginning to be examined."**⁵

the initial wave, caught here on the second of three expanding instances.

I agree; another case of twisted times?

⁵Charles Olson, *Projective Verse* (Brooklyn: Totem Press, 1959): 3-4.

Age' Quad Agis (KH: pf., MO: vln. + vla., JCF: perc., JS: trb. + vln.)

It could be, of course, also could be that nothing has changed, everything was as it now is, and every

Finally, no tape tricks; the recording starts with the music, and **last detail can be rewritten. A good night's sleep is also helpful; I'm slowly dev||| . . .**

vice versa. A lack of reflexivity, or ultimate concern for product

there it is: "music that evolves rather than develops."⁶ I thought these ideas were used intransitively, as in "the music

(what quasi-electronic composition or documentary slice will remain **evolves (itself) rather than develops (itself)"**, but other possibilities exist, such as

after the session concludes), to an inviting formal ambiguity. Though

music that evolves (me) rather than develops (me)/

I evolve rather than develop

the sonic intensity and social dynamics fluctuate throughout, AOA

What are the ramifications of thinking/ being intertransitively? More than a grammatical tissue. The value of following,

retains a sense of motion and balance that sets it apart from the other

leading this path, however gingerly, is electric, many-splendored. Sometimes, form comes into focus, micro- and

KIVA pieces. In short, it exhibits the energy of an improvisation.

macro- and para-, as JS's forks have more than two prongs, and KH is working them too. The differences in gesture-

Each performer at some point enters the foreground, occasionally **density that muddy the forward for both of us don't stick to each other necessarily, but crust this mighty unknown in**

⁶(From the KIVA papers.)

virtuosically. In the case of MO, the time comes after a wait and
parallel – that is, the luminous empty of
recontextualizes the accrued momentum of the subensemble which preceded
{our collective, collaborative selfhood space}.
it. Her eventually frantic triple-stop glissandi provide the contrast of
Dealing here may require forfeit of an extroverse logic, but the dance (which
here, not there, can be seen via cassette)
a large-scale orientation - recalling (JS's?) previous frantic triple-
will help. MO, for instance, first appears as a JS double – no, stunt devil – and
works right out of “that violin” for a
stops, shortly after the beginning - to the organic loping forward of
moment. Later, she points the way for KH and JS, but JCF is doing the

interloper... **Knock,**

the piano and percussion solos in the middle of the piece. Likewise,

Knock ... whose here? Why, it's they or me, naturally/ The

stampede runs its course, and

all take turns in the background.

threads wear bare through the labyrinth: always falling up against

the walls

Getting the Runaround (KH, JCL, JS)

I love, love, love to eat peanut butter and peach sandwiches. (I only had one, but one peanut butter and peach sandwich is delicious as well.) It is possible that the excessive saltiness of the peanut butter had something to do with the fact that I was near the end of the jar, and while scraping the last bits from the jar sides managed to scrape off concentrated pockets of salt that had crystallized there.

Perhaps that imagined

inside-of-ness is real, too. Or, no cigarette smoke can waft so beautifully as to effect a negation of the hairs falling out, to the bottom of my

Kidneys, like however many
structural incongruities I'm
no longer talking about

unless you think of the place of "about" along, around which is exactly how i
aspire to think it but i'm right now failing along around the mixing bowls
which so sharply stink up the notion

not in

**line with however many keys are lost, lives are lost while rice
goes uneaten don't even**

try

† To clarify: the choice of clumsiness does not signify irony, and this is not ironic music; KIVA's entrance of wildly stereotypical (even cheesy) modern-musical material does not resemble the mushpot of casual self-consciousness in which I might, less sympathetically, find certain neighboring methodologies. True, the music *does* attempt to resist particular expressions of sincerity: a musician's debt to his/ her masters, or an unwitting affirmation of dominant conceptions of musical literacy (including the a priori privilege of that master, and the subsequent subordination of his performers, listeners, and their environments). But this alone does not warrant an interpolation of "irony", as much as it does an interrogation of why {the ironized} is being placed at arm's length.

Art, Musicians and Music Teaching Today

Talk given by Jean-Charles François
Director of Cefedem Rhône-Alpes/Composer

I – Modernism

An era now seems to be coming to an end, or to have already come to an end sometime (a half-century or more?) ago – unless it endures for some indeterminate period of time, in a world in which different time-frames can coexist. I am referring to the emancipation of composers since the middle of the 18th Century (or perhaps a little later, so slow was the process of implementing this transformation; or perhaps much earlier, since the premises of this emancipation can be traced far back in time). This emancipation of composers was mostly a liberation from their patrons: aristocratic courts and the Church. Composers then became independent entrepreneurs, in charge of their own work, in its temporal unfolding and artistic content. The audience of the work was no longer the prince or the heavens, but a mythical concept of the people.

How can we describe this period when composers were all-powerful? A whole set of elements can be mentioned: secularization of thought, heritage of Enlightenment or of the French Revolution, rise of the bourgeoisie, industrial development, assertion of the Nation-States, etc. Let us keep in mind for now two possible qualifiers: “modern” and “Romantic”. These terms may seem inadequate. They are merely meant to indicate two phenomena that are still playing an especially important part in musicians’ minds. On the one hand, through copyright and the taboo on plagiarism, the individualism of composers and the privileged character assigned to musical works give composers the status of perpetual inventors relative to the past, and necessarily lead them to the avant-garde. On the other, the composers’ art remains a mysterious one, which cannot be reduced to schools and canons; they remain akin to alchemists or godlike creators. Whether the composers’ art has more to do with spontaneity or metaphysics, or with an interaction with the objectivity of the sciences, the phenomenon of creativity is still perceived as incommunicable.

Let us attempt to describe the most salient aspects of that era. The musical work as such took on an importance it did not have until then. It became equated with its score, excluding anything else. From then on, performers were no longer allowed to add ornaments, to add or leave out any notes. The work became an autonomous and self-contained object relative to other musical works, and was set apart from any artistic, philosophical or political context. Public concerts became the privileged means of presentation of the work which, although it was defined by its score, only

existed inasmuch as it was expressed through sounds. The concert is a specialized and secular venue for pure musical art. The concert enterprise divided the musical world into professionals and amateurs. It also established a fundamental divide between the act of music-writing and that of performing, assigning to performers a specialized and restricted role. The development of large symphony orchestras also created a hierarchy among performers, between the regular orchestra members and those – soloists and conductors – who had the opportunity to determine a performance.

The imagination of composers could roam free as long as it was based on stable and rational foundations which made music seem universal. Thus the system of musical notation has not changed, except for the increasing level of precision required by composers. Musical instruments have become standardized throughout the world. The tempered scale divided into equal semitones has become the only accepted one. This shows how powerful the system is: in the same way that the alphabet, with its twenty-six abstract, universal and arbitrary elements, allows an infinite number of specific representations and contradictory expressions, the stable and rationalized framework provided by musical institutions allows composers to express an infinite diversity of aesthetic choices.

What about performers' training? Until the 18th Century, it was only envisioned within the framework of what Foucault described as "characteristics of guild apprenticeship" (Foucault, pg. 156) and defined as:

"the relation of dependence on the master that is both individual and total; the statutory duration of the training, which is concluded by a qualifying examination, but which is not broken down according to a precise programme; an overall exchange between the master who must give his knowledge and the apprentice who must offer his services and often some payment. The form of domestic service is mixed with a transference of knowledge."

Within this context, the status of performers gradually shifted from that of apprentices to that of full participants in the trade, confronting from the start of their studies its conditions in the real world.

In the course of the 18th Century, the school became established as a specialized space, distinct from the profession for which it prepared its students. According to Foucault (pg. 157-58), study time was rationalized according to four principles: a. breaking it down into segments dedicated to specialized activities; b. organizing within that time an increasing complexity; c. marking the end of those segments through a series of examinations; d. establishing at any time differences between students and setting specific exercises that are suited to their respective levels.

The third part of *Discipline and Punish*, entirely dedicated to the education system, focuses on the concept of discipline. The relationships between body and gesture and between body and instrument that are involved in the training of musicians constitute a perfect application of this concept.

"Disciplinary control does not consist simply in teaching or imposing a series of particular gestures; it imposes the best relation between a gesture and the overall position of the body, which is its condition of efficiency and speed. (...) Discipline defines each of the relations that the body must have with the object that it manipulates. (...) Over the whole surface of contact between the body and the object it handles, power is introduced, fastening them to one another. It constitutes a body- weapon, body-tool, body-machine complex. (...) The

regulation imposed by power is at the same time the law of construction of the operation. Thus disciplinary power appears to have the function not so much of deduction as of synthesis, not so much of exploitation of the product as of coercive link with the apparatus of production.” (pg. 152-53)

This way of considering the performer's gesture as a technique, as a means of production, seems poorly suited to a traditional conception of music in which the creation of a musical context through sounds seems more important than the performer's gestures. However, most methods provide a process, from the breaking down of gestures into exercises to the piece itself, through which the gestures can be applied in a musical context.

This is easy to understand: since musical notation is the universal tool through which composers express their potential, performers must be prepared for anything that can be expressed with that tool. For the gesture to be correctly performed, the sound of the instrument matters, of course, but that sound must be the medium through which any score can be actualized, regardless of its aesthetic context. This implies a standardizing of the sounds produced by the musical instruments as well as of these instruments themselves.

The rational organization of musical media (notation, instruments, techniques of performance, tuning...) and their relative stabilization over a long period have brought about a great objectivity in the way their uses have been learned: while the creative act has remained within the realm of the ineffable, *solfège* (the rational study of written music) and technical efficiency, on the contrary, have become the foundations of the teaching of music. The avoidance of any ambiguousness in the way the elements of the code are dealt with (since each note has to be either correct or incorrect) has made the evaluation of performances crystal-clear and, in principle, has created an even playing field in which everyone has the same opportunities to succeed through hard work and dedication.

What has been the purpose of engaging in this process of industrial production? It has made it possible to perform the scores, it has provided access to them. And through this, it has made it possible to find enjoyment in them, and for some, to appropriate them in order to give them an aesthetic existence appropriate to their content (whether an even playing field can ever be created in the area of cultural sensibility, however, is far from certain).

The performers' identity is constructed through their ability to meet the composers' concerns, in particular regarding virtuosity. But this identity is also constructed within the more strictly limited framework of instrumental technique and sound, through membership in a *school*, the most relevant aspect of which, during the era we are considering, has been the nation. As it happens, this question of national identity has often met the concerns of composers, who tended to match their musical writing to the characteristics of their national school, which also influenced the characteristics of the performance.

In her dissertation, *Education musicale et identité nationale en Allemagne et en France* (1994), Noémi Duchemin showed to what extent music in France has had to conform to a political agenda aimed at founding a national identity, whereas in Germany practices which were widespread among the people have better allowed the development of "the affirmation of music's own power" (pg. 350). It seems that, because of the diversity

of the cultures found within France's borders and of the decisive choice that was made to enforce a centralizing rationality, the modern republican French nation has been founded since the Revolution upon the imposition by the state on the whole of the people of a culture that, to some extent, was a fabrication. Thus, the use in teaching institutions of a manufactured music at the expense of regional traditions was consistent with the imposed use of the French language at the expense of traditional dialects and of a secular rational culture at the expense of local superstitions. That process was clearly at work in the philanthropic ideas that gave rise to *Orphéons* (amateur bands) and to ordinary people's choirs during the 19th Century. Their educational and moral agenda seems to have been based on three rejections, on a matter of principle: that of the cabaret, of the aristocratic salon, and of the village festival. This triple rejection implied the setting up of large ensembles in which individuals would vanish, merging into a collective sound endowed with a supposedly universal character, thus avoiding overly erotic situations. It also implied the manufacturing of appropriate musical compositions (see Philippe Gumpłowicz's *Les travaux d'Orphée*). This was in no way incompatible with the development of virtuoso soloists, or with the use of exotic influences in the pieces presented. The rational teaching of music had thus found its objects, in three different senses of the term: its purpose (rationality), tools (textbooks), and subjected bodies (students).

II – Postmodernism

In the course of the 20th Century, the development of electric technologies has at the same time reinforced and disturbed – which is to say completed – the process that had begun with the empowerment of composers. One example is enough to show this: the advent of the record has greatly increased the audience composers can reach. But it has also come to compete with the score as a physical object able to record the elusive element of sound. And, by turning the art work into a commodity, it has completed the process that had started with Romanticism and Modernism. Recording technologies have brought to completion a long and difficult process, namely the artists' struggle to reach real audiences. Electronic technologies have democratized the access to diverse aesthetic experiences, while turning everyday life into an aesthetic experience. The struggle has been won. But, at the same time, it has been lost, because it has ended up in the expression of ironic forms, heavily devalued in regard to the metaphysical claims with which artists had started up. Art is complete, it is dead. A postmodern artistic posture seems to match a postindustrial technology.

My presentation has been inspired by Gianni Vattimo's *The End of Modernity*, especially his chapter on the "Death or Decline of Art":

"The way in which artists often respond to the death of art at the hand of the mass media also belongs to the category of death, for it appears as a suicidal gesture of protest. To protest against Kitsch, a manipulative mass culture, and the aestheticization of existence at a low and weak level, authentic art has often taken refuge in programmatically aporetic positions which deny any possibility of immediate enjoyment of the work (its 'gastronomic' aspect, as it were), refuse to communicate anything at all, and opt for silence instead. (...) in a world where consensus is produced by manipulation, authentic art speaks only by lapsing into silence, and aesthetic experience arises only as the negation of all its traditional

and canonical characteristics, starting with the pleasure of the beautiful itself."

John Cage provides an example of this. Paradoxically, on the one hand he completely took on the posture of an international composer in every external aspect of his role: published scores, copyright, aesthetic writings explaining his purpose, concerts, festivals, recognition by the artistic community and beyond... On the other hand, his approach to art was entirely aimed at demonstrating the absurdity of that very posture: refusing personal responsibility by resorting to chance, replacing identifiable works with indeterminate processes, rejecting the hierarchy between musical and supposedly non-musical sounds, denying any relationship between sounds and any meaning they might take on beyond their mere existence. Every one of the values on which composers' modern agenda had been based collapsed in Cage's approach. After him, no foundation can any longer be provided for any point of view, rather than any other. The prophecy has been fulfilled: art cannot be taught. The end of art amounts to the irrelevance of all schools: this axiom has become truth. However, this approach has left the logic of Modernism intact: in order to perform Cage, performers must still be trained in conservatories according to the same requirements as those developed since the Revolution.

Vattimo's surprise at the enduring existence of the institutions of modern art echoes ours: "For there are still, after all, theatres, concert halls, and galleries, and there are artists who produce works which unproblematically fit into these frameworks" (pg. 57). Incompatible values thus coexist, intertwined within the artistic world. According to Vattimo, through this coexistence the death of art has entered into an ironical game with mass media through all of its modalities: utopia, *Kitsch*, and silence. In this context, Vattimo introduced the concept of the decline of art.

"This is the situation with which aesthetic philosophy must deal. Because it persists in always announcing and always once again deferring the death of art, such a situation could be called the decline of art." (p. 59)

What is most striking in the decline of art is that the work of art has lost its status as a self-contained, unalterable and sacred entity. After Walter Benjamin, Vattimo notices that, in the age of its technical reproducibility, the work of art has lost its aura, inducing a state of "distracted perception". Confronted with electronic media, art in the second half of the 20th Century has tended to take on processual forms, moving further and further away from finished, absolute objects. On the one hand, every work is contextualized within its own value system, precluding any possibility of a community of thought based on shared criteria of evaluation. The multiplicity of possible points of view matches the multiplicity of the media, of the venues of artistic experiences, and of the modes of perception of those experiences. On the other, computer technology gives rise to a culture of the virtual. This is how François Burckhardt, introducing the exhibition organized by Jean-François Lyotard, the theorist of the postmodern (*Les Immatériaux*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1985), defined what was at stake in the exhibition:

"The theme of the "Immaterials" can be described as the demonstration of the transformation of the material world of

objects into a world ever more dependent on mass media, a world in which what is new and real is mediated through techniques of communication, and matter itself is becoming intangible, or even invisible, like rays or waves. It is a trend towards a loss of materiality, which is precisely that of the new technological age, and which must find its counterpart in a different sensitivity and a renewed perception of the world."

Confronted with technological requirements, the work of art has lost its integrity. Increasingly, it has been produced by collectives (in film, television, electro-acoustic music). It has become open to multiple potentialities. Following the concept of the open work (see Umberto Eco's *The Open Work*), performers are invited to intervene into an ever-increasing number of aspects of the work, which have not been strictly set by the composer. Through the flowering or renewal of improvised forms, works have become ephemeral. Performers have been liberated from a standardized production of the sounds. Fashions change at a fast pace, and specific practices are born, generate infatuations, and vanish within a fairly short time. Electronic data can be continually modified, etc.

These phenomena can be defined by using a phrase with multiple meanings: the work-less society. Not only are humans nowadays without a purpose, free to wander during their free time, but their attitude toward works of art is distracted, that is to say at once devoid of specific attention, and belonging to the mode of entertainment, while the practices of production of the works increasingly conform to this pursuit of an occupation, this wandering, this distractedness.

In the domain of education and of the teaching of art, the work-less postmodern society raises two distressing issues related to the dilution of values into a state of indeterminacy: those of professional competence, and of the educational objectives of schools.

How can professionalism in the field of music and its consequences on amateur practices be defined today? Some crucial facts of the last three decades should be recalled. The *conservatoire supérieur* no longer has a de facto monopoly on musicians' access to professional status; other paths are available, including in particular partial self-teaching. The increase in the number of courses of professional study available matches the development of musical genres requiring more and more diverse types of competence. Moreover, it is no longer possible to practice only one profession, and public performances take place with an increasingly irregular frequency. Few and fewer performers, even at the highest level of competence, can live on concert performance alone. More and more, teaching is coming to be the main activity of musicians. Conversely, an increasing number of people whose professional activity lies outside the artistic field are able to develop a secondary activity, not just as a mere pastime, but within a context in which the stakes of artistic production apply to their full extent. Whereas professional musicians rarely have the time or the ability to give full consideration to the artistic, philosophical, aesthetic and political aspects of their practice, amateurs may be better able to do so...

The work-less character of postmodern society undermines any attempt to design a unified system of music teaching. Each artistic project seems to require the establishment of specific procedures of learning that cannot be transferred to competing or following projects.

Three important conclusions can be drawn from this observation:

1. The diversity of the fields of knowledge involved exceeds any individual's

ability to memorize or comprehend them as a whole. A system of teaching can only be effective if it responds to the immediate needs that are experienced by learners. This is what makes it possible to move without major difficulty from one situation to another.

2. Education cannot be restricted to the traditional time of learning during childhood and youth; it must be extended over a lifetime.
3. The modern distinction between the domain of school and that of artistic activity has been blurred. Teaching, research and production have become impossible to separate – as they used to be in pre-modern times.

All this may be welcome news for non-professionals and for those who wish to advance the work-less society, but it also provides the principles for a hard-line free-market philosophy of education: schools as such are no longer needed (except for providing basic education), and training should precisely match the needs of companies (or, which is almost the same, those of artistic projects). This is an ominous development, because the lack of a strong educational agenda that would ensure unity between different social groups inevitably results in violence between competing cultural identities.

