

---

DESERT PLANTS

---