III – Mediation

How can we find a way out of this rather unhealthy, depressing and potentially catastrophic confrontation between modernity and post-modernity? Is there any hope of establishing renewed the foundations of a more positive, a less nihilistic comprehensive practice of music and music teaching? As Isabelle Stengers, a philosopher of science, asks, “how to resist”? (Stengers, pg. 151). According to her, there can be no resistance without reference to the past – so that past mistakes will not be repeated – and to a future that will be different from it. As an example of this, Stengers provides this postmodern statement: “Before, we did not know that we believed, today we know that we can no longer believe.” (p.152) This statement suggests that progress has been made. It challenges us and questions future practices:

“The question is thus one of knowing what “what we no longer believe” can make us capable of: What sensibilities, what risks, what becomings can it engage us in? Can we confer a positive meaning to “what we no longer believe?” Can we transform the shame of what our beliefs have permitted into a capacity to problematize and to invent – that is, to resist? (Stengers, pg. 152-53)

Yet the second clause, “we can no longer believe”, undermines the validity of the first, “Before, we did not know that we believed”. In other words, the “post” element of the post-modern challenges historical concepts, in particular the elegant construction of modernism. This is the thesis developed by Bruno Latour in *We Have Never Been Modern*. According to him, the concept of modernity is based on the fiction of a fundamental separation between nature and culture, or between the realm of science and that of politics. For the modern configuration to work, the entire space of mediation between

these entities must remain empty: on one side, scientific progress with its truth requirements regarding its objects; on the other, political emancipation within the shifting space of human subjects.

To return to the examples I have given, the affirmation of the role of the composer as the specialized subject of creation and thus of progress, is based on the fact that the material of music, meaning both the musical instruments and the state of scientific theories of acoustic space, must remain a stable, controlled and neutral element. For composers to be able to function as producers of modern works, every element involved in the mediation between the objects and the people who participate in this mediation, the performers in particular, must conform to this project. Antoine Hennion notes the existence within research on artistic phenomena of a fundamental separation between “aestheticism (music without society) and sociologism (society without music)” (Hennion, pg. 297).

For modern or Romantic musicians, the phenomenon of music was perceived in its absolute purity, requiring that the concerns of everyday life be erased. The work of art entailed internal requirements that could not be popularized or even modified without compromising its very essence. At the same time, in the realm of musical performance, the work had to remain in an unreachable space. A few exceptional beings (world-level soloists) were alone able to come close to it. As for others, only differences of degree could be found between members of orchestras, cultural mediators (musicologists, critics, and professors), amateurs and ignoramuses, within a carefully maintained hierarchy. Great works of music existed in themselves, transcendent, outside of any context of interaction with society, of any political perspective or of any exchange between actual human beings. The work was considered as an absolute entity, and the enterprise of mediation thus downgraded as merely incidental: only the final result mattered.

Conversely, sociologists have tended to focus exclusively on institutional, political or social systems, in order to bring to light what the agents cannot see, without taking into account the artists’ aesthetic intention. They can convincingly show the poverty and pretense hidden behind art’s brilliance, but they refuse to consider the many mediations (through humans and objects) which play a part in, and determine, the production of art. By doing so, even though they may be deconstructing the mechanisms of social interaction, they perpetuate the myth according to which works of art would be created *sui generis* by superhuman geniuses.

Hennion’s enterprise amounts to denying this divide between two worlds (aesthetics of music and sociology of music) that are at the same time antagonistic and interdependent in the absolute claims they both make. Developing a theory of mediation would allow a better understanding of the many social, political and aesthetic contexts within which all artistic production comes into play. But Hennion’s thesis goes much further in illuminating the contemporary world and the conditions under which art might still be considered in the future. Faced with increasing mediation through objects and human beings, music can only be considered as a process of interaction with these mediations, aiming at an ever-changing recreation of sound material in context:

“Music, which is an art of actual presence, as opposed to the arts of representation, an art of the unavoidable interval between musicians and sounds, cannot be easily transferred to the material its objects are made of, or to the “imagination” of its subjects – since this word is not relevant in the domain of sounds. To exist, it must every time recreate its sociology and its physics.” (Hennion, pg. 290)

Because mediations are now unstable by nature and in the way they coexist with each other, and because the agendas and hierarchic relationships involved in the interaction between human beings are constantly shifting, mediations can be considered not as mere means of explaining the world, but as a deliberate mode of production of artistic events.

We must reconsider the way we have been envisioning history. According to Latour, modernism is in fact an elegant or optimistic historical fiction, which was put together a posteriori based on salient facts and great works. In reality, these facts and works were dependent on the existence of processes of mediation. These processes became the conditions that made it possible for the specifically modern character of these facts and of works to be realized:

"We do not need to base our explanations on these two pure forms, the object, or society as a subject, because it is these forms, on the contrary, that constitute partial and purified effects of the central practice that is our only object of study.

Human activities have always been makeshift jobs putting disparate parts together; they unfold on a background of contradictory historical sediments. Latour resorts to the concept of poly-temporality, or coexistence of different times. In all modern projects, the pre-modern to some extent keeps imposing its concepts, even (and above all) in the privileged space of dispassionate rigor: that of science laboratories. Consequently, the chaotic aspect of our present society, with its various cultural expressions, may not be the amazingly new phenomenon it might seem to our anxious gaze.

It is possible to reconsider history in a different way and to rewrite the scenario of modernity I presented at the beginning of this article. Composers, while claiming to be chosen by fate to trample the Academy and create for posterity the work of the future, were actually poor blokes who had to keep one foot in the door of the Academy to try to establish their power on a day by day basis. They had to compete with dangerous rivals who turned authentic art into spectacular but vain pirouettes: virtuoso performers. They had to improvise in the salons, seduce the King of Bavaria, find harpists, decide on teaching methods, take charge of the amateur musicians from the *Orphéon*, play political games in order to be appointed directors of the conservatory...

The conservatory of the 19th century, and until the very end of the 20th century, has not actually been the space we described above as completely rationalized by the framework of discipline. On the contrary, it has also been a place where the authority of a certain mode of thinking and of any overly didactic enterprise has been stubbornly opposed. What is especially striking is the way the pre-modern world has endured within the framework of specialized teaching: very close and quasi-daily relationships between master and student, hierarchic guild-like organization of the profession, belief in the predestination of musical spirits, culture of oral transmission, downgrading of the score as a mere rite of passage or means of little significance, rejection of any theory outside of the school's own textbook. Even the national institution of "solfège", the internationally famous method that has trained the best readers of scores, has denied its students the act of writing. The conservatory has been a hybrid institution in which contradictory practices and cultures coexist.

Let us now leave history aside in order to examine in what ways the concept of mediation may give us the opportunity to develop new perspectives. Let us return to

our debate between modernism and postmodernism. The fixed character of the written work has been undermined by technological development. Yet, thanks to editing software, never has so much music been written. This plethora has been weakening the role of composers, but at the same time the future of music writing as an important means of music production has been ensured. It undoubtedly remains the most economical way sounds can be partially represented, so that they may be manipulated, but also so that particular practices may be objectively considered, analyzed, reflected upon, rationalized.

Yet in the modern world, Western musical notation has lost two types of exclusivity: first, it can no longer claim to be the only universal mode of communication among musicians. Other equally powerful means have come to compete with it, recordings in particular, which imply other modes of interaction with musicians. They have given oral cultures the opportunity to enter history. Second, musical notation has lost its monopoly on the integral representation of the identity of musical works. Diverse ways of using musical signs have appeared, contributing to the development of particular practices that are either inherited from a distant past or related to the nature of new technologies. Thus notation can be used in order to recollect past events just as well as to plan for the future, to provide the framework for an improvisation or the means for a reflection on its own practice. In its ability to structure musical practice, musical notation can represent sounds to be reproduced or considered as starting points, gestures to be performed on instruments independent of the sounds they will produce, etc.

A reflection on notation as mediation opens the way to a reflection on written and oral expression. Musical notation is all the more effective in its operative potential because it provides only a partial representation of actual sounds. The lack of an overly detailed description of the sounds provides composers and readers with an immediately synthetic view of the musical form. In the world of performers, this is what has made it possible for an essentially oral culture to survive, since almost every aspect not represented by notation must be provided by other means. Here lies the paradoxical character of Western culture, based on writing while at the same time disparaging it to the benefit of an oral culture that is perceived as being primordial. How does this paradox work? On the one hand, writing is a "modern" mythical practice (Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Volume I, chapter 10, "The Scriptural Economy"), in the sense that in the past four centuries progress seems to have been linked to the practice of writing, and has become the foundation of our civilization. Conversely, oral culture has been perceived as synonymous of stagnation and cultural backwardness. A distinction between oral culture, connected to ordinary people, and written culture, connected to the scholarly world, has been allowed to set in. On the other hand, writing is considered as nothing more than a secondary representation of living speech. In music, writing is thought of as being silent in two different ways: the score is nothing unless it is performed, and, in the absence of the composer, it is nothing more than the necessary pathway his or her thoughts must follow.

Writing in music is perceived as being eminently dangerous, insofar as the musical sign might be arbitrarily thought of as a visual sign in itself, instead of as a representation of an already established sound reality. Within the framework of the teaching of musical writing, it is assumed that one can only take up writing to the extent that one can form a mental representation of the sound indicated by the written sign. Only by acquiring beforehand this "inner listening" ability can students escape the risk of performing in an arbitrary manner. Teaching is thus presented as a gradual pathway towards the supreme act of composing, on the condition that the primordial character of oral transmission must

be preserved: a pathway from the sensory experience to the reading of the notes, from a recognition of the signification of notes to the ability to write, from an understanding of the act of writing as an organization of the sound material to the freedom to create. In this scenario, everyone must be able to read music, but few ever reach the stage of writing it. Only the very best among the elite are expected to reach the highest peak: composing. This scenario has become obsolete, not only to the extent that research in education has deconstructed the concept of learning as a gradual linear accumulation, but also because the second half of the 20th century has provided a wealth of experiments based on the arbitrariness of written symbols (such as the *Oulipo**) and because, during the same period, technological development has come to fundamentally transform the necessary connection between symbol and sound, between written and oral expression. Means of communication of all types are no longer representational objects *per se*, instead they each constitute one of many possible representations within the broader realm of information processing. They would be more accurately described as means of transformation; no simple dichotomy between oral and written communication can be applied to them any longer (is a concert recording an oral or a written document?). In this way, they fully enter into the logic of mediation.

In the same way as there is no such thing as a pure act of writing, there is no purely oral expression, except in the myths of a lost paradise. In any musical expression, there are particular procedures, varying with particular cultures, which are meant to set sound material into something permanent and recognizable. In almost every case, fixed structures are complemented with more fluid elements that come into play during the musical event. Languages are sometimes developed to describe musical practices from the outside, in order to explain them or to enable musicians to communicate with each other. Undoubtedly, there is in any type of music a particular rationality which is expressed in organology, the system of tuning, scales, rituals, etc. The increasing number of media and of the representations they make possible opens the way to an objectification of oral practices as powerful as that allowed by notation in classical European music. The existence of "sound mirrors", of instruments of reflection, of virtual simulations, allows us to think of practices as something other than immediate expression and action unaware of itself. Comparison and dialogue between experiences happening within different time-frames have become possible. Mediations make it possible to analyze and diversify the uses of a particular medium, but they also provide the opportunity of mediating between practices which at first glance seemed incompatible.

From this point of view, placing an emphasis on mediations opens significant perspectives of emancipation, in terms of an increased freedom of choice, but also of a possibility to communicate across different cultural identities. It provides performers with means to overcome the anonymity of standardized sound and develop their own creativity. Antoine Hennion has shown how recording technologies and the evolution of public taste have played a defining role in the return to traditional modes of performance of Baroque music that has been observed in the past few years. Clearly, this movement is a scholarly journey back to earlier times, but it also amounts to the creation of a new sound in the 20th century. At the beginning of *La Passion Musicale*, Hennion quotes Philippe Beaussant:

"What has led to the new relationship (...) between performers and ancient music was not in the end an intention to rediscover

*historical authenticity. In fact, some went 'in search of lost sound,'** [...in order to] communicate with the music of a certain period not only through the forms it had passed on to us, but through the very noise that music had made."*

The foundation of the identity of contemporary musicians, as different from the one imposed by the school that had forbidden them to create their own sounds, is above all provided by the "noise" they make. They have had to invent this "noise" in all of its aspects, from the construction of instruments to the questions of tuning, ornamentation, phrasing and rhythm, and of the interaction between musicians. They have been able to do all of this because they were not working *ex nihilo*, but within the constraining framework of musicological research.

This is what is shared by all those new forms of music that are less and less excluded from the conservatories: music in the age of electronic technology. Musicians must be able to make their own sound. Sound is no longer standardized data used in musical scores, which only differ from each other in the way pitch changes over time. Sound has become the constituent element of a particular musical expression. Music ensembles differ from each other and trends quickly follow each other on the basis of their sound. Nowadays, the construction of sound is not an individual phenomenon, it involves a collective. This collective has to be a small one because sound amplification makes it easy to be heard, and because the wealth of possible effects makes it impractical for each individual musician to specialize in the production of a single timbre. The co-construction of sound by a collective can only occur insofar as each person has the opportunity to affect, with his or her own means, the whole of the sound mass, and to find mediations in order to make his or her performance fit with that of the others. Beyond a certain number of individuals (five? ten?) these conditions cannot be maintained, because one is soon overwhelmed by an excessive amount of data, and personalized sound merges and disappears into an undifferentiated sound mass. Much of what I just have described can of course be called "contemporary" or "amplified" music. In this perspective, the cultural, educational and ethical values of these types of music become evident.

Conclusion

The theory of mediation seems to me to open the way to a new paradigm of musical universality. Such a model might be found in the very nature of the mediating experience. Mediations depend on the circumstances and change with the objects and subjects involved. What matters is no longer what is permanent in the work offered to posterity, but the practical project that is left for us to carry out day by day within the ability of each person involved and with the objects (instruments, codes, concepts, fragments, technologies) that are available to us. Virtuosity is no longer to be found in aesthetic and technical transcendence alone, but above all in individuals' ability to manipulate already existing information in order to transform it to their benefit in an inventive manner. We should no longer value individual exploits alone, but also the ability to cooperate with others in a coherent co-production. To participate in this co-production, one must accept the risk of assuming full responsibility for it. It seems to me that new values can be found in this cooperation, applicable to both musical practices and teaching. Recent research in education, in the area of pedagogy in particular, constitutes a convincing reflection on mediation. Such research is often described as a means of enhancing the communication of knowledge without changing its nature, or of finding solutions to problems related to

motivation and to social and cultural diversity. But above all it finds its meaning to the extent that knowledge and practices in society have tended to lose some of their authenticity and original purity in order to confront the conditions of the theory of mediation. Pedagogical transposition is not only an opportunity to make knowledge accessible to students, it is the fundamental principle which makes it possible for those engaged in learning to involve themselves in the elaboration of a personal and collective artistic project commensurate with the philosophical, aesthetic and political stakes of our society.

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Discussion following the talk by Jean-Charles François

René Rizzardo – “Work-less condition”: this phrase you used is very hard to hear, but it seems to describe a very real thing. But when artists work with marginalized people, one realizes the extent to which art is absolutely indispensable to the development of a personal project. You spoke of a “distracted” attitude; I would add that political officials, as well as officials in any institution, sometimes display a kind of intellectual complacency that contents itself with this distracted attitude. Is there a position that minimizes, to a significant extent, the role of art in society, in spite of the existence of very strong though unrecognized expectations?

Jean-Charles François – It is clear that the key to a re-foundation of values lies in taking this notion of work-less society seriously. Art will no longer be able to make claims to the purity of its objects; the artists' activities you mentioned are no longer purely artistic projects, their nature is political – or perhaps philosophical – just as well as it is artistic. The logic of *mediations* is at work: we no longer find “pure” objects – purely artistic objects, for instance –, but hybrid logics in which different factors, which until now had been isolated from each other, are now cobbled together. This type of “makeshift activity” is now accessible to more and more people, precisely because they have time,

because they have no tasks to perform. Artistic activity is no longer intended for posterity. The question now raised is this one: "how can a particular project be carried out, here and now, with those who can and wish to take it up?" This concept of mediation, if one can think it through and implement it, makes it possible for individuals to be involved. Such an involvement of individuals would allow them to move from a position of "pure" consumers, supposedly passive, to the position of *actors*: they would become full participants in an activity that would involve them.

Eddy Schepens – The work-less condition is understood differently depending on the approach chosen: psychological, philosophical, or sociological. It is an understandably seductive term when applied to art: it is clear, following your talk, that it first applies to composers, on their way to becoming *work-less*, since the very notion of the work has been losing its traditional meaning. But I am not sure that our society really is work-less.

In your talk, you referred to the concept of mediation as defined in the sciences by Bruno Latour and in music by Antoine Hennion. They both underlined the role played by objects in our society; according to them, objects are not mere tools that would be "transparent," mere extensions of our will, but are fully operative *mediators* endowed with meaning, which lead us to act or think through them. Modernity was concurrent with industrialization, and the concept of post-modernity appeared in a postindustrial age. In the West, the number of objects has been increasing along with technological development. In music, the proliferation of objects has profoundly transformed cultures, practices and conceptions. First, the techniques of sound reproduction have transformed audiences' relationship to listening at the same time that they have increased the number of listeners. The marketplace of media has often been criticized; it has been blamed for developing attitudes of passive consumption, manipulated to a large extent by commercial interests. However, recordings have been the main vehicle of the hybridization of music – of its scales, rhythms, timbres – and the instrument of a certain kind of democratization. Today, electronics are transforming people's relationships with music in an even more radical way, by increasing their opportunities of becoming the producers of their own music. I think the proper context of the issue we are trying to deal with is less that of a work-less society than that of the proliferation of musical objects and of the new mediations that they entail. Music schools are among these objects...

Jean-Charles François – What has been increasing is not only the number of objects, but also the different uses of these objects. Let us take the musical score as an example; it might seem that electronic technologies would imply the end of the printed score; but no such thing has happened. On the contrary: electronic technologies are responsible for the plethora of written music produced today in numbers unheard of throughout history. Technology ensures that the score – and the activity of writing – endures; but at the same time, it increases the scope of its use. The score no longer is a mere representation of the work to be played: it is also becoming the representation, written after the fact, of an improvised event. It is becoming a more incomplete object, so to say, helping people to plan their musical activities in an extremely flexible way. All these uses of the same object are encouraging this hybridization of musical activities.

Jean-Luc Berthon – You spoke of a "distracted perception of the work of art": I would like to hear more about this. It seems to me that this attitude does not come from audiences alone, but from the artists themselves, that there is a kind of intention on the artists' part

for their work not to be taken literally, or even seriously. You mentioned John Cage, but wasn't this true of Andy Warhol, for example, when he reproduced Coca-Cola bottles or portraits of Marilyn? Isn't there a kind of fragmentation or dissemination of the work into many facets that makes it fluid and elusive? I think this approach is not specific to music: in works deriving from Surrealism, for instance in Georges Pérec's *Life: an Owner's Manual*, we also find multiple points of entry into a narrative, resulting in an abandonment of continuity. The artist himself "de-realizes" his work.

Jean-Charles François – Yes, of course. I completely agree.

Martial Pardo – In the description you gave of this great Western neurosis, of post-modernity and of the death of art, you emphasized technological development – as many authors do. It seems to me that there is another harmful aspect of our culture: the trauma of colonization, the encounter with the other. I am thinking in particular of Gide's complete idleness in the Algerian desert, when he lost every landmark he had, and felt at the same time extremely attracted to and repulsed by the art of the other, of the Arabs, and seeing in it the death of *our* art, in this monotony without boredom, as he said. The silence of which you spoke was for him the metaphor of the desert, something like an art of death. I think the Europeans' colonial enterprise had a feedback effect on them that involved death and rebirth. The impact that the so-called "art nègre" – or, in fact, all the cultures of the world – had on our own culture is well known. It seems to me that an analysis of this "boomerang" effect of colonization has often been lacking, or in at least somewhat marginalized. The issue of the status of composers, for instance, cannot be discussed in the same terms outside of the West: who has been composing, who has been theorizing North African art, for example, as it was discovered in the 19th Century? What is the status of the work of art, there? North Africa does not have composers or theorists, in the sense we understand those words. There is also this unease you mentioned, that rose out of the coexistence of different kinds of time: the other is at once our own offspring and an old man. I often use the example of Arab art: Arab music is a kind of old man that has been mummified by a long and dusty history, and at the same time it is a child in terms of civilization, since it has not yet discovered harmony. I think these are important factors, which should be taken into account in a historical analysis such as the one you presented. They have an impact on the intercultural exchange, the mediation you discussed.

I find it striking that so little consideration has been given to world music and to the musical logic related to emigration in the discussion of the concept of "contemporary music". Intercultural exchange is a very important element in this "makeshift activity" you mentioned, not only through hybrid music or contemporary amplified music, which often already are hybrids, but also through the effect of shared neighborhoods, of daily contacts with the immigrants' cultures that are alive and well today in our cities***.

Jean-Charles François – It seems obvious to me that this aspect is fully at work in the idea of mediation. My impression is that what I said about the score can just as well be applied to the logic of oral expression, although this notion is harder to tackle.

Martial Pardo – But the culture of the other is not necessarily oral; it often is, but not always. It cannot be reduced to that.

Eddy Schepens - The term *intercultural exchange* often remains somewhat vague. It is true that to this day we keep thinking in an “intra-cultural” and very European way, and that the colonial era and its recurrent effects have fallen into a kind of amnesia. Democratization continues to be thought of in terms of a Republic that gives priority to its own. Thinking in terms of intercultural exchange has less to do with the social stakes involved than with a more radically political vision.

Jean-Pierre Saez – Rather than of “blurring”, I would prefer to talk about an “encounter between the actors” that we are. We should watch the words we use: we have been speaking of encounters, of a hybridization of artistic forms, of an increase in the numbers of elements and in the complexity of the field, but also of “blurring” - blurring of values, or of references. I think we need to keep in mind these different concepts, but to take each of them for what it is worth and what it means. It seems important to me that the concepts we use be clarified.

Notes

* *Oulipo (Ouvroir de littérature potentielle)*: playful Parisian literary workshop whose activities have mostly consisted in the writing of experimental texts under self-imposed formal and often arbitrary constraints (translator’s note).

** Allusion to Marcel Proust’s novel, *In Search of Lost Time* (translator’s note).

*** The French word *cités* means both “cities” and “housing projects” – the places where immigrants tend to concentrate. (translator’s note)

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The Swerve and the Flow: Music's Relationship to Mathematics

John Rahn

There are certainly perspectives on the relationship of music to mathematics from sociology and intellectual history, and perhaps even a natural history – the cats and dogs of music scholarship, so to speak, allegorizing the dichotomy between musicians who can and will do some mathematics, and those who can't or won't. Underlying these distinctions is a relationship – which I will not call essential – between the nature of music and the nature of mathematics.

We are all familiar with the influence of Pythagoreanism, a mighty bell once sounded whose dying reverberations pervade music history with the idea that Number is Music and Number is Cosmos, and that harmonic relations among numbers are privileged. This locates the nature of music in that of Number. However, we can look at such Pythagoreanism as one aspect of a larger thread or strand in pre-Socratic Greek philosophy, namely the tendency to identify an unchanging essence of things and to sort out the cosmos in terms of such essences: discourses of Being. Along this thread I would locate all atomisms from Democritus through Epicurus and Lucretius. Atoms *are* – tiny indivisible unchangeable Beings whose combinations account for the variety of the cosmos – atomism is founded on Being. Platonic Forms and Ideas are also along the thread of Being, as is almost all Christian theology.

Parmenides put the underlying ethos well:

Being is without beginning and without end, whole, unique, imperturbable, and complete; it never “was” and never “will be,” since it Is now altogether, one, coherent; for what genesis could you try to find? How and whence did it grow? For I will not allow you to speak or think from the standpoint of Non-being; for it can not be said or thought that it Is-not. What need would arouse it sooner or later, beginning from nothing, to start being? Therefore it must exist entirely or not at all.

Itself remaining in itself, it lies situated throughout itself and remains steadfastly in its place; for powerful Necessity holds it in the bonds of its furthest limit, which closes it around, wherefore it is not lawful that Being be unfulfilled to its limits. For if Being were in lack of something, it would lack everything. ...for nothing either is or will be separately, apart from being, since Fate bound it to be whole, inviolable.¹

The beauty, and the convenience, of the strand of Being is that it provides flash-frozen slices of the universe (horizontal or vertical slices) which lie quiet so that their structure may be perceived and described – and of course, mathematics is the best tool for describing structure. Being provides a frame.

The problem with the strand of Being as an approach to music, or to life, is to accommodate within the matrix of Being not only apparent change in general, but also human will, free will, artistic will.

The Swerve and the Flow

There is a second strand in philosophy that is radically different from the strand of Being: the strand of Becoming, existence rather than essence; change, flux, fire, plasma, flow. It begins with Heraclitus, who says among other things:ⁱⁱ

1. Nocturnal wanderers: magician-priests, Bacchantes, wine-festival party people, mystical initiates.
2. The hidden harmony surpasses the apparent harmony.
3. Disbelief escapes and is not known.
4. Remember also the person who forgets how the road goes on.
5. Those who sleep are workers and co-workers in the universe of becoming.
6. Know that war is common to things that are, to justice and conflict, and everything needs to arise through strife.
7. They do not understand how something can go against itself, yet agree with itself; tuning by contrary motion, like a bow or lyre.
8. The thunderbolt steers everything.
9. One cannot go twice into the same river.
10. Nature likes to conceal itself.
11. The way up and down is one and the same.

Musicians, he us speaking to us! The vagabonds of the night, the magicians, the possessed, the bacchantes, the inspired! Clearly this is a different voice. We hear it from a few philosophers – certainly Nietzsche. The phenomenology and logic of Hegel are everywhere indebted to Heraclitus. Existentialists from Avicenna through Sartre sing in harmony with Heraclitus. Philosophers of flow and time such as Suzanne K Langer and Henri Bergson are in this strand. Deleuze and Guattari would like to be: in their brilliant and influential book, *A Thousand Plateaus*, a nostalgia for fireflow, change, and metamorphosis coexists with a discourse of escape from frame.ⁱⁱⁱ Music flows, and swirls madly.

But how does mathematics relate to flow as pure change? The first issue is the nature of change: to describe change in terms of states, at least two describable states are needed, before and after – perhaps almost infinitesimally after. But do two such static descriptions capture the feeling of change itself? A second issue is related to unpredictability and free will: there is a mathematics of turbulence, but is that suited to describe flow resulting from artistic governance during creation, steering the work amid the rapids, continuing acts of free artistic will (which are not stochastic)? We will explore these questions as we go on.

To sharpen our point, we must try to weave these two threads together, Being entwined with Becoming, state with change.

Lucretius, following Epicurus, modeled the universe as a frame of atoms of Being falling (naturally, according to their weight) forever in parallel lines, with this important tweak: occasionally, for no reason, an atom will *swerve* in its fall (the *clinamen* or *ekklisis*). The frame of structural (or divine) order and the Swerve of free and artistic will.

Michel Serres has written brilliantly about Lucretius, not entirely from our point of view. Here is his poetic description of the aspect of Being in Lucretius, Lucretius without the Swerve:^{iv}

Without the declination, there are only ...the chains of order. ... the new is only the repetition of the old. ... The order of reasons is repetitive, and the train of thought that comes from it, infinitely iterative, is but a science of death. ... the law is the plague; the reason is the fall; the repeated cause is death; the repetitive is redundancy. And identity is death. Everything falls to

zero, a complete lack of information, the nothingness of knowledge, non-existence. *The Same is Non-Being*. [Serres 1982 pp. 99-100]

We would rather say, *the Same is Non-Becoming*. Identity is death. The apparent flow of the parallel atomic tracks is really static, instantiating unchanging law. The aspect of becoming enters only with the Swerve – weaving a horizontal thread across the primordial atomic warp. The charm of the Swerve is its irrationality – it breaks the law (*quod fati foedera rumpat*, II 254) – and its random temporality (*incerto tempore incertisque locis*, II 218-19).^v But it remains a Swerve founded on atomic Beings and their unchanging drizzle of death.

Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers have illuminated the history of dynamics, the mathematics of physical change, with respect to these issues.^{vi} They show that the world of Leibnizian metaphysics and physics was a far more respectable endeavor than it is usually credited with being, in comparison to that of Newton, and that a Leibnizian monadic dynamic system has as its physical translation every integrable system, every physical system whose equations of movement can be integrated. Prigogine says:

A problem put in the language of dynamics is presented in the form of a set of differential equations that describes the following situation for every point: at every instant, a set of forces derived from a function of the global state (such as the Hamiltonian, the sum of kinetic and potential energies) modifies the state of the system. Therefore this function as well is modified: from it, a moment later, a new set of forces will be derived. To resolve a dynamic problem is, ideally, to integrate these differential equations and to obtain the set of trajectories taken by the points of the system.

It is evident that the complexity of the equations to be integrated varies according to the more or less judicious choice of the canonic variables that describe the system.^{vii}

Prigogine points out that every integrable system can be represented as a system in which all the energy is kinetic, in which the potential energy redefined in terms of its variables is cancelled out. This is a monadic system without any interaction among the monadic units, a Leibnizian system, a clockwork world of reversible processes – a predictable system.

However, the class of integrable systems is very restricted (the theorem of Liouville). Moreover, modern science has had to learn to deal with unpredictable systems of irreversible processes, in which interactions do play a role, starting with the relatively simple problem of three balls in a box. So the ideal of the predictable, integrable system fails as a model for the world of physical change.

It is the Lucretian world that, by adding turbulence into laminar flow in its grand metaphor, better models systems of irreversible processes, non-integrable systems that incorporate non-eliminable interactions. If the downward drizzle of atoms is the metaphor for law without change or interaction, Serres' dead "nothingness of knowledge," Sartre's hell in *Huis clos*, a Leibnizian integrable dynamic system, laminar flow – then, as the velocity of the laminar flow increases, vortices arise spontaneously, as it were, irreversible processes of turbulence deriving catastrophically from infinitesimal changes in initial conditions. Prigogine says, "The fall [of Lucretian atoms] is nothing but the universal without a memory whose every instant is the integral repetition of the preceding instant." But turbulence evolves as a kind of creative disorder which breaks the law of the integrable Fall, but is not random, not stochastic; a self-organizing system in which "correlations can appear among distant events; local deviations echo throughout the system."^{viii}

This is a world of Becoming. The Heraclitean flux/flow/plasma of Becoming correlates with the Lucretian Swerve; while the Lucretian flow, the drizzle down, correlates with the integrable system of

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Being. Life and death both properly enter the picture with the Swerve; without the Swerve, there is only a changeless world of Being in which neither life nor death finds a place.

We do have to be careful about these metaphors. The mathematics of dynamic systems models systems of physical objects in physical motion. Musical change, and metaphysical change, are not precisely thus. Turbulence is not free will, laminar flow is not determinism or slavery or totalitarianism (or even bad art). But the kind of globally predictable (and reversible) system in which entities do not have to influence each other on the fly and nothing really changes, still stands in contrast to a system of interacting agents which evolves irreversibly and almost capriciously to a complex organization of its own.

One could easily paint a picture of artistic endeavor as one whose nature is bound up with the Swerve. Without the frame, there cannot be a swerve: there is a need for both frame and swerve. Composers, even the most anarchic composers, know this: to play with structure or to break it or flee it, you need to invent or find structure to play with/break/flee. Can mathematics describe both frame and swerve by “adding one dimension $n+1$ ” a la Deleuze and Guattari? – a meta-structure of frame+swerve? Would this capture the reality of the swerve in art? We must remember that a discourse of frame+swerve remains founded on the frame of Being, and on attempts to translate the untamable Swerve into a captured line in a larger frame.

We may ask, how important is it, and under what circumstances, for a model of music to sing alongside the wildness of music, its turbulent flow and untamed swerve? Historically, we see attention to Being in music theory, nailing down simple invariant structures such as scales, chords, and pitch class sets, making taxonomies, natural histories – what are the kinds, the types? Taxonomy is simple science, but perhaps music’s temporal and fugitive nature makes it more attractive to parse it in such clumps. Perhaps music’s flickering flame is most in need of a frame, and has the least to fear from being framed. It will always already have escaped its frame.

No one would suppose that a “formal analysis” that identifies sections of a piece according to criteria such as themes and harmonies, with respect to some conventional historical paradigm (such as sonata form), there they are, the sections, clunk clunk clunk – no one would suppose that this adequately describes the music. It certainly does not sing alongside the music. If music were like such a description, no one would want to listen to it. We can say the same about descriptions which list chord identifications, or theme identifications (and chord types and theme types). We could say the same about the notes in a written score. The entities of such a description are at best merely the fumets of the fleeing beast of music. It is the relations set up between the entities and how these relations play as the music moves along in time that better sketch the flight of the beast.

Not all music theory aims to analyze a given piece of music, or to provide a theoretical framework within which it would be possible to set up a plausible model of some piece of music as it is experienced in time. Analysis is a recent addition to music theory. The question, “What is it made of?” (notes, scales, chords, relations, and so on) has been prompted primarily by a need to understand music *in a way which will help a musician create more of it*. Compositional theory and pedagogical theory are the historical mainstreams. This kind of theory aims at praxis: how to *do* it.

A good analytical theory would need to model the dynamics of musical experience, which is a very difficult undertaking. Compositional theory only needs to focus on whatever is of most practical use to musicians who are performing, composing, or improvising music. The wildfire of the musical swerve and flow is part of the act of musical creation, but compositional *theory* may choose to focus on a relatively simple box of *tools* for the creator to use.

We have not seen much attention focused on frame+swerve descriptions in musical analyses that are

mathematically oriented. We do see some analyses that pay attention to the swerve within a context of mathematical structure, but they tend to formalize the frame and not the swerve. This may in fact be the best way to do it. Iannis Xenakis talked about musical structures outside of time versus structures in time: *hors-temps* vs. *en-temps*. Benjamin Boretz has talked about the coordinate roles of syntax and structure: syntax is the set of entities and relations relevant to a piece of music, and the musical structure is how these entities and relations play among themselves as musical time goes on. The musical piece becomes a sort of playful path in time through a field of temporally invariant relations. Both kinds of relations can be modeled formally, but it is clear that syntactical relations, outside of time, are better at staying still to be pinned down in a formal description. Formalizing the dynamic, temporal, phenomenal, playful musical path through these relations is possible, but harder, and runs up against the refractory anti-essence of the swerve.

Music theory in general, historically, has tended to focus on syntactical relations of this sort, with little attention paid to what music does with the relations. One of the first theorists to harmonize the syntactical and the structural in a way that emphasizes the dynamic/temporal/structural is Heinrich Schenker. His work has become in many ways, at least in the USA, a model and a standard for any music-analytical endeavor. Schenker is interesting metaphysically. His essentialism is really a mysticism which is probably related to or derived from Jewish Hasidic mysticism and the Kabbala. He was raised in a professional Jewish family in nineteenth-century Polish Galicia, the center of such thinking at the time. Schenker as Tzaddik, the Genius: the prophet-leader with a privileged relation to God, and with a special revelation, who passes this on to his followers. This predilection to monistic emanationism, to a secular Plotinism, transfers structurally to the generative theory of hierarchical levels which is Schenker's innovative music theory. As shown by the work of a group including Michael Kassler, Steven Smoliar, James Snell, myself, Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff, Mario Baroni, Bernard Bel, and others, a theory like Schenker's is formalizable in two stages, the first of which is a phrase-structure grammar (or set of recursive functions, or any equivalent formulation in logic or group theory); the second is a kind of transformational grammar subsequent to the output of the phrase-structure grammar. In general, this is a very successful way to model much musical experience. The phrase-structure grammar induces a partitioning (if not a temporal segmentation per se) on the elements of the experience, the partitions at various levels are consistently related to each other generatively through a small set of inter-level relations, and any musical relations not amenable to the resulting abstract order are manipulated by the transformational component. Finally, some more or less explicit or sophisticated modeling relation connects the abstract model as a whole with the musical experience as a temporal whole, meticulously through their relational details.

In this kind of theory, the syntax is not merely a box of relations which are animated in time as the music passes through them to produce a structure. Yes, there is a syntax, but it includes on the one hand decisions as to useful entityhood – taxonomy – and the relations among these canonic “things,” and on the other hand, the inter-level relations governing the generation of the structure in levels. And as the musical experience progresses through time, it is the particular Schenkerian model of this particular piece of music which can be thought of as animated in time. The Schenkerian analysis is a fabric of relations, and every moment of the music lights up patterns of swatches in this fabric, so that the progress of the piece in time resembles an abstract sound and light show. In reply to Occam's famous criticism of Plotinism, we can say, we find that we really do need all these hierarchical levels of entities, the whole structure of them, in order to model music as it is experienced. Flatter models do not work as well for this music.

Of course Schenker is Parmenidean: “*semper idem, sed non eodem modo.*” What makes Schenker Heraclitean? There is the mysticism: the hidden harmony surpasses the apparent harmony, nature likes to conceal itself. There is its temporality: Schenker's theory is a *linear* one, growing out of

concern for the overall structure of melodies and the counterpoint that emerges among them. Counterpoint is at the root of Schenker's thinking. There is also a temporal teleology deeply inherent in Schenker's thinking: as the music progresses in time, the fabric of relations highlights exactly the ways in which the music is complete and incomplete, and the musical relations are thought of as moving strongly toward completion. Also Heraclitean is the irreducible, productive tension of irreconcilables: the linear, contrapuntal basis of the theory is in constant, productive tension with its inherent tendency to hierarchical chunkings; without this tension, the theory would probably congeal unattractively. Finally, there is Schenker's sense that, after all, music is not a craft, but a high calling, and not for everyone: "Only the Genius is connected with God, not the people. For this reason it is necessary to strip the masses of their halo."^{ix} Such an ecstatic mysticism introduces the unpredictable Swerve at the root of Schenker's view of the world, and of music.

Schenker severely restricted the scope of application of his theory (Bach through Brahms). Others have shown clearly that such grammars work well for quite different kinds of music, as Bernard Bel has done for North Indian art music. But there is at least a question as to whether there is a question (as Milton Babbitt might put it) of whether this kind of theoretical structure fits all kinds of music well. In particular, it has been argued that atonal and serial music is flat, not hierarchically leveled. Babbitt himself thinks of serial music in this way, in explicit contrast to tonal music: in Benjamin Boretz's phrase, serial music is order-determinate rather than content-determinate. This view has necessitated the growth of atonal and serial theory along these lines.

Joe Dubiel has perceptively described Milton Babbitt's music as the animation of lists, rather than the animation of a fabric of relations. The things in the lists can be large and complex, such as types of partitions, or the "compositional mosaics" theorized so well by composers such as Robert Morris and Andrew Mead, but the order-determinate syntax, in the large and in the small, remains one of completion of lists ordering an aggregate universe of things. One is tempted to say, lists of things at some level. An ordering of the pitch-class aggregate is one kind of thing, and an ordering of all possible partition types within a combinatorial matrix is another, larger kind of thing. Or, lists in some direction. There can be a fabric, an n-dimensional fabric, whose threads are lists, lists up and lists across, as in mosaics. It need not be dull or simple! However, there are no consistent theoretical relations that have emerged for this serial music which formalize inter-level relations of a kind that would allow setting up a grammar of hierarchical levels for it.^x

Most of the American music theory of serialism has derived from compositional theory, theory by composers, such as Babbitt and Morris, thinking about what might be useful theory for their compositional activity. Although this can be used for analysis, such analysis tends to uncover the "precompositional" structures that were, or could have been, used by the composer. It will be interesting to see whether some theories for serial music emerge that are more analytical in genesis and orientation, and what the structure of such theories may be.

However, it is primarily this compositional theory which has driven the development of mathematical music theory in the USA, deriving first from Milton Babbitt, who introduced concepts of group theory in the 1950s which were extended and built on by theorists such as David Lewin, Robert Morris, and myself. This tradition is indirectly responsible at least to some degree also for more recent applications of group theory and other mathematics in scale theory (John Clough's extended family of friendly researchers) and the neo-Riemannian theory which derives from David Lewin's work (David Lewin, Richard Cohn, Julian Hook, and many others). An astonishingly similar tradition of compositional theory arose independently in Romania from the composer Anatol Vieru, which nourished also Dan Vuza's highly mathematical applications of group theory to structures of pitch and time. And Iannis Xenakis went his own way in France, with an unquenchable intellectual

curiosity about intimate applications of mathematics to music. Group theory is an important component of all these theories.

It was, of course, Allen Forte who in the USA pioneered the analytical application of concepts from mathematics, first with a taxonomy of pc-set types (the concept arose also in Babbittian serial theory), and following up with some relations (such as abstract inclusion and similarity relations) meant for analytical use. Forte's "set theory" (as it is somewhat misleadingly known, because it deals with sets of pitch classes) has had its own ramifications and influence. In particular, Forte's own analyses of individual pieces of music have led many others to do likewise, and Forte's initial idea of similarity relations (as distinct from equivalence relations) among pitch-class sets has seen a flourishing theoretical industry grow around it, after seminal articles by Morris, Rahn, and Lewin appeared in 1980.

I hope it is fair to characterize Forte-analytical theory as of the syntax/structure kind, where the syntax is of the box of tools kind. There is in general no theory of how to put the tools together to model the flow or swerve, and, given an analytical structure of theoretical entities, no explicit theory of the modeling involved, how the theoretical entities map on to the phenomenal ones in the experienced music. For example, even the "segmentation" – more properly, any covering – of the total set of notes in the piece into component pitch-class sets is un-theorized. Any individual analysis is free to make its own case for coherence emerging in the temporal structure of its particular piece of music, using the tools in the box in any way it pleases.

Now is the time to talk about David Lewin. David, who passed away this year, was a colleague whose work and example have played a major part in building the American music-theory community. He was also the most mathematical of music theorists in the USA in the twentieth century. He was always careful to present his mathematics not so much as an application of mathematics to music theory, but as valuable music-theoretical thinking whose most appropriate formulation happened to be mathematical. This approach went a long way towards leading our community to accept the use of mathematics in music theory. There was always a clear music-theoretical payoff for using the math.

David Lewin contributed in many areas, two of which are especially worth mentioning here: his ground-breaking article on phenomenology in music theory, called "Music Theory, Phenomenology, and Modes of Perception,"^{xii} and his theory of transformational networks.^{xiii}

Lewin problematizes the notion of perception, while also theorizing it and to some extent, formalizing this theory. He insists on the poetic, creative, performative nature of every musical activity. He says: "...since music is something you *do*, and not just something you *perceive* (or understand), a theory of music cannot be developed fully from a theory of musical perception...."^{xiii} Not only is any musical activity active and poetic, but so are musical perceptions and music analysis: David says, "To the degree that analytic records of musical perceptions are poems, ski tracks tracing the poetic deeds that were the perceptions themselves, then critics – if not analysts – must concern themselves with the poetic resources at hand, that is, the sorts of poetic spaces analysts inhabit and the varieties of poetic media through which they move in executing their deeds."^{xiv} Of course, mathematics is one such poetic medium.

One recognizes the effects of this stance in Lewin's transformational networks, in which each relation, including elementary relations such as intervals, is construed rather as an act, a performed transformation. In his book on transformational networks, Lewin says:

In contrast [to thinking about relations among elements], the transformational attitude is much less Cartesian. Given locations *s* and *t* in our space, this attitude does not ask for some observed measure of extension between reified "points"; rather it asks: "If I am *at s* and wish to get to *t*, what characteristic gesture... should I perform in order to arrive there?" The

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question generalizes...: “If I want to change Gestalt 1 into Gestalt 2...., what sorts of admissible transformations in my space will do the best job?”...This attitude is ... the attitude of someone inside the music, as idealized dancer and/or singer. No external observer (analyst, listener) is needed.^{xv}

This is an anti-essentialist and Heraclitean stance: no atoms of musical data or perception, no transcendent essence of music. Music is just what we make of it, as we make it. The rhythm of this process assumes a central and foundational importance.

Lewin’s formal model of perception is based on Husserl. An individual perception (as modeled) is a list containing an event, a context, a list of other perceptions and their relations to the current perception, and a list of statements in some language(s) about this current event (such as music-theoretical statements). Lewin is at some pains to point out explicitly the various ways in which his model accommodates self-referential recursion, using a Lisp-like meta-model, and how the mutually referring recursive loops can be resolved either by a pre-parsing compiler or by an external interrupt (a musical event in time as time goes on).

Is this model fully consistent with Lewin’s overall Heraclitean, even Nietzschean, ethos? The model atomizes and particularizes experience, when the experience may be less explicitly assertive and more continuous, more sinuous and fluid, than a set of indexed perception-atoms can model well. Moreover, Lewin points out that there is no logical need to include the objective individual “event” in the model of the individual perception. Lewin says: “The role of EV in my model corresponds ... with Miller’s analysis of Husserl’s “determinable-X”....a feature... which determines the purported object of the act *in abstraction from its (purported) properties*....something like the meaning of an indexical...”^{xvi} Lewin’s “context” component of a perception-as-modeled is also built on such non-perceived event-things, so there is also no logical need to include context as Lewin has described it. So the model of an atomic perception would condense to a list containing a list of other relevant perceptions and their relations to the current perception, and a list of statements in some language(s). The relations of other perceptions to the current perception would include information previously relegated to a context of objective things, without the need for objective things. But how do we express the relations of perceptions to each other? Surely, the expression must be in some music-theoretical or other language. And what would we find a need to say, within the theory, about the perceived music that would not relate perceptions to each other? So the whole list of lists modeling the individual perception condenses at last into a list of the relations perceptions bear to each other, with an overall theoretical language for expressing those relations – in fact, a syntax.

I would add some way of indexing any given perception as a “current” one: the moving finger indicating a temporal experience. Presumably, the relations among perceptions are taken as acts, transformations by an agent from one perception to another, along the lines of Lewin’s later statements already quoted here. Once we have a set of sets of such perceptions, in each set exactly one perception indexed as current, we can act to yank the whole ensemble out of time and consider it as a whole, including the various positions of the current-perception index in each perceptual pattern. This model hashes experience into a set of slices, as noted earlier, which may not be always the best way to do it, although one can amuse oneself thinking about possible analogies with offset Poincare time sections in n-dimensional phase space.

Lewin’s theory of transformational networks builds a formal meta-model of structure on his phenomenological foundations. Lewin meticulously develops the formalism required for his networks, from node-arrow systems to transformation graphs to transformation networks, defining isomorphism among node-arrow systems and among transformation graphs, and isography among transformation networks (IFF their underlying transformation graphs are isomorphic); also homomorphisms among all these and the usual concepts of connection, and so on. The book

brilliantly illustrates each mathematical distinction with a wide range of music-analytical examples, some of which, like neo-Riemannian theory, have themselves become new subfields of music theory. Lewin has convinced American music theory to take this underlying framework of transformation networks very seriously, so that it has become a new paradigm for expressing musical thinking.

Lewin's transformational networks are, formally, graphs whose arrows are labeled in some semigroup, and nodes in some set acted on by the semigroup, in such a way that the resulting diagrams "commute" in the sense of category theory. Indeed, if the semigroup whose elements label the arrows has an identity, the resulting monoid-graph is kin to a category.^{xvii}

What kind of kin? In fact, the necessary identities are provided by Lewin's definition of the "node-arrow system" underlying transformation graphs. However, categories allow more than one arrow between a given pair of nodes. The way Lewin defines node-arrow system and transformation graph allows only one arrow, or label on an arrow, from one node to another. This precludes multivalent musical interpretations of relations (or transformations) between ordered musical objects (nodes). For example, when the semigroup supplying the labelling is the group of transpositions and inversions, and the objects are pitch classes, any ordered pair of objects could have two distinct labels; for example, $\langle 2\ 5 \rangle$, the arrow from 2 to 5, could be labelled either T3 or T7I, but according to Lewin's definitions, not both. Yet we often want to assert multivalent relations (or transformations) among musical objects. So if there is no overwhelming musical reason not to amend Lewin's definitions to allow multiple arrows, or multiple labels on a given ordered-pair arrow if we follow Lewin's definition of node-arrow system, there is some musical reason for doing so, added to the mathematical reason for doing so.

The standard way for allowing multiple arrows is to define arrows independently of objects (rather than as ordered pairs of objects) and to define also two functions from arrows to objects, one function yielding the tail or source of each arrow, the other function yielding its head or sink.

This change would bring Lewin-networks much closer to categories. The question would be, how usefully would category theory in general "transfer" to Lewin-net theory, in the sense that group theory "transfers" to GIS theory, as shown by Oren Kolman.^{xviii} Lewin's further constructs, such as isography, would then also find an interpretation in category theory. One possibility is to interpret a Lewin-net as the free category generated by a graph,^{xix} or it could be viewed simply as a diagram within a category.

As already mentioned, a Lewin network can be interpreted as showing actions transforming musical perceptions into each other. The network does not itself model time; the network floats freely over musical time. Lewin does develop the formalism of partial ordering implicit in the directed-graph basis of the networks, a hierarchy of possible partial orderings of which the strongest is, of course, linear. Lewin points out that such formal orderings need not reflect temporal orderings.^{xx} In fact, any Lewin-net itself (if labelled in a group) models a kind of instantaneity outside time, in that any change to any part of one refigures the rest of it already.

The Lewin network is a communicative tool, or poetic medium. The analyst can also use the display of the network in some space – a page – to communicate diacritically, as the display is independent of the network itself. The idea of the network does not itself prescribe the choice of included node-entities (perceptions) and arrows drawn among them, nor, in general, the relation of the transformations shown to the in-time experience of the music.^{xxi}

The newest currents in mathematical-musical space are coming from some people who are primarily mathematicians, such as Guerino Mazzola and Thomas Noll, who, I am sure, will express themselves better than I can express them.^{xxii} The overarching role of category theory and, for Mazzola, Grothendieck topologies, at least does seem to conform to the anti-essentialist Heraclitean mode,

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pretty radically at a mathematical level. It remains to be seen how well music theory as a discipline will adjust to these strong Boreal winds from the heights.

I close with a sonnet by Shakespeare.

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy:
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?
If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,
By unions married, do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou should'st bear.
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing:
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee: 'Thou single wilt prove none.'^{xxiii}

This paper was delivered as the keynote talk at a conference at IRCAM in Paris, October 15-17 2003, titled "Autour de la Set Theory." The event was sponsored by a number of agencies, including IRCAM and SFAM, the French music theory society, and *Perspectives of New Music*. The other speakers were Jonathan Dunsby, Luigi Verdi, Moreno Andreatta and Stephan Schaub, Allen Forte, Xavier Hascher, Andrew Mead, Joseph Dubiel, Robert Morris, Marilyn Nonken, Andre Riotte, Paul Nauert, Jason Eckardt, Jean-Jacques Nattiez, Celestin Deliege, Guerino Mazzola, and Thomas Noll. Discussions were lively, and included substantial participation from a number of people in the audience.

Endnotes

ⁱ From Parmenides Fragment VIII, my translation from the Greek text in Taran.

ⁱⁱ Heraclitus. Translations, and even the Greek texts in the various editions of the fragments in Greek, differ considerably. The best overall (of the ones I have run across) is probably Marcel Conche, *Heraclite: Fragments* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986); this is a very scholarly edition of the Greek with good French translations and with intelligent commentary. Charles Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) is also quite scholarly. In Yves Battistini, *Trois Presocratiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), is a lyrical, enthusiastic French translation for popular consumption, which is very readable but in my opinion not always entirely justifiable in its interpretations. Battistini emphasizes the mystical, wild-man side of Heraclitus (the opposite of Conche). I have resorted to a reading of the best English translation (Kahn), and readings of the French versions of Conche and Battistini, and have ended by offering here my translation from the Greek texts found in one or another of these sources, none of which seems entirely satisfactory. The rest of this already long footnote documents how each of the translations of fragments in this paper were arrived at.

1. My translation from Greek text in Conche 43.
2. My translation from Greek in Kahn LXXX.
3. My translation from Greek in Kahn LXXXVI.
4. My translation from the Greek and French, following Conche 13, who makes a good point against the standard interpretation.
5. My translation from Greek text in Conche 12, but not following his French version.
6. My translation from the Greek text in Kahn LXXXII.
7. My translation from Greek text in Conche 125.
8. My translation from the Greek, following Conche 87.
9. My translation from the Greek and French in Conche 134.
10. My translation from the Greek in Conche 69.
11. My translation from Greek (Conche 118, Kahn CIII).

ⁱⁱⁱ The “ligne de fuite,” line of escape, does not always work well partly because it is not properly construed from the “pointe de fuite,” the vanishing point which is a centralizer par excellence, the point from or to which all relates.

^{iv} Michel Serres, “Lucretius: Science and Religion,” in *Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1982), pp. 99-100. This appeared originally as “Conditions Culturelles. Violence et contrat: Science et religion,” in *La Naissance de la physique dans le texte de Lucrece: Fleuves et turbulences* (Paris: Minuit, 1977).

^v Lucretius, *De Rerum Naturae*.

^{vi} Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers, “Postface: Dynamics from Leibniz to Lucretius.” In *Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy*, Op. Cit, pp. 137-155. Subsequent discussion of dynamics here is indebted to this article. See also their *From Being to Becoming* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, c1980), and *The End of Certainty* (NY: The Free Press, 1996).

^{vii} Prigogine, Postface, p. 143.

^{viii} Prigogine, Postface, pp. 153-154.

^{ix} Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, translated by Ernst Oster. NY: Longman, 1978: p 159.

^x An interesting exception is the hybrid compositional theory of Ciro Scotto. “A Hybrid Compositional System: Pitch-Class Composition with Tonal Syntax,” *Perspectives of New Music* vol. 38, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 169-222.

^{xi} David Lewin, “Music Theory, Phenomenology, and Modes of Perception,” in *Music Perception* vol. 3, number 4, Summer 1986: 327-392.

^{xii} This appeared initially as “Transformational Techniques in Atonal and Other Music Theories” in *Perspectives of New Music* Vol. 21, numbers 1-2 (Fall-Winter 1982/Spring-Summer 1983): 312-71, and subsequently was extended and illustrated with many examples in his influential book, *Generalized Musical Intervals and Transformations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987) (abbr. GMIT).

^{xiii} Lewin, “Phenomenology,” p. 377.

^{xiv} Lewin, “Phenomenology,” p. 382.

^{xv} Lewin, GMIT p. 159.

^{xvi} Lewin, “Phenomenology,” p. 336.

^{xvii} See Saunders Mac Lane, *Categories for the Working Mathematician* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1970). There are also parallels in the theory of abstract machines.

^{xviii} Oren Kolman, “Transfer Principles for Generalized Interval Systems,” *Perspectives of New Music* 42, no.1 (2004).

^{xix} Mac Lane, *Categories* p. 48ff

^{xx} Lewin, GMIT pp. 212 ff.

^{xxi} A Lewin network would embody phenomenal and temporal information only to the extent that its nodes were labeled in a set of objects which incorporated such information, such as the perceptions modeled in Lewin’s article on modes of perception. In GMIT, the examples usually show one-dimensional abstract node-objects which do not incorporate time information, such as pitch classes, pc sets, tonal chord-functions, and so on. The formalities of relating multi-dimensional perception-objects in a Lewin network are complex, involving at least direct product semigroups.

^{xxii} Guerino Mazzola, *The Topos of Music* (Basel: Birkhauser Verlag, 2002). See also Michael Leyton, *A Generative Theory of Shape* (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 2001), and related to this and to Mazzola, John Rahn, “Chloe’s Friends: A Symposium on Music and Mathematics,” *Perspectives of New Music* vol. 41, no. 2 (2003). Oren Kolman’s recent work is also notable here: see “Transfer Principles for Generalized Interval Systems,” *Perspectives of New Music* 42, no.1 (2004).

^{xxiii} William Shakespeare, Sonnet VIII.

Representations of the Natural in Cage, Young, and Lachenmann

Erik Ulman

No anti-representational aesthetic is free of representation. The autonomy of “things in themselves” can never be absolute, as it inevitably carries the traces of some intention, draws meaning—however unwillingly—from social and historical context, and invites interpretation from an audience. The anti-representational music of John Cage and La Monte Young is no exception to this rule. Each is concerned to remove human agency from the compositional process, in order to “let sounds be sounds.” However, this project not only carries with it assumptions about the inherent meaning of sounds, in which sounds become manifestations of universal order, but about social organization as well: the “pure experience” at which both composers aim is laden with metaphors and associations that implicate issues of human identity and relations with environment. The rigorous order that each employed, although designed to negate itself and expose pure sound, leaves legible traces in their work and thought.

Cage and Young are inheritors of a long tradition of thinking about musical essence. Within the Western musical tradition, since the ancient Greeks, one may discern at least two opposed categories of opinion on “musical reality.” It is not possible to sketch a complete history of this dichotomy here; nor is the dichotomy absolute, since elements of each may be found in most music—little if any is completely reducible to one stance or the other. Nonetheless, one category ultimately locates musical reality, or essence, in its proximity to language and its capacity for expressive communication; the other finds in harmonic and/or rhythmic order a reflection or manifestation of universal principles transcending the specifically human. Two pairs of contrasting figures from very different circumstances may broadly illustrate this dichotomy: in ancient Greece Homer and Pythagoras; in eighteenth-century France Rousseau and Rameau.

In the oral poetic practice we associate with the Homeric epics, music had no independent existence, but functioned as an aide-mémoire for both bard and audience. This is made more explicit in Eric Havelock’s observation that *mousike* means both music in our sense and “the state of self organization and intensity of attention which the bard must attain.”¹ The rhythmic structure of the poem helped the bard remember (or improvise) appropriate formulae; and one conjectures that melodic inflections or instrumental accompaniment both underlined the effect of the recitation and further assisted the memory. This role of “musical” characteristics as supporting verbal information would also help listeners retain that information: Havelock suspects that the different physical positions taken for “strophe” and “antistrophe” in the recitation of odes was an extension of this musical fixing of information in the body.² Without written transmission, what Havelock calls the “tribal encyclopedia” had to be inculcated into the memories of the citizenry, and the memorability of music and movement would be indispensable.³ (One wonders to what extent Plato’s attack on music in *The Republic* reflects the kinds of information modes traditionally encoded, that is, in the habitual verbal associations of tonalities as well as intrinsic tonal effects.)

In this instance music’s power is clearly subjected to language: music arises as both a structural support for memorization and as intensifier of emotional effect and identification. However, with Pythagoras (or his followers, since definite ascriptions of ideas or actions remains conjectural), the

idea of a music tied neither to verbal meaning nor to dance and bodily activity arises. Noticing that simple numerical ratios produce consonant intervals (stopping a string at its midpoint yields its octave, etc.), Pythagoras found this to be another instance of the mystic power of number: as Donald Jay Grout writes,

as the understanding of numbers was thought to be the key to the understanding of the whole spiritual and physical universe, so the system of musical sounds and rhythms, being ordered by numbers, was conceived as exemplifying the harmony of the cosmos and corresponding to it.⁴

Music was thus a microcosm of general order, and the mind could extrapolate from musical to cosmic harmony.⁵ We know little about the Pythagoreans' specific musical practice; but Aristoxenus' observation that they "practised the purification of the body by medicine [and] that of the soul by music"⁶ suggests the spiritual dimension of the order present in musical number, and supports Grout's claim that music "was not a passive image of the orderly system of the universe [but] a force that could affect [it]."⁷ Plato is also evidence of this position: although in Book III of *The Republic* he views harmony and rhythm as strictly dependent on the words they carry, in Book VII he says that listening to "harmonious motions"—that is, certain relationships between sounds in themselves—may prepare the soul for the "higher object" of the "natural [intellectually apprehensible] harmonies of number."⁸ In the *Timaeus* Plato reinforces this view:

[Harmony], whose movements are akin to the orbits within our souls, is a gift of the Muses, if our dealings with them are guided by understanding, not for irrational pleasure, for which people nowadays seem to make use of it, but to serve as an ally in the fight to bring order to any orbit in our souls that has become unharmonized, and make it concordant with itself.⁹

A similar opposition between a "linguistic" and a "physical" source for music may be discerned in the tension between Rousseau and Rameau. In Homeric practice language was primary; but for Rousseau, music transcended language, although the two were deeply linked. He assumed that music preserved the traces of primal human expression as it existed before the decline into conventional discourse, and the measure of its authenticity was its affective power. As Carl Dahlhaus summarizes:

[L]anguage was moulded by melody, primarily moved by emotions rather than determined by concepts, and was closer to the original, lost nature of human kind than the utilitarian linguistic forms of the present. Music came into existence as the stylization of screams, groans, and shouts of jubilation, as Hegel meant by calling it "cadenced interjection"....¹⁰

For Rousseau the primary musical element was melody, and the most authentic music was vocal. Instrumental music was tolerable insofar as it was depictive, and did not deteriorate into the empty entertainment and irrelevant artifice implied by, for example, contrapuntal device; but it remained secondary to the direct expression of the voice.

On the other hand, Rameau, in his famous *Treatise on Harmony* (1722), asserted that music's foundation is not melody but harmony, "which arises from natural principles derived from the mathematical and physical bases of a vibrating body."¹¹ In this he was drawing on the investigations of predecessors like Mersenne, whose acoustical examinations demonstrated a firm faith in the capacity of scientific rationality to illuminate principles of universal order. Rameau did not dismiss music's capacity to illustrate or move, as his own compositions amply

demonstrate; but these were conditional for him upon a scientifically explicable harmonic truth. As for Pythagoras, this order was a natural one, arising from the overtone series, whose lowest partials generate the "primary consonances" in tonal music—octave, fifth, and major third—from which the other consonances may be deduced. Although Rameau eschewed Pythagoras' cosmic claims, the sense of musical essence as lying in external nature, as distinct from the internal nature of human expressivity, persists: the difference between them arises from the intervening rationalization of, and separation between, cosmology and musical theory.

As mentioned above, Cage and Young are modern examples of the second tradition of thought that I discern, that of Pythagoras and Rameau: they seek to present in their work not personal expression but manifestations of a more general natural truth. In fact, Young's image of order descends directly from Pythagorean notions of perfect ratio, as well as from Indian traditions: it is radically exclusive in its focus on pure intonation and sounds of long duration.

Young's interest in long sounds stemmed from early childhood experiences, such as listening to the drones of electrical wires and power plants, as well as to natural phenomena like wind and resonant canyons: from the start such sonic images were tied to the images of, and desire for, eternity he acquired in his Mormon upbringing.¹² This predilection for stasis was reinforced later by a range of musical influences. While studying at UCLA in the mid-fifties, Young encountered Schoenberg's "Farben" and Webern's serial music, and was deeply attracted to the static texture of the former and the static "repetition of pitches at the same octave placements"¹³ in the latter: early works, like the *Five Small Pieces for String Quartet* (1956; later retitled *On Remembering a Naiad*), clearly demonstrate these influences, employing a serial style in which ostinati figure prominently in the spare texture.

Soon, fascinated by Gagaku music, the drones underlying Indian music, and the Notre Dame School, Young began to incorporate long tones, some lasting several minutes, into his music. This phase of Young's work reached its apogee with the fifty-minute long *Trio for Strings* (1958), which consists exclusively of long sounds and silences.

In 1959 Young traveled to Darmstadt to study with Stockhausen, where he also encountered the music and thought of Cage. These experiences (in the course of which Young deeply impressed Stockhausen, whose *Klavierstück IX* [1961] and *Stimmung* [1968] unmistakably bear the younger composer's influence) encouraged Young to continue exploring sound in itself, increasingly detached from the justifications of serial technique or specific historical precedent. It was at this point that Young became involved with the emergent Fluxus movement, and many of his works are text scores foregrounding, sometimes absurdly, the theatrical element of performance as much as or more than the traditionally musical. Other works of this time, some of which are preserved as tape pieces, were improvisations using "wild sounds"—i.e., long friction sounds of unpredictable character, often amplified to deafening levels. Still others were saxophone improvisations which prefigure the rapid modal permutations of late Coltrane and Evan Parker. (I assume, for example, that the tantalizing saxophone riffing that briefly surfaces in Jack Smith's film *Flaming Creatures* [1964] is Young's: Young and his wife Marian Zazeela appear in the film, and the soundtrack was assembled by Young's associate Tony Conrad.)

In discussing his "wild" improvisations in his "Lecture 1960" (which, like Cage's "Indeterminacy" [1958], consists of disconnected anecdotes and observations), Young states:

The trouble with most of the music of the past is that man has tried to make the sounds do what he wants them to do. If we are really interested in learning about sounds, it seems to me that we should allow the sounds to be sounds instead of trying to force

them to do things that are mainly pertinent to human existence. If we try to enslave some of the sounds and force them to obey our will, they become useless. We can learn nothing or little from them because they will simply reflect our own ideas. If, however, we go to the sounds as they exist and try to experience them for what they are—that is, a different kind of existence—then we may be able to learn something new.¹⁴

The debt to Cage is apparent in Young's radical non-anthropocentrism, in which sounds are presumed to exist outside intentionality, and are no longer admitted as a medium for ideas or emotions. Instead, human meaning is restricted to the passive role of reception:

...I began to see how each sound was its own world and that this world was only similar to our world in that we experienced it through our own bodies, that is, in our own terms. I could see that sounds and all the other things in the world were just as important as human beings and that if we could to some degree give ourselves up to them ... we enjoyed the possibility of learning something new.¹⁵

From such Cageian premises, however, Young began to evolve a very different aesthetic: he moved away from theater and “wild sounds,” and back to sustained tones, now governed not by serial order but by acoustical “truth.” Young's interest in pure tuning is implicit in the perfect fifth that constitutes the *Composition 1960 #7*, but did not become central to his work until his encounter with Tony Conrad. Still an under-appreciated figure in the development of minimal music, Conrad—a skilled violinist and mathematician, as well as an inventor of the “flicker film”—introduced Young to just intonation and the pure ratios of the overtone system. Their mutual excitement led to the formation of the legendary ensemble known variously as the Dream Syndicate (Conrad's preferred name) and the Theater of Eternal Music (Young's), a group that also included Zazeela, as well as such figures as John Cale (later of the Velvet Underground), Young's friend from Berkeley Terry Riley, and the drummer Angus MacLise. Using electronic drones (sine tones and an amplified aquarium motor) as a basis, the ensemble would add further long tones above them in pure interval relationships according to fairly strict rules of voice leading designed to ensure correct intonation.¹⁶ At the root of such explorations lay the ideas of Pythagoras, and with them the sense of the cosmological dimension of music. Young has explained his interest in just intonation in the following terms: “[It] was very harmonious, so beautiful, so right, so natural, so consciousness-expanding, so much a key to the understanding of the whole idea, the harmony of the universe.”¹⁷ The ensemble was convinced that their music was expressive of eternal verities. According to Conrad,

At the time the numerical frequency ratios we used for the microtonal intervals in Dream Music appeared so intimate with ancient Pythagorean numerology that it was easy for us to be seduced into fantasizing that our system of pitch relationships was “eternal”...¹⁸

Young began to view himself as custodian of an absolute truth, a subtle but deep shift from the egalitarian non-anthropocentrism he had proclaimed a few years before. The issue was no longer simply the exposure of the immanent divinity of pure sound relationships, but had come to involve issues of control. To quote Conrad again:

For La Monte Young, in the longer run, there came out of [the Dream Syndicate] a rigid conviction that discipline and tradition should dominate.... Our “tradition” was centered in this constructed fiction: that the sound we made had flowed, and would flow on, forever. Young's elitist temperament was much abetted by this absolutist conceit...¹⁹

Conrad's criticism of this "elitist temperament" reflects the ongoing controversy between Young and Conrad over authorship: Young holds that the works of the Theater of Eternal Music are his compositions, whereas Conrad insists that they were collaborative works. The general unavailability of the recordings of this period has not helped resolve the controversy.²⁰

Conrad may be overstating Young's malevolence, but not his obsession with control. This manifests itself musically in a concern not simply for natural truth, but in a fanatical attraction to discipline: "I am wildly interested in repetition, because I think it demonstrates control."²¹ Young comes no longer to provide for the free encounter of sound and listener, but to emphasize the capacity of pure intervals to ensure a Pavlovian consistency of listener response, which casts a different light on the "open" non-anthropocentrism of "Lecture 1960":

[Intervals] that can be repeatedly tuned *exactly* ... are the only intervals that have the potential to sound *exactly* the same on repeated hearing. It is for this reason that the feelings produced by rational intervals within a gradually expanding threshold of complexity have the potential to be recognized and remembered and, consequently, develop strong emotional impact.²²

Accompanying this interest in the precise programming of neurological/emotional response, curiously enough, has been a broadening scope for spontaneous personal invention on Young's part. Since 1964 he has been engaged with a work entitled *The Well-Tuned Piano*, whose most recent performances have lasted some six hours: it is an evolving improvisation built around various fixed chords and melodic patterns, of extraordinary range and beauty, even if one finds the authoritarian trappings of Young's underlying self-absorption unattractive.²³

Cage in some ways could scarcely seem further away from Young and his forebears in his acceptance of virtually any phenomena in his music. In their cases, the "universal order" they seek is present in the relationships among specific sounds, which is amplified in Young by the radical exclusion of imprecisions; in Cage's, it is present within each individual phenomenon, and fixed relationships among events only limit their autonomous divinity. However, both share the desire to foreground pure sonic experience at the expense of expressive concerns, and at least in one way Cage approaches Young's Pythagorean heritage: Pythagoras' use of music to purify the soul is echoed in Cage's adoption of a position he found in Indian aesthetics, that music should "sober and quiet the mind and render it susceptible to divine influences."²⁴

Accompanying Cage's persistent interest in sounds in themselves was a persistent analogy between sonic and social organization, and, as he himself recognized, a certain didactic intent: the paradox in his work is that sounds become, by virtue of their very autonomy from representational conventions, representations. Cage's social analogies are present in his work from the beginning of his career. He describes his attraction to varieties of twelve-tone technique, for instance, as motivated by their egalitarianism, the at least theoretical equivalent importance of all tones: one may surmise that his self-proclaimed lack of feeling for harmony was connected to harmony's intrinsically hierarchical nature. Twelve-tone technique, however, by definition excluded noise; and it was in noise, and the incorporation into music of all sonic phenomena, that Cage saw the future of music:

The present methods of writing music, principally those which employ harmony and its reference to particular steps in the field of sound, will be inadequate for the composer, who will be faced with the entire field of sound.²⁵

Accompanying this new field of possibilities was a renewed social utility. As Cage wrote in 1939, "Percussion music is revolution.... Tomorrow, with electronic music in our ears, we will hear freedom."²⁶

Tonal or twelve-tone methods of organization are obviously irrelevant to unpitched music. Therefore, Cage turned to rhythm for an alternative structural principle. With the *First Construction (in Metal)* (1939), Cage developed his idea of macro-microcosmic rhythmic structures, in which the same series of numbers governs the proportions both of small and large formal units: for example, the sequence 4-3-2-3-4 could govern groupings of beats, of bars, and of larger sections, thus allowing each temporal layer to reflect every other. Such rhythmic structures appealed to Cage in that they dictated nothing about how they were to be filled, but could accommodate any sound or silence. By this point, Cage was convinced that sound and silence were necessary complements, and, since of the various musical parameters only time was common to both, that rhythmic structure was, in fact, the only correct method of musical organization.²⁷

At this time Cage still believed that music was concerned with expression. The amplified sonorities and chaotic cross-rhythms of *Imaginary Landscape #3* (1942) are intended as references to the self-destructive violence of the Second World War, whereas *Amores* (1943) and *The Perilous Night* (1944) allude to a love triangle and the deterioration of his marriage.²⁸ However, coinciding with this personal crisis, Cage came to doubt such expressivity: the uncomprehending critical response to what he had thought to be the direct emotionality of *The Perilous Night* triggered a mistrust of the capacity of music to communicate and a search for an alternative motivation. This motivation appeared in the aforementioned revelation of music as means of quieting the mind and opening it to the divine, and stimulated Cage's interest in Eastern philosophy, specifically Hindu thought and Zen Buddhism. In these systems Cage found an attractive ideology of egolessness, in which the turbulence of emotions and the ambition of intention were to be relinquished. With the *Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano* (1946-48), Cage sought to express both the "permanent emotions" distinguished in Indian thought and their transcendence by tranquillity.

Cage's music increasingly avoided the vigorous momentum that reaches its maximum, perhaps, in the *Third Construction* (1941) and the *Three Dances* (1945). In its place, rhythmic structure changed, as Paul Griffiths has observed,²⁹ into a passive repository for sound events, deprived of directionality by repetition (an extreme example being the *Music for Marcel Duchamp* of 1947) or, to a lesser extent, isolation (as in the huge silences that interrupt the extremely repetitive *Four Walls* [1944]). In addition, Cage began to introduce objectivizing procedures for the selection of material into his hitherto intuitive approach: the prepared piano was restricted to a gamut of inflexible sonorities, and Cage imported similar restrictions into his writing for other instruments, as in the *String Quartet* (1949-50) and the *Six Melodies for Violin and Keyboard* (1950), which not only employ drastically reduced material but are strictly monophonic. With the *Sixteen Dances* and the *Concerto for Prepared Piano and Chamber Orchestra* (1951) Cage extended this principle of pre-determination of sound objects by constructing charts, through which he moved increasingly automatically. The effect was to obliterate any perceptible "causal" connections among events.

From this point of compositional automation and perceptual atomism, Cage was ready to move into chance operations, in which no event is contingent upon any other. The decisive step was taken in *Music of Changes* (1951), in which pre-arranged sonorities and events were arranged randomly, with the help of the *I-Ching*. However, Cage wanted both to explore more open situations and to find less cumbersome methods of composition: he achieved the former with

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Imaginary Landscape #4 (1951) for twelve radios, *Williams Mix* (1952) for tape, and *4'33"* (1952) for any players; and the latter with the series of *Music for Piano* (1952-6). The proportional notation, lack of specificity of detail, and unlimited possibilities of superimposition characteristic of this series were followed by further experiments in opening the score, transforming it from a fixed object into a collection of materials to be arranged and realized uniquely in each performance. The unprecedented responsibilities that this conception places on the performer are not to be considered license for improvisation or the introduction of personal taste: on the contrary, Cage explicitly and repeatedly discouraged such interpretations. The score was open not, to paraphrase Morton Feldman, to liberate the performer, but to liberate sound.

This is where problematic social, as well as cosmological, implications manifest themselves. Cage continued to view the work as social analogy, even as he defined his music as purposeless. For him the unplanned coincidence of heterogeneous events was a model of an anarchic society, free of any imposition of order. In addition, his music was an image of nature (a metaphor underscored in works like *Atlas Eclipticalis* [1961-2], whose derivation from star maps encourages a programmatic reading of the musical texture). Cage claimed, following the Indian aesthetician Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, that art should imitate "nature in her manner of operation."³⁰ However, for Cage this order was neither the occult numerical correspondences of Pythagoras nor the rational hierarchy of Newton. Instead, order was indistinguishable from disorder; and to represent it one needed to repress or circumvent creative intention. Among his most eloquent statements of his position is a 1956 letter to Paul Henry Lang:

For "art" and "music," when anthropocentric (involved in self-expression), seem trivial and lacking in urgency to me. We live in a world where there are things as well as people. Trees, stones, water, everything is expressive. I see this situation in which I impermanently live as a complex interpenetration of centers moving out in all directions without impasse. This is in accord with contemporary awarenesses of the operations of nature.³¹

However, in his aspiration to reveal the "multiple unimpeded centers" he abstracted from Buddhist thought, Cage ignored the tendency of things to produce orders, to develop intentions, to merge or conflict. His works, particularly of the 1950's, present a radically dissociated world, in which there are no organic connective principles: rather connection is solely coincidental (the accidental proximity of events, devoid of consequence) or perceived (the inevitable orderings of phenomena imposed by the listener's consciousness). The positive side of this situation is that the listener becomes aware of the active nature of perception; the negative is that that activity operates in a void. Cage locates meaning solely in the perceiver, and suggests that such meaning has only an arbitrary connection with the source phenomenon.

In this context, the hypostatized sound grows apart from its context in human activity. After all, a violin tone is not "natural," but manifests some sort of human intention. In Cage, however, this intention must strive to conceal itself, in order to let the allegorical "sound-in-itself" become audible, as though without human intervention. As a discipline, and as a particular possibility of meaning, this is unexceptionable, but as generalized dogma, it becomes problematic, in that it posits an irreconcilable dualism between the human and the natural, and, further, and masochistically, sides with the latter. A wide range of human sense must be repressed, even as hitherto unprecedented freedoms are granted: "Anything does go, but only if nothing is taken as the basis."³² In other words, Cage could only celebrate the phenomenal insofar as it detaches itself from the human circumstances that give rise to it and interpret it. The benevolent anarchism that

Cage found manifest in his work could just as well be viewed as a reproduction of social alienation.³³ Sometimes Cage himself seemed to acknowledge a profound pessimism in his work and thought, as in a 1987 interview with William Duckworth:

But we surely know, as well as any Buddhist or any Jewish mind, the futility of placing faith in anything of this earth. Doesn't the prophet say: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity?"³⁴

Surely this statement stands in uneasy relation to the celebration of the phenomena of the world with which Cage elsewhere identified his work. Still more disturbing, at least to a non-Buddhist, are Cage's denigrations of emotion: "Love, in fact, is said to make people blind. 'I was blindly in love.' You could get run over. Emotions have long been known to be dangerous. You must free yourself of your likes and dislikes." It remains unclear, given these premises, how the rejection of one's likes, "[will make one's] pleasure ... more universal."³⁵

One reason, I think, for the especial interest of Cage's late works is their witting or unwitting deviation from his overt position, and their gradual reintroduction of much that he had initially sought to exclude. First came a return to traditional instruments and notation, beginning in *Cheap Imitation* (1969) and the *Song Books* (1970). While these works are conscious attempts to elicit non-intention from historical sources (the former is a randomization of the melody of Satie's *Socrate*, and the latter includes distortions of Satie and Mozart, as well as recollections of Cage's "taste-based" styles of the 1940's), Cage continued to use relatively traditional means in "original" contexts, such as his series of virtuoso etudes (such as the *Freeman Etudes* [1977-90] for violin solo) and numerous orchestral, vocal, and chamber works. In addition, Cage began to apply randomness on various structural levels, subsuming the "atoms" of his earlier works into larger categories and creating what is in effect a non-intentional hierarchy. Pieces like the *Music for* series (1984-8) are made of different materials, in which randomness may operate within broad or narrow limits: the recurrence of these perceptually distinct types creates hitherto absent formal relationships, as well as specific local melodic and harmonic expectations. Further, and perhaps most "expressively," much of the late music is constructed using "time brackets," in which the given material may be played within extremely flexible time limits at the discretion of each performer. The result is a reintroduction of organicism, since the performers inevitably reintroduce the personal intention which Cage himself tried to avoid: listening and "natural" rates of traversal of material rescue the independence of parts from alienation, instead making corporeality and community palpable.

The perils with which Young and Cage flirt—authoritarianism in the former and puritanical repression in the latter—arise from their absolutism, the ideality of their premise of autonomous sounds. An ideal, as Nietzsche criticizes Plato, rejects reality in favor of a postulated transcendence.³⁶ This is perhaps a strange and paradoxical criticism to make of two composers who have done so much to enlarge (at least my personal) perception of and attention to phenomena; but I think Young's exclusive concentration on "pure" phenomena and obsession with control, as well as Cage's mistrust of human emotion, make such criticism relevant. Nonetheless, the limitations of this kind of critique should be acknowledged, as the paradox I mention remains: it is valuable to remember that, while objectionable social implications may indeed be part of the work of Cage and Young, their music is not reducible to them—that, for example, the intense feeling of community necessary to bring off a successful performance of Young may well embody a more essential meaning than do assertions of proprietorial authorship.

In any case, Helmut Lachenmann's thought and work offer an interesting alternative to Cage and Young. Like them, he has been concerned with awakening listeners to sound "in itself;" and he has spoken respectfully of both composers. Lachenmann's admiration of Cage, for example, has led him to identify Cage as one of the only two avant-garde figures of the 1950's to retain their genuinely progressive status and their relevance to younger composers, the other being his teacher Luigi Nono.³⁷ He did not always hold this position. As Nono's student in the late fifties, Lachenmann ghostwrote several lectures for his teacher, including one entitled "The Historical Reality of Music Today." Although much in this article seems today unbearably dogmatic and simplistic, some of its points are worth considering. For Nono and the young Lachenmann, the creative spirit is determined by historical necessity: their Marxism finds no contradiction between true spontaneity and responsibility to contemporary conditions. Cage's advocacy of chance is, to the (unstated) extent that it is not "a means of widening our empirical experience [and] exploring new possibilities,"³⁸ an abdication of such responsibility:

[Cage's] paramount lack of creative force and social consciousness betrays a conception of history which is bedevilled by a dualism of spirit and material. The spirit is regarded as the faithful mirror of the material and expressiveness is attributed to the automatic activity of it. Because the spirit is lacking, material becomes all-important and because the mind has already shown itself to be bankrupt, a new relationship where everything is controlled by material is preferred.³⁹

Lachenmann eventually retreated from such severe condemnation (as did Nono), but not from his conviction that music must foreground both its immediate physical mode of production as well as its social and historical context. Whereas several of Cage's works of the 1950's (such as *26'1.1499" for a String Player* [1953-55]) had dissociated and alienated standard performance techniques in order to liberate unfamiliar sonorities, Lachenmann's "instrumental *musique concrète*" draws attention to the specific resistances of performance, and thus to its status as mental and physical labor. In other words, it is concerned with exposing sound as resultant of, not as dissociated from, human action. In addition, Lachenmann has remained acutely conscious that sounds carry traditional associations with them, and that these associations are not distractions from their essence (as Cage seemed to think) but part of their identity. For this reason his works deliberately invoke musical tradition, both paying it homage and criticizing its ossification through unusual uses of tonal materials and/or schematic formal references.

Even as he has been concerned thus to ground musical experience both in its material and its historical location, Lachenmann retains a deeply Romantic longing for a perhaps inaccessible nature. Unlike Cage and Young, he posits nature as goal, not as achieved: it can not be reached by fiat, but must be discovered within the complex impurities of physical and historical contexts. I studied with Lachenmann in 1995-96, and in my lessons with him, he spoke repeatedly of the "Naturereignis," that is, of the sound in itself, transcending intention and tradition, heard as if new. At worst the burdens of history that he refuses to abandon imprison his music in referential sterility; but at best, sound reveals itself within the wreckage of tradition and the ungainly efforts of sound production as, to paraphrase Charles Bernstein on Jackson Mac Low's *Words and Ends from Ez*, a pure, inhering paradise.

NOTES

- ¹ Quoted in Don Byrd, *Charles Olson's Maximus* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 36.
- ² See Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1963), especially Chapter 9, "The Psychology of the Poetic Performance," 145-64.
- ³ Havelock writes, "The Greek 'music' exists only to make the words more recollectable, or rather to make the undulations and ripples of the meter automatically recollectable, in order to free psychic energy for the recall of the words themselves" (150).
- ⁴ Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music* (New York: Norton, 1973), 5-6.
- ⁵ Hence the persistent image of the harmony of the spheres. See the excerpt from Aristotle, *De caelo*, in G.S. Kirk and J.E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 258-9.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 229.
- ⁷ Grout, 7.
- ⁸ Plato, *The Republic*, excerpted in Ruth Katz and Carl Dahlhaus, eds., *Contemplating Music: Source Readings in the Aesthetics of Music, Vol. I* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1987), 25, 39-40.
- ⁹ Plato, *Timaeus*, in *The Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 1250.
- ¹⁰ Carl Dahlhaus, *Realism in Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. by Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 19.
- ¹¹ Albert Cohen, "Rameau, Jean-Philippe: Theoretical writings," in Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. 15* (London: Macmillan, 1980), 568.
- ¹² See Edward Strickland, *American Composers: Dialogues on Contemporary Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 64.
- ¹³ La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela, *Selected Writings* (München: Heiner Friedrich, 1969), n.p.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ I am indebted to Charles Curtis' lecture on *The Second Dream of the High-Tension Line Stepdown Transformer*, UCSD, March 1998.
- ¹⁷ Strickland, 65.
- ¹⁸ Tony Conrad, program book to *Early Minimalism: Vol. I* (Atlanta: Table of the Elements, 1997), 36.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.
- ²⁰ The controversy between Young and Conrad over issues of authorship and ideology continues to this day, and has recently (September 2000) been heightened by the release, unauthorized by Young, of a recording of the Theater of Eternal Music on Table of the Elements entitled *Day of Niagara*. See www.lamonteyoung.com and www.tote.com for both sides of the conflict.
- ²¹ Young and Zazeela, n.p.
- ²² La Monte Young, program book for *The Well-Tuned Piano* (New York: Gramavision, 1981), 6.
- ²³ See Kyle Gann's extremely thorough and interesting analysis, "La Monte Young's *The Well-Tuned Piano*," in *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 31 #1 (1993), 134-62.
- ²⁴ In Calvin Tomkins, *The Bride and the Bachelors* (New York: Penguin, 1976), 99.
- ²⁵ John Cage, *Silence* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 4.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.
- ²⁷ See, for perhaps his most incendiary statement of this position, the "Defense of Satie," in Richard Kostelanetz, ed., *John Cage* (New York: Praeger, 1970), 81.
- ²⁸ See Margaret Leng Tan, "Taking a Nap, I Pound the Rice," in Richard Fleming and William Duckworth, eds., *John Cage at Seventy-Five* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1987), 40.
- ²⁹ Paul Griffiths, *Cage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 16.
- ³⁰ Tomkins, 100.

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³¹ In Kostelanetz, 117-8.

³² In Tomkins, 135.

³³ Note Susan Sontag's observation in her essay "The Aesthetics of Silence," which complements Nono and Lachenmann's criticisms below: "[Cage's view that in principle one should desire to pay attention to everything] seems almost to parody the capitalist world-view, in which the environment is atomized into 'items' ... and in which every item is a commodity—that is, a discrete, portable object." In *Styles of Radical Will* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1969), 25-6.

³⁴ In Fleming and Duckworth, 29.

³⁵ In Richard Kostelanetz, ed., *Conversing with Cage* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1991), 213.

³⁶ See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1954), 484-6.

³⁷ See Helmut Lachenmann, *Musik als existentielle Erfahrung* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1995), 144, 305: although Lachenmann mistrusted Cage's self-assurance, he says, "ich lernte auch zu lernen, und aus der Irritation wurde schöpferische Unruhe and Ruhe, und auf deren Rückseite sedimentiert sich bis heute persönliche Dankbarkeit." ("I also learned to learn, and from irritation came creative restlessness and calm, and on the other side personal gratitude sediments itself to this day.")

³⁸ Luigi Nono (and Helmut Lachenmann), "The Historical Reality of Music Today," *The Score* #27, July 1960, 45.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

Walter Branchi: Three Texts

Music belongs to us and we belong to music
only when its vibrations enter our imagination.

I don't want to be shut off

The question that recurs, with little variation, is: "Where can one hear your music?" Or: "Where can one go to get some of your music?" Or: "Where can one buy some of your records?" The reply is always the same: "I don't want to be shut off."

'It's time to go.'

'They want you on the telephone.'

'Dinner is on the table.'

Any experience is extinguished by these requests and messages, and I don't want my pieces shut off or interrupted for these or any reason.

We must remember that all things in this world must be respected. Objects are not simply at our beck and call; they consist of processes requiring our interaction. Moreover, they are emotional creations and are precious. Their value must be understood and protected.

The alternative is consumerism, mass media and merchandising, all of which transform objects and even ideas into objects for sale, which, once "ours," can be disposed of at will and even interrupted at any moment.

Because I do not accept this consumerist idea, I have decided to not record my music and sell it. Like all beautiful and important things in this life, it can be neither bought nor sold.

"But then how is it possible to listen to your work in the absence of recordings? There must be some way for people to experience your music."

"Experience? Ideally, for a truly extraordinary experience, one would be in a place of beauty—for instance, in a garden, or surrounded by stars in the desert of Wadi Rumm in Jordan, or even in the wind in the Temple of Poseidon at Cape Sunion in Greece—listening to my music through the entire atmosphere of that particular place and time. It is the entirety, the whole experience, that is an encounter with the sacred that can never be shut off.

Safeguarding

'Everything happens for a first time,
but within eternity.'
J.L. Borges

1. Naming

During an expedition to discover wild roses in China, I happened to see, in the Boranic Gardens of Urumqi, an exceptional rose bush: tall, leafy and well-shaped, with numerous large semi-double sulphur-yellow blooms. At the sight of this marvel, the boldest among the expedition's participants began to suggest possible names, to explore its similarities with other rose species and to air the most varied and original botanical speculations. After a brief period of fruitless debate, we concluded that this rose did not resemble any known rose and that therefore it was impossible to name it. Accordingly, we decided to question a gardener who was working nearby. In response to our guide's questioning, the gardener replied that he did not know the rose's name and that we should ask the director. So we searched for him and learned that he was temporarily occupied in another part of the garden. Finally, after a wait of forty minutes!, a kind and helpful young man arrived, wearing a large white apron. The long wait for the name of the rose had reduced us to a state of anxious anticipation. The director looked first at the plant, then at us. With a respectful and courteous smile he said: 'Thorny yellow rose.'

How is it possible that such a special plant, growing in a botanic garden, would have no precise name?

2. Remembering

For those of us who do not want to forget, to lose our memories, our culture or our history, there are systems of naming, annotating, listing, and marking. The Western world has developed these ways of thinking in an attempt to preserve who we are and where we come from, maintaining and safeguarding ourselves in the face of progress and evolution. We buy things, build museums, restore pictures, buildings and churches to preserve the past and keep it from escaping. With these artefacts, we can ultimately calm our fear of losing the past.

In Western culture, this attitude is so prevalent that we expect to find it everywhere; even in China, where there are an increasing number of museums and institutions dedicated to restoration. This is odd, because the Chinese are not really sure what to do with museums. The Western idea of conservation does not exist in Chinese culture because there, nothing has ever been lost. Conservation and restoration, in the Western sense, are not fundamental to their culture. When, for example, the decorations on a temple fade as a result of contact with visitors or the oxidation of pigments, they are simply repainted. Certainly, there is a high level of craftsmanship, but it is not essential to re-create the original effect. In China everything endures and has co-existed forever. The Chinese culture is one of safeguarding.

3. Eternity

It is the differing perceptions of time that create the division between East and West. In the West, we are very conscious of the passage of linear time, of causality and loss; the Chinese reside in eternity. They are immersed in an 'eternal present': birth, death, nature and culture are without beginning or end. This idea permeates all of life. Even the various dynasties are not seen as succeeding one another in different historical periods, but are perceived to exist simultaneously. Ancient crafts, by now extinct elsewhere, and modern skills casually co-exist. The same applies to means of transport as it does to ideas: the latest Western automobiles share the roads with carts drawn by men or donkeys. So why should we give a specific name to a rose, dragging it out of eternity into a particular time and place?

4. Only if it is already within you can you find it.

The eternal took me by surprise (no one tells you about these things when you start off on a journey).

I compose music that is without expectations (in the sense that there is nothing to wait for. The conditions in which one waits for something do not exist here). That of which it is made is already there, it manifests itself without suspense, and there is nothing else. Although it makes itself heard, it does not represent or express anything else: it is pure sound, vibration that, through its changes, directly changes us. The best way to perceive to it is not to listen to it but to let oneself be permeated and thereby resound in mind and body. So, it is necessary to rediscover one's ability to resonate with all of the things that comprise an event: the music, a tree, a light, people, sadness, a desire. It is all alive and emotionally compelling. Everything belongs and is a part of the experience. Nothing is lost and all is eternal.

Speechlessness

(Lovers are unable to describe their love; they lack the words, they are speechless.)

I have often wondered, and still do, why the music I write sounds so different from most other music I know. Clearly, the answer could be simply that all music sounds different from other music; even different works by the same composer can vary in sound and style. But this is not the answer I am looking for. The reply, I think, must be sought elsewhere.

Dear Friend,

Your music speaks of things, while mine says nothing.

Your music speaks, and in speaking it uses words, but not real ones; it has no voice with which to articulate words. Rather, it progresses, following a musical movement connected to phrases or sequences of words, or better yet, to sequences of suggested words. The rhythm of these musical shapes is like that of spoken expressions.

I will try to explain myself more clearly. In our musical history, compositions have often resulted from linking a musical arrangement to a text, for instance, the madrigal (in all its different historical forms). The meaning and form of the words are suggested in the rhythm of the music.

It is well known, as in the madrigal, that the meaning of the words determines the form of a composition. The music seeks to reproduce the poetic imagery of the text. So, when I say that your music speaks of things, I mean exactly that: the words define the musical flow of the composition.

The relation between meaning and form is critical to language and the spoken word and, although this link is not inherent in the madrigal, it is still a good example of how this relationship has been developed musically. By contrast, 'Schiudendosi' is one of my compositions that ultimately says nothing: it is devoid of the musical flow that implies the rhythm of speech or the physical act of singing or playing a musical instrument. 'Schiudendosi' literally means the action of opening up (in reference to the harmonic-geometric structure of a single sound). It is action unmediated by any language, it is pure sound revealing itself, and in revealing itself it attempts to be faithful to its magic.*

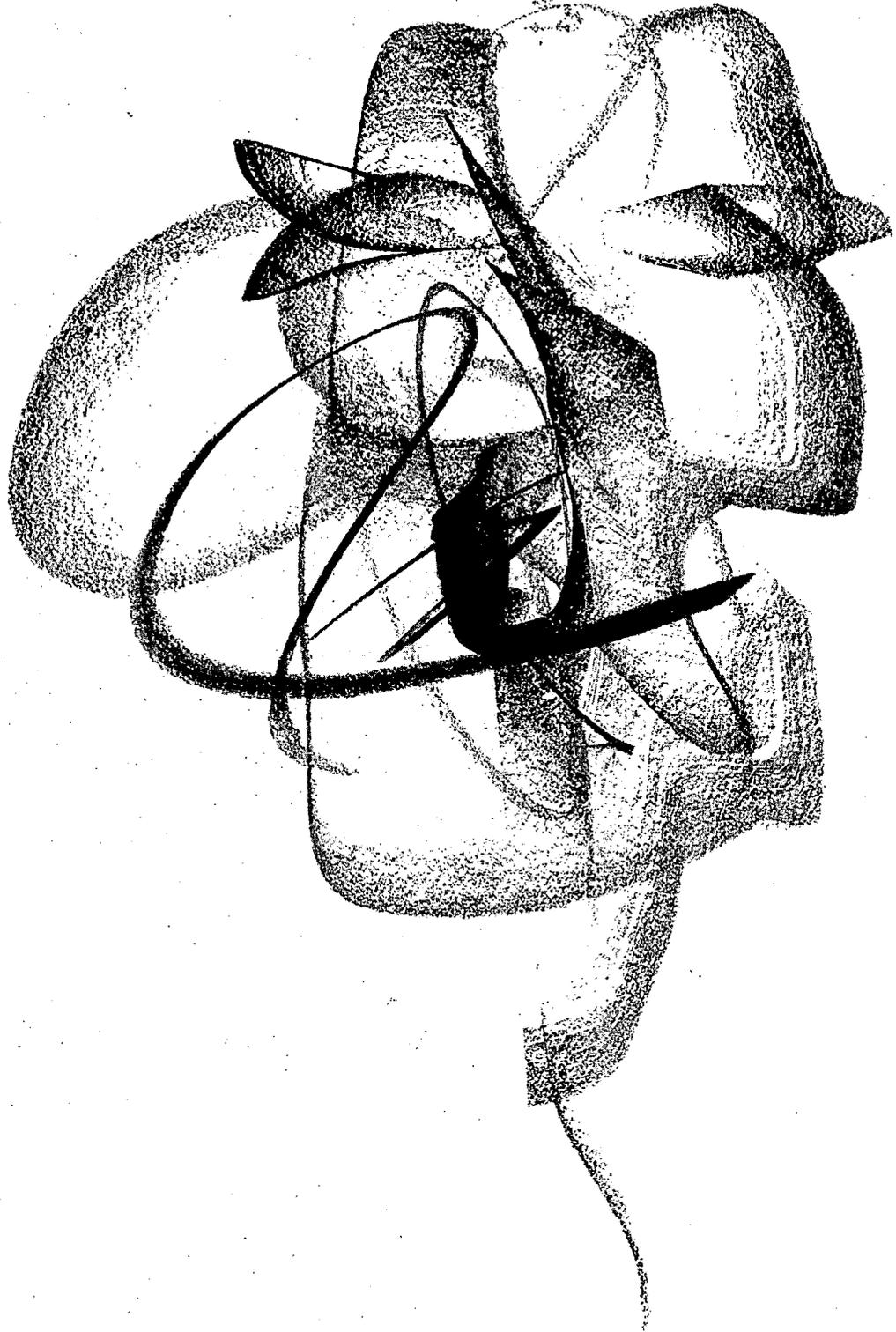
'Schiudendosi's composition relies on its sound not being perceived as separate elements or as phrases of words to be articulated according to rules that are external to the sound's inherent structure. The piece is designed according to the principle of invention, and that alone informs its structure.

The concept of words as music brings me to another reflection. A word is part of a code and so, always referring back to something else, it is representative. Furthermore, to form speech these isolated elements must be linked in a sequential, logical chain. This progression then imposes on listeners a restricted sense of perception, as they concentrate on what the piece is 'saying' and dismiss anything outside of the performance as a mere annoyance. Therefore, this type of music draws attention solely to itself by following this logic and is, as a result, self-describing.

On the other hand, music that is not self-descriptive is just itself. Since it does not refer to something else, it can be a pure event that confers value and can incorporate incidental occurrences: it flows with the moment. This music finds itself, and its form, only by referencing that which surrounds it. It does not impose itself and cannot be anything else because it is without words: it is speechless.

*All sound creates in the listener a sense of magic from the moment it starts to vibrate (Leopardi and Kant were well aware of this phenomenon). However, this sensation does not last long if the sound is static. The art of making music comes from the modulation of a sound according to an organizing principle that can take advantage of this magic.

(Translated from Italian by Nina Prentice)



Drawing happens. Nothing and anything can be said about it, and it happens in its own time and its own way, and is equal to *saying*. It has a poetics.

It has a *life* too. We often say about a thing that moves us or occupies us that it's alive — perhaps because it makes us *feel* alive. But when challenged we say that we mean it only metaphorically — the part, at least, about the *thing* that feels alive (but maybe also about our *own* feeling alive). It's confusing; sometimes it seems inadvisable to think about it. It gets us into the hot water of having to consider what we mean by "life," a "thing," "art" Maybe they're all metaphors, but not necessarily in the ordinary sense of one thing standing for another; rather, in the root sense of one thing or word as bearer of a transference or even transformation to another thing or word. The *drawing* is *alive* to me. The thing is like me, sort of. It happens, I feel different — even, I would say, *excitedly* different. It has moved me toward the self I didn't know. A living event is occurring *between* two, there and here, here and there, a thing and me, a thing happening and me happening. Between two equals.

If I allow myself to think this way about the drawing that is happening, I forget entirely about issues of method and technique. That's easy for me because I have no formal art education. And so the well-honed dos and don'ts are not stored in my fingers; the automatic self-doubt of the sophisticated *craftsman*, normally overcome by expertise, mastery, and, hopefully with maturity, original artistic vision, have little particular play in the action at hand, in the hand. My "education," such that it is, is simply whatever has come in through the senses and undisciplined engagement with artists, art historians, critics, etc., where they have no special authority in my life. This makes me a good example of "outsider artist" — no credentials, that is, the art act itself does not *begin* as a conversation with art history. And the art act is not struggling to overcome its predecessors; and, lo, it can hardly be called "belated." *Au contraire*.

Outsider is one of the rare categories that don't make me claustrophobic. This allows me extra room to see the drawings themselves as happening on the *inside* of their own domain. Access to that domain is characterized by the drawing itself, and yet this inside is not necessarily exclusive of another, or any other, inside, or for that matter any outside. The distinction "inside" is, in part, a local response to the historically imposed category "outside(r)." But the distinction inside/outside is not intrinsic to art, or, for that matter, life; the sense of inside or outside (or, likewise, subjective/objective) is perspectival and, therefore, essentially functional within a context. It's optional, strategic.

So if I treat the drawing as the site of its own generation, as opposed to considerations of context, it is for perspectival and tactical reasons — to allow a certain kind of activity to take place, resulting in a species of object that produces more of itself.

This approach is not anti-historical or anti-contextual in motivation or in final sense of “meaning”; it simply understands the need to stand within its own activity without interpretive exertion. It doesn’t necessarily understand “correctness,” yet it has a definite and indispensable experience of “rightness” or “self-trueness.”

What is that activity? This is the question that remains throughout the occurrence of a drawing and its aftermath: what happens when it happens, or, perhaps, what makes it happen the way it does? What constitutes its *performance*? There are reasonable and unreasonable answers, both interesting. To various degrees in drawing, as in poetry or music, the “method” may determine the activity. Method in the context of drawing can be understood in any number of ways: for instance, as specific technique; as a systematic or procedure (e.g., “chance operation”); as concept; as representation or abstraction; as device inducing inspiration or vision or simply intuition (presumption of the “automatic,” “given,” “channeled”), etc. From the standpoint of method, the artist seemingly chooses among options or at least understands that an option is being exercised. And yet, even if the artist engages the kind of clarity that establishes a position among options with respect to method, the question remains as to what is happening in any given act of drawing. A poetics of a particular practice of drawing need not focus on method. Not only is the use of a particular method optional, but the very consideration of method is optional.

For me there is always a *principle* at work, yet the drawings I make do not lead me to a specific conclusion in terms of method as such. In a work governed by principle rather than method, method is optional but principle is not. (I realize that the word “principle” is problematic, and indeed the dominant usage may run counter to mine, and at times I’ve considered other words or perhaps altering the word itself). In my usage, a principle is not just a concept or idea, although it is expressed, in part, through concepts and ideas. It has the status of a thoroughgoing “truth,” yet it may not be fully nameable or clearly delimitable. This status does not require *belief* in an ordinary sense of believing *in something*; there is no *thing* there. At the same time, once it is recognized, it may inspire a kind of non-reifying faith in its operative and performative force. Obviously the status of this faithful state of attention is difficult to characterize — somewhat as notions like truth and nature/natural resist characterization. So a principle governing the work generally is not easily (or even desirably) held in mind in the actual process of making a given work. What interests me is that on reflection the principle persistently reemerges.

If I sense the ongoing presence of method or technique or style, I tend to move in a contrary direction.¹ If I think I know what I’m doing, I feel uncomfortable, as if I were dozing off at the wheel. This has to do with what I call the *axial* — a distinction at the level of principle. It can show up in a variety of methods, or as seemingly methodical in various different senses, but no method can be the definitive manifestation of the axial. In some ways the axial may be considered anti-methodical. And yet the notion of the axial originates in the consideration of very physical perceptions, experiences and observations.

Axial respects the existence of a physical (spatial/temporal) axis in any physical (energetic) entity. The earth has an axis, I have a spine, any two objects in the

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particular alignment called *balance* share an invisible axis. And any thing in motion has a moving, changing axis within it. (At some level, everything is in motion, so “stable axis” is illusory.) What I mean by “axial” infers not only the phenomenon of having an axis, but *awareness* of the fact. Axial may be *apperceptive* — involving perception with awareness, even reflection (e.g., awareness of awareness) — yet without the psychological focus of comparison with past experience; instead, the *relational* awareness works with the *immediate* field (in which “pastness” evidently plays some part). One might speak of radical apperception.

Awareness is understood here as active, involving conscious alignment with an axis, a vigilant process of being in contact with axis as the space of self-adjustment. One engages this “space” as a reflective way of responding to gravity. That is, instead of resisting gravity in any given moment, one aligns with the axis by inwardly searching out a feeling of weightlessness and freedom of movement. It feels like a gap, space within space, emptiness. And the awareness itself produces relative release — a loosening of “grip” or of gripping in its role as resistance to gravity. This happens in such a way that self-governing occurs in relation to a felt axis and a certain intentional surrender to that axis.

There are axial arts, or arts of the axial. T'ai chi and aikido, for instance, may be considered traditional axial arts, in that they engage one in the study of one's axis as the basis of conscious movement. So there is a purely “physical” fact of axiality that constitutes a principle, and there is the extension of the principle to various degrees of conscious practice — differences of degree that become differences of kind.

The arts I practice carry the name of the principle — “axial poetics,” “axial stones” and “axial drawing.”² Although it takes a sort of intellectual focus to place the axial within thinking, it can hardly be fully understood that way, and axial arts cannot be practiced within that focus. Yet one could think of them as practices of principle that aim to explore a certain art possibility. In this practice I find it natural to reflect on what it means to develop an art based on principle, and in a way each statement on an art practice, including the present one, is an instance of that reflection. And each in its way furthers the insight that, even discursively, the manifestation of principle is performative. Principle acts itself out. And it thinks about itself.

And so: *axial drawing*. I can say a little about how the action happens, how it is consequential.

Most important for me is *first action*, how the drawing gets started. The *first mark* sets the tone, rhythm, and quality of the ensuing work. Everything unfolds accordingly from focused gesture, which is not something that can be precisely controlled. In a certain sense, it takes control itself to an edge, challenging one's sense of responsibility. I might prefer (with Blakean axiality): *the first mark sets the bounding line on its track*.

And yet, this notion of the first mark as determining the fate of the process at hand is more than a rule because it is *informed* by principle, and its exercise is a matter of integrity. Practiced with this view, any mark determines the focus and attention of the

drawing at hand. It becomes a matter of what range of *gesture* a given drawing will sustain. The first gesture is an incursion in the field (usually paper), and then there are the consequences; a line traces its own action (karma). The disruption of surface might require a compensatory *field awareness* that somehow “makes amends” for the disruption. Viewed in this way a certain receptivity is at work, a kind of listening and responsiveness to the materials and to the space itself. Further gesture requires feedback from the aroused space. And so an auxiliary “rule” — more like a rule of thumb — arises from the exercise of principle: any further mark/gesture must be clearly demanded by the drawing itself, and the *discipline* (in this apparently “undisciplined” work) is in the integrity and accuracy of response to the demand (feedback). One does only what is called for, where the impulse to point the pencil is clear.

The view here puts the mark, the gesture, indeed the *line* in the domain of *writing* (and, concomitantly, *erasure*, in various senses). As such it recalls a justly famous line from Robert Duncan’s poem “The Structure of Rime I”: “Writing is first a search in obedience.” Obedience to the unfolding out of the first gesture drives the field to self-composition. Whereas language in Duncan’s view offers the “law” of syntax as base, drawing in this view, as the exercise of principle, releases *pulsation* as determining energetics and gesture, embodying perhaps a raw force of speaking mind. In the place of syntax, line happens as synapse. The drawing is the thinking released.

Mark is always also *absence* of mark, removal of mark, and mark in any possible degree and relation to other marks. Clarity of action in the domain of absence and removal comes more slowly than with the first making of the mark. It is hard to find the *balance point* of a given mark or place within markings, and hard, too, to learn how much you can remove, how much you can give up in the process, so that what is there can reveal itself. Attachment to an idea easily blocks the path of release, and yet *release* is the fundamental event, indeed the process itself is release — of what is known only to itself, and not known to any other — unknown until released. The balance point is everywhere you look. Each mark deals with balance — how it *belongs* where it is, *precariously* — and every mark remakes the whole. And the more it is itself, however precariously, the greater its attractive force and torsional play within the whole. One almost never can believe how little it takes to change everything. A simple variable, reflective and resonant.

“Maturity,” in an axial sense, is not accounted for by the notion of technical mastery; it’s something closer to learning to respond with simplicity of touch. How *little*, how much *less*, is needed..., and then, suddenly, all falls into place.

Or tumbles slowly, instantly slowly. One balance point at a time.³ Each mark — made/removed. Intensified/taken down. The process is much the same as with the axial stones, except that the latter, exploring the more and more precarious, keep bringing themselves down. Until they don’t.

One discovers a certain joy — perhaps a *jouissance* — in the very removal, a laying bare, a release through the touch *into* the touch; toucher touched, feeding back into the feeder (giver/eater). Obedience to the line, the drawing, is the drawing released, by way of giving up the mark. There’s an element of unsaying — you could call it *haptic apophysis* — the touch that unsays. At any rate the movement toward the paper is in



balance with a movement *from* the mark, a release outward. I give up my idea in order to invite a certain bounce, and bounding.

The hand, removing, amplifies. What grows stronger has not yet been seen. A silence at the heart of a clear sound, a zero point arriving through configuration itself. And *clearly* something is excited into being, into being itself, its further self. The work seems to offer evidence of something like *underself*, or perhaps *underbeing*, of which the drawing is a further speaking, specifically attracted to an open space. A space charged with openness. It — the drawing and its space, which are nonseparate — arises out of undertime into *this* time. It follows a timing, which could be heard as the music of its unexampled arising.

I have kinship with the notion of a *conceptual* base, but I prefer the notion of *principle*. A conceptual work may be said to be the definitive instance of the concept, which may obviate any further instances of the concept. It's the outgrowth of a defining intellectual focus. A principle has no definitive instance (is not defined by a given manifestation), and further instance is necessary to the truth of the principle, and indeed new works are inevitable as a consequence of the *declaration* of principle. So if there is a declared principle of axiality, unlimited new events (e.g., axial drawings) are called forth. A principle, unlike a concept, cannot be exhausted.

The drawings stay ahead of figuration and representation; they move *away* from coherent viewing, as if to *inhere* physically before they claim a shape. They are neither figurative nor abstract but *configurative*, which is liminal to both. That is, figures come and go, catching attention with a momentary will of their own, letting go of figuration without notice, without formal commitment. Making the drawings and looking at them can be quite similar in this respect — there is a sense of figuration that gives over to the field of patterning/repatterning, with a certain internal rhythm or *pulsation*. Somehow they are animate, animating, self-animated. They trace their own time, as if keeping a story hidden. As a record they are barely there. Or what's there is a trail: traces of their time, bare awarenesses in timed space. There's some kind of dialogue between form-seeking elements, the interval between them, and their absence. What they *retain* is bodily memory of the precarious (but precious) process of self-generation.

This relates in my mind to the Japanese notion of *ma*, a *natural distance or time-space between*. Any visual incursion in the flow of a field creates its own special time that carries over to the "area" around. Together the incursive event and its surround show time as something created. So neither the elements of drawings nor the drawings themselves are "forms" but, more accurately, neighboring markings in some state of mutual realization. Likeness *draws them* close together. A certain mystery shows in the fact of their interdependent integrity.

The root meaning of the word *draw* seems to be *to move*, extending as: *to pull, to cause to flow forth, to suck or inhale, to attract, to shape, to stretch, to inscribe....* Drawing is immensely self-varying. And it's worth considering that the simple act of

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drawing as putting pencil or pen to paper might retain the full play of the word's semantic field.

The sense of *ma* in ancient times was focused in terms of specific attractive force—an invitation to the *kami* (loosely defined, “space-time gods”) to inhabit a defined temporal-spatial location. My interest could be characterized more modestly as *spirited attention alighting within points charged with emptiness*. It relates in a sense to the way a dream is momentarily present, but just barely, and already slipping away in the instant of recollection. The mark of the line engages an emergent energy and holds to its direction.

I do not wish to seem coy, clever or disingenuous in describing the relationship of “maker” to the “thing made,” and I recognize certain dangers in entering into the distinctions I am making (invoking, for instance, a notion like *ma*); extreme or polemical statements on either side of such opposition or “dialectic” — subject/object, artist/work, process/product, etc. — do not advance my understanding in these matters. I am attempting a certain “liminalist” view, which respects the perspectival attractions of both sides of active opposition. But this view is hardly middle-of-the roadism or friendly compromise or eclecticism. The liminal, in a perhaps special sense, avoids low intensity amalgams in favor of retaining the charge of difference. Turning up the fire, it sees possibility in allowing necessary awareness to arise in the charged space *between* such statements as: *I make and control the work* and *the work self-generates and requires surrender*. Both thoughts are necessary at different points in one's own process, and if I emphasize the latter, it is, in part, tactical with respect to the compositional perspective — it excites the work into action beyond itself. It also invites further reflection *within discourse* by putting understanding itself in danger.

So: the artist *holds to a direction* initiated with an energy determined to go “out of control.” *Now* one can no longer pretend to be fully responsible for what is nevertheless one's exclusive domain of responsibility, thus causing a radical and endless reconsideration of “responsibility as keeping the ability to respond” (Duncan). In practice, one becomes more aware of the space *around* the mark or line. (Even a point is a line, a very small line.) This surrounding space is not entirely spatial; it moves through degrees of energetic intensity and temporality; one is tempted to speak of a *resonant surround*. And it has a certain multiplicity that, once recognized, pulls one away from attempting to create unity as such. Instead, one waits for a sense of completeness.

There are fields of intentionality, overlapping and resonating. The drawings — like poems, also like dreams — are *personal*, but *personal to themselves*, not necessarily to their author; they bound with, against and across what is near. Intentional activity within limitation. Yet always with a sense of *permission*, which arises naturally in a good neighborhood. The work is a field of evolving relationships.

So I am speaking of a sense of art — of composition — that includes entities offering *each other* a timely breathing space between emerging intensities. *Ma*, the between, allows the listening that in turn prepares a work to find its *zero point*. Point?—well, call it (not without disadvantages) the *space*, perhaps even (more perilously) the *source* outside immediate understanding. *There* any actual contact

discharges the itch to conceptually interpret what is happening, or to otherwise get in the way and break the emergent timing.

Axial drawing is related in principle to music as right timing/true measure. The fundamental: there is pulsation, the unique incidence of bounding strokes. There is sound — *incidentally* — for instance, graphite on paper (the grade of graphite and of paper contribute to sound quality) — and sometimes the sound appears to be speaking, or talking back — with its own poetics. (Feedback talks back? Perhaps that's what feedback is doing, or art is feedback articulating at the level of language.) There is friction. A sense of hurt surfaces and draining pains, of paradox in suffering joy or the release of surfacing ills as (or *vs.*) an axiality of ecstasy: the intensely *in place* that goes beyond itself *out of place*.

I can only speculate, if I may be permitted a small diversion relating to noticing sound quality, about what an *axial music* would be, because I have not yet intentionally made it.⁴ It occurs to me, on the model of axial stones as a state of responsiveness, that an axial music could be viewed as a state of sound composition in which sounds listen to each other and behave according to what they hear, which event occurs inside the experience of a person oriented toward the open listening to sounds in play. (A related definition of poetry is *speaking with listening*.) The presumption that one is listening *to* sounds seems limiting, whereas listening *through* sounds, or even *with* sounds, seems open, *bounding* as a moving, living, shared line. Such music, so principled, would have no *outside* distinct from an inside and would be performative of its own listening. And any act of listening is fully compositional.

Principle as I employ it here derives from a special usage I found in the practice of t'ai chi in the early '70s at the school called *Shr Jung* in New York's Chinatown (the teaching of Prof. Cheng Man Ching). The name *Shr Jung* means "right timing" or "true measure." The heuristic notion embodied in the name was to "stay on principle," which meant engaging a "natural truth," revealed as self-evident through body-centered inquiry. Practicing "on principle" is ultimately contrasted to the imitation of an outer form, which, however, was considered indispensable in the early stages of practice — to be shed over time. (Principle was also distinguished from implementing ideology, although analytical discrimination played a vital role in the teaching.) The inquiry into what it means to stay on principle is conducted through self-observation and interaction with opposition (the martial practice of "push-hands"). Eventually principle is something experienced anew in unique manifestation as what is always there and yet emerging freshly in each moment.

It's difficult to explain how such a notion of principle is not merely another pretension — an intellectual abstraction that one believes in and pretends to represent. And admittedly it's easy for such a notion of principle to become another trap for the self-serving "art ego." Perhaps the only real protection against self-delusion is the actual appeal and livingness of the work produced. Yet this too of course can bring us quickly back into the arena of aesthetics and artistry, the lure of metaphysics and some form of "ideal." At the same time, any effort to avoid the extremes by choosing sides (e.g., "process" over "product"), or avoiding choice, still does not eliminate the infamous "torments of dualism."

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I work the notion of *liminality*, as I began to say earlier, as a way of keeping present within the dynamic of continuously appearing oppositions. The notion of “being at the edge” can mean many things, yet it has a sensory precision in axial composition, a tautness in the engagement that can also be a tuning in the body, that is *physical* to the medium. The touch has tone, an intensity of focus in drawing that sustains the flow; vigilance in the process to track an emerging form.

Over the years practicing this way, according to principle, has meant for me that the *medium* in art and poetics is radically open, based only on one’s ability to find principle active in practice itself, reflective and performative of one’s own opening. The boundaries between different mediums grow softer. Identity too softens, clears.

In axial drawing there is a relation to the martial arts practice of push-hands, where one remains at the precise point of physical contact and *follows* without exerting direct pressure. There is eventually a *reversal of reflex*, a sensory inversion. One tries to discover how to view the objective surrounding as *zero world*, empty of always already determining, yet resonant. One somehow manages to approach this facticity palpably, with sheer listening intensity — listening, that is, through the hands. Accordingly one cannot hold a model or ideal in mind, yet one tries to stay alert for the *optimal*, which is relational and concretely connected to what is at hand.

What guides? Compositional sense, no doubt, but in a sense that includes a certain *unknowing* — a precariousness. I give the name *undertime* to accessible basic atemporal reality as *level* — in place of “universe,” “zeroverse.” I am again resorting here, unfortunately, to the notion of something mysterious, something that would serve as source of temporally emergent and “spontaneous” possibility. I’m aware that undertime cannot be perceived directly, yet it shows through as a *pulse*, which, however, is variable and unpatterned, and which one can follow within oneself or in the work at hand. Follow what? Strange to say, an *actual impulse*, one’s *own* impulse in the contact with medium, as if one is becoming the amplifier of a “thrown voice,” a ventriloquism of the emerging entity, the drawing itself. The recognition of impulse requires a certain alert openness, a species of “beginner’s mind” or attitude of “non-mastery” of one’s own means — an attentional dilation before “what is at hand.” Ordinary momentum and familiar voice, however attractive and desirable, can distract from *optimal attention*, which must center in the actual moment. So one learns another way, a way with the strange and unknown, with which one maintains gentle contact.

“Feeling a pulse” seems simpler than in fact it is, because our sense of pulse is based on the simplistic medical practice that resorts to a normative and quantitative, ultimately statistical, model. Other practices of reading a pulse, less familiar in the West, for instance the Oriental Medicine approach, are qualitative and relative to the individual organism’s array of pulses. There are multiple pulses even of the blood. Breathing is a highly and quickly variable pulse. The craniosacral fluid pulses several times slower than the others, and reading it requires a very special listening focus. So an organism is an immensely complex field of variable and interdependent pulsations, in which a sudden pulsation may seem more like a spike or unique irruption than a moment within cyclicity. It would seem obvious that art composition — a drawing, a musical composition, a poem — is from one angle a projection of the artist as organic

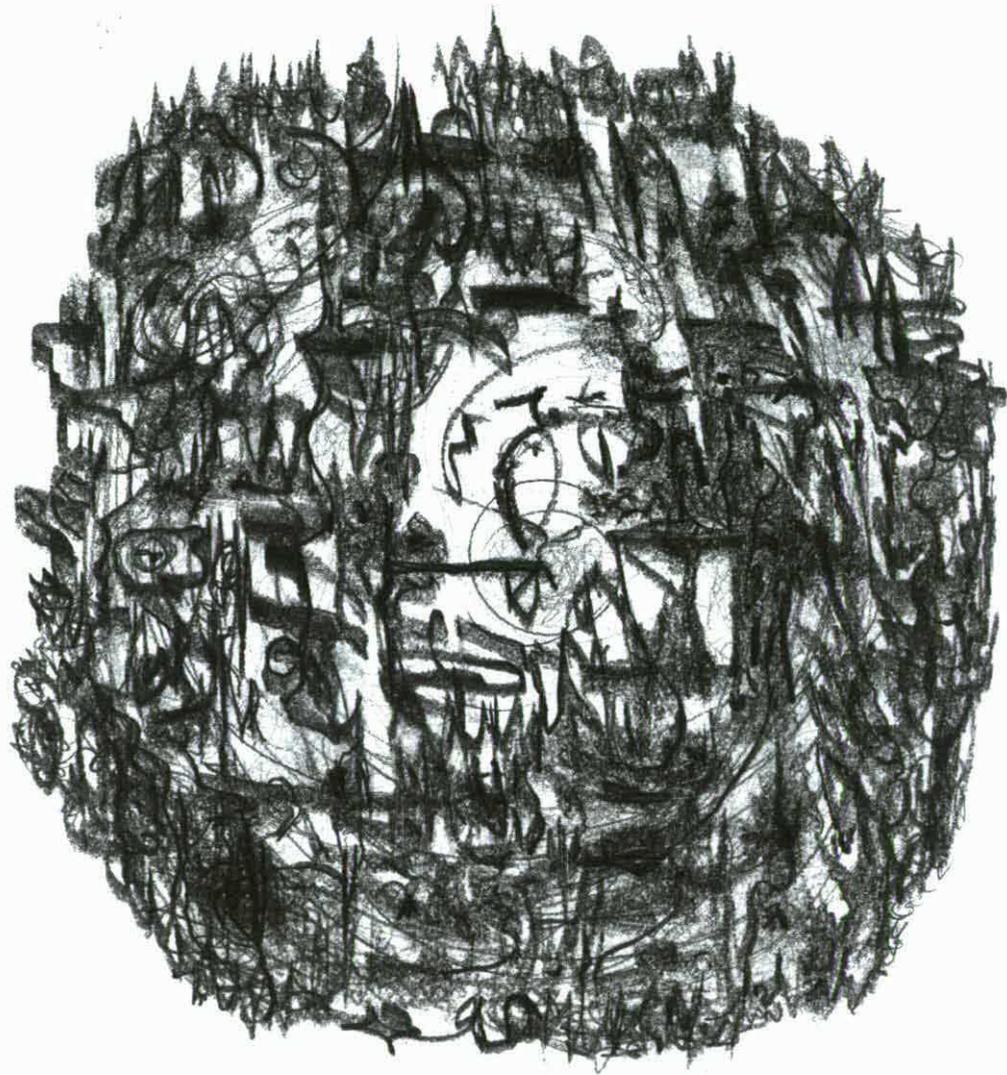
entity, and potentially can imitate or embody one or more of the pulses. “Beneath” the array is the undertime that on one level stands for the possibility of pulsation itself. Axial listening in this sense rests, indeed *resides*, in the zero point of undertime in such a way that it can entrain instantly to a sudden impulse — an impulse that, originating through such radical openness, carries something like raw possibility within it and is originarily performative. Something truly new holds the focus. Something so clearly itself that it leads to a further listening, attracting its axial music.

In *principle*, then, axial poetics allows for *interruption of momentum* so that gesture is allowed to pass freely through the medium, an incursion that radiates. And there is a sustaining theory of the principle as *a possible poetics of any moment*— a speaking from the actual instant, a zero-point voice.

This degree of abstraction in stating the principle and practice of unique moments of orientation and field-awareness makes one look for analogues with which to hold the vision in mind. I have found one such aid to thinking in William Day’s “new non-Newtonian [and non-Einsteinian] physics of the unity of space, motion, and the structure of matter.” Consider this interesting statement: “**Holistic Physics** is based on the principle that all things are at the center of their interactive environments. It is an object's direct interaction with its immediate environment that is responsible for its actions. And as the environment moves or changes, so too does the object change to remain centered. Environments arrange to form systems, cells, communities, and societies.” And, continuing to define “Holism”: “motion is caused by spontaneous shift to remain centered in an interactive environment.”⁵

Such a notion of immediate orientational adjustment in a specific changing environment can help us think what makes a line move, turn upon itself in the frictive engagement with a medium, and produce a state of open configuration.

And in the particular series of axial drawings I have named “*limenspheres*”⁶ — drawings that explore the *sense* of a sphere, yet which are always only liminal to an actual sphere — there is also a discovery of *other dimensionality*. What is seen as inside or outside the sphere is optional, configurative — at times perhaps even relating to a Klein form (a one-sided topologic 3-dimensional form, as a Möbius Strip is a one-sided 2-dimensional continuous surface). The root idea is not to imply any specific order of reality, metaphoric or literal, but to attract unique engagements with possibility. There is a visual inquiry into the location of what is seen. The notion of “non-locality” in quantum theory interests me in this regard, but it is limited, in my opinion, by the suggestion that there could be anything that is “non-local” to itself. I wish to imagine *further* locality or what I have proposed calling *hyperlocality*, indicating that something is where it is and potentially also anywhere else — what might be called unlimited field possibility and non-separation of the pervasively local. A *limensphere*, or for that matter any drawing, could be defined as integrated intentional patterning without precedent, and one can experience it in such a way that its “dimensionality” is not limited to the conceptual frame “object here and now”; it may seem, rather, to open out from an elsewhere (yet not represent that elsewhere). If one allows this appearance a certain virtual ontology, it can suggest its own quasi-quantum reality — the ability, for



instance, to appear in unpredictable ways wherever it meets with reciprocity or is somehow attracted.

The drawing attracts the further possibility of its particular origination. Intimate action, with its potential for high levels of integrity, responsiveness, and interdependence, not only can project a pattern capable of conditioning less private, more public behavior, but can morphically resonate in site-specific ways, far beyond what one knows one knows. Call them poietic pop-ups, interconversions. Nuclear bodies (human, poetic, etc.) may attract the components of their own ad hoc or emergent systems, potentially free of dogma.

Axial drawings are free acts in the sense of possible freeing of reality itself in its moment of self-knowing/self-definition. Viewer access to the drawing cannot be assisted much by comparison with art precedents, which is to say that whatever evaluation means for such works, it can hardly be in historical *terms*. The terms hold the frame of thinking, or hold thinking in the frame. The drawing *is* history, as we are history. We fail to get to the heart of the historical when we limit the sense of action and integrity to that of any specific precedent, rather than discovering unique ways to know unique acts. By such limitation we withdraw from responsibility in the historical. Drawings are micro-histories that teach in the nature of the historical at the level of interdependent responsibility. The axial perspective feminizes history or restores balance by acknowledging radial response and listening as a function of field.

With all this talk about the axial as though it were different from the art function at large, it's perhaps time to end this partial discussion on a note of acknowledgment: art *event* is itself an axial notion. And the axial view sees art as happening, with the implication that *we* are happening, too. And a cautionary note: the very fact of thinking one knows what *it* — drawing, event, the axial — *is* tends to deaden the whole domain. Yet, one does know it, in a certain sense that can hold open the possibility of its further instance.

BEAUTY = PRECARIOUS x OPTIMAL

¹ “Rules,” which may or may not be considered formalized distinctions within a given method, are not distinctions at the level of principle; they are provisional local ordering events and may or may not be extended beyond their locality. I regard a rule as a focusing device, which does not in itself have any ontological or even aesthetic status. An example of rule in drawing might be, for instance, that the drawing should stay on the page, which is something that I might mostly try to do but not at the level of “rule.” (If I made it a rule, the next drawing would probably go off the page.)

² An extended statement, *Axial Stones*, appeared in *Open Space Magazine* #3 (2001) and then in a revised form in *Ecopoetics* #2 (fall 2002). A book of axial stones (photos and commentary) is in preparation for North Atlantic Books. A further exploration in relation to language practice is *Axial Poetics: free standing language on an open axis*, which has been published on line in *Exquisite Corpse* (Cyber Issue 1, spring-summer 2002: http://www.corpse.org/issue_11/manifestos/quasha.html); in *BeeHive Archive* (Vo. 5. No. 1, summer 2001: <http://beehive.temporalimage.com/archive/51arc.htm>); and in *The Alterran Poetry Assemblage*: <http://members.rogers.com/alterra/axial.htm>).

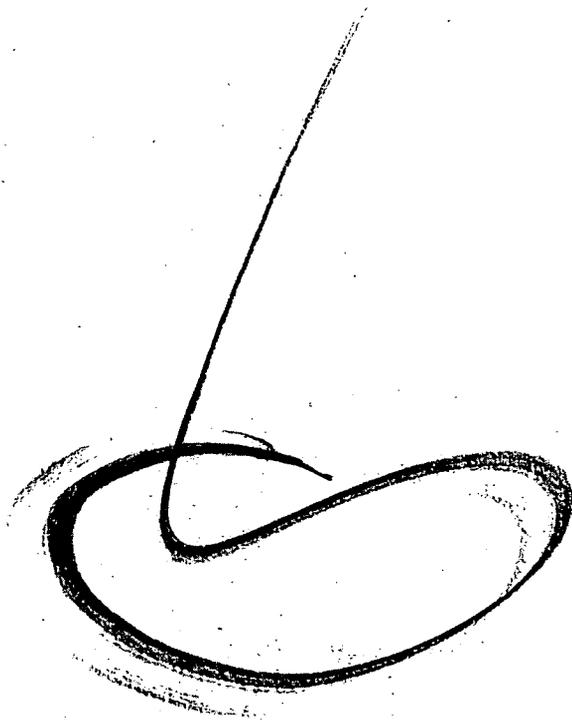
³ This notion reminds me of a remark by filmmaker Oliver Stone about how he makes his films; he quoted Francis Ford Coppola when the latter was asked how he made a certain film: “One motherfucking frame at a time.”

⁴ However, the improvisatory sound poetry that Charles Stein and I have made over the years is clearly axial, but it’s a stretch to regard this as music; the root impulse there is speaking, and it makes more sense to view it in the context of poetry. Yet this “abstract” sound can create a self-interacting sound field, which, by the way, I would prefer to call “configurative,” rather than abstract, since figures arise of their own accord for performers/listeners; and these figures often behave like phonemes, morphemes, syntagmemes, sememes, and indeed, gnosemes. I worked out the neologism *gnoseme* in 1974 to indicate a minimal unit of radical knowing, usually but not necessarily considered “verbal,” such that transforms the relationship between the thing (word or whatever) and awareness. The gnoseme involves a high level of performativity and can be elemental to the configurative. (Prof. Herbert Guenther has made decisive use of this term in *Matrix of Mystery: Scientific and Humanistic Aspects of rDzogs-chen Thought* [Shambhala, 1984].)

As regards “music,” I have thought to hear the intensively axial in works by composers as diverse as Morton Feldman, Benjamin Boretz (*Ainu Dreams 1 & 2*), J.K. Randall (*Gaps*), and Franz Kamin (*Behavioral Drift*), among others, which indicates that the “improvisatory” is hardly an essential issue as such for the axial. But I may not be an interesting witness from a musician’s standpoint; after all, the thought of an axial music probably derives from my late ‘60s interest in the songs of humpback whales and, later, extends to, for instance, Cecil Taylor and Pauline Oliveros. This sort of speculation, of course, about who does or doesn’t embody an axial principle, is of an entirely different order from the speaking from within one’s own work, which is not intrinsically *comparative*. Curiously, having begun trying to imagine what an axial music would be for me, I have experienced involuntarily “hearing” it.

⁵ [See: <http://www.non-newtonianphysics.com/>]

⁶ In the recent phase of axial drawing I have used only graphite — a new development, since for many years I used primarily ink. I attribute my rediscovery of axial drawing to the “magical” properties of graphite (a discovery thanks to artist/poet Linda Cassidy, who gave me a box of Tombo 3-B professional pencils). The first thirteen drawings are named *limenspheres*, a name that carries over as well to subsequent series.



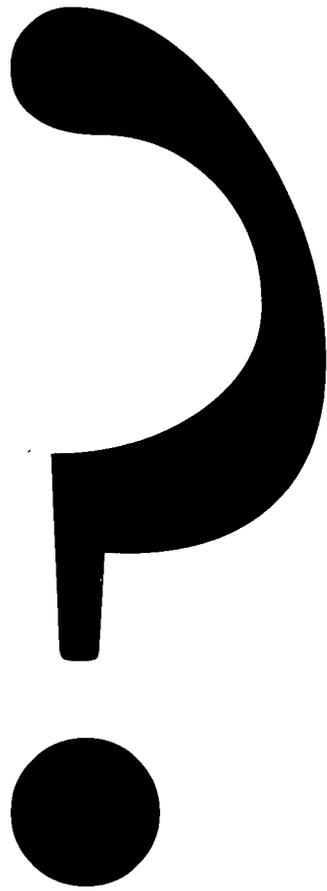
benjamin boretz

3 for now

september 2004

an interrogation for now

are we still?



(NOW?)

or did we start to think anew?

not another little review

giya kancheli, györgy kurtag, galina ustvolskaya, steve mackey, james dillon, györgy ligeti, luigi nono, earl kim...and morton feldman

there are composers who plunge into their work urgently following their music into strenuous fantastic voyages of discovery, perhaps of self-discovery; there are composers who apply themselves strenuously to discern and implement what their music requires of them, going where it needs them to go, fulfilling its demands out of a sense of intellectual, artistic, ethical obligation; there are composers who work from the outside in to energize their music to be as powerful self-projected personified presence as they can forge; there are composers who remain intactly disciplined, keeping intact and fulfilling rigorously their well-formed vision of how their music might perfectly do the work of reflecting on their persons as they conceive they would want, and deserve, to be reflected. from what point of view their music might be variably admirable, or engaging, because of these biographies, is probably not indeterminate but certainly indeterminable. is there any reason you'd want a key to this code? ... — and that one who composes the transcendental hush as blatantly as others compose the standing O, floating sounds labelled with their interpretations, subtextual advertisements for themselves...?

(the composers who may have inspired these thoughts are not necessarily implicated in them in any particular or explicit way, at least not intentionally...)

outside out

(email, 2/9/04)

Dear A.

Unlike you, I'm not particularly frustrated by the current abasement and commoditization of the cultures of music performance and art exhibition.

Because, some time ago, I decided to adjust my cultural attitudes in my own favor, to detach my internal culture-focus from the alienating 'evils' of 'the culture' so as to find alternative psychic spaces — even, perhaps, otherwise unpopulated spaces — where life choices and environmental effects are ontologized with a perspective that dis-reifies the irrelevant and renders it inoperative in determining my sense of cultural location — what I count as 'my world'. What that gives up is (the illusions of) social companionship, in favor of the companionship of a whole world of discoverable qualities that actually nurture the inner lifestyle I crave. There's a confusion: 'art' ('music', 'concerts', 'museums', etc.) have symbolized an 'enlightened' ('elevated') lifestyle — they don't, I don't think, anymore, as a general cultural phenomenon; but this doesn't mean that there isn't abundant stuff in our world which is still potentially nurturing to such a lifestyle; consider that at an earlier time, there were massive cultural phenomena which you might think of as non-nurturing (gambling palaces in Havana, Broadway musicals, bullfights in Madrid, gourmands in Paris, dog races, medicine & magic shows - & all) - but they didn't seem to get in the way of people who wanted to read books, listen to music, look at painting or buildings — that sort of 'culture' — for whatever 'inner' or 'outer' reasons. So it's about confusion: the old 'enlightened' contexts are now overtly dog-&-pony shows, so 'enlightenment' needs personal re-creation with other materials (I make out great with the California, Nevada, and Utah deserts, the bristlecone pines at 12000 feet in the Great Basin, the rain forests on the Olympic - plus the availability of music movies & reading matter on the internet). Such as, using the availability of modern technological resources (like transportation and reproduction and communication) to access and create all kinds of stimulating phenomena which can be a daily cultural environment, as the museums and theaters and Lincoln Centers become cheap crass commercial enterprises of limited interest and even possibly threats to your morale if you imagine they are still part of your ecology. They aren't, haven't been for quite some time, part of mine, and I haven't wanted for stimulating materials for - whatever matters and engages. (Of course, those who produce 'art' for galleries, music for concerts, books for publishers, discourse for classes, are producing what's appropriate to participation in their own perceived culture - they're not making any mistake - because they function at the exact level of 'art' appropriate to their personal talents, perspectives, purposes, horizons - to their fundamental self-conceptions as public personae. So they're cool - maybe they're Jack Johnsons rather than Hector Berliozes - but also don't forget how even the sleazy is always a legitimate part of the public art scene - was, right from start - and how it took the in-your-face deconstructions of the 1960s (including the self-deconstructions by lots of artists playing both ends against the middle) to expose the connections - those fat chanteuses & ditto social cats who performed in and inhabited opera houses were surely serious cultural pollutants way beyond any

fine pool champions or skillful strippers, but that tony sort of pollution was overlooked by people like you and me if we told ourselves there was redeeming musical value (what *were we doing?*) — which there hardly is any more, and you can bypass all of that by buying CDs and DVDs anyway)

(I've been thinking too about the accelerating global-culture institutionalizing of our public expression and intellection, ferociously wasting all but the highest-powered human resources, and the metastasizing corporatization of all of our cultural environments, a great deal of which I attribute to the complicity of most of our supposed peers (fellow-artists. fellow-academics), who complain about it all the time....)

—b

Dorota Czerner

(the texts between quotation marks are freely based on an oral report from an eight year old Kinshasa boy accused of witchcraft.....another substance/energy felt in the moment)

“a friend came to our house with a gift of a mango fruit...”

a bird caged inside the globe crushed pulp gave off a sweet

heart pounding against the soft fire like a yellow bird set free, skin cut, stone out

an opening inside opening not like something else an incision not like itself not like hearing not hearing like being pierced only always mine yours but other too

“...the following evening he returned demanding my body and soul to pay off the debt...”

nobody can get past himself without listening to their own a place a dream, you think what you think before moving forward time perched on the sound, grammar years undone

“....I am a green locust in charge of our ship an outlaw a fugitive, gliding from roof to roof, carrying messages and light....”

past himself un-noticed, dressed in language to go ashore, woven unraveled then put back in the shiny pod, to be called again only to save nomadic images traversed by rivers of memory, dotted with oases, a blue waterfall flowing up

and the music, emptying the reality of miracle, against the unwillingness, I can hear

four steps below myself

singing, “now by night my body turns into an insect, and we fly together on a vessel made from the bark of a mango tree”

*The foregoing text was composed as a response to a suggestion that I attempt to write cover notes for the orchestral version of UN(-), Open Space CD 19. Seemingly unprepared to hold the music as a matter of discourse I turned to a contrary possibility of entering the music as a space, a specific locus from which to hear my own language un-picked of its rational habits, infused with images, dreams, perceptual stains emerging over repeated listenings to Ben's composition-----
thus UN(poem) is a sliver of a parallel micro-universe with a vocabulary of correspondences or links called up by the music, aware of musiclanguage yet articulated in another voice, construed from within the space it co-inhabits, yet highlighting the resonances of its own unique scope, a scion responding to/reflecting/furthering*

—Dorota Czerner, September 2004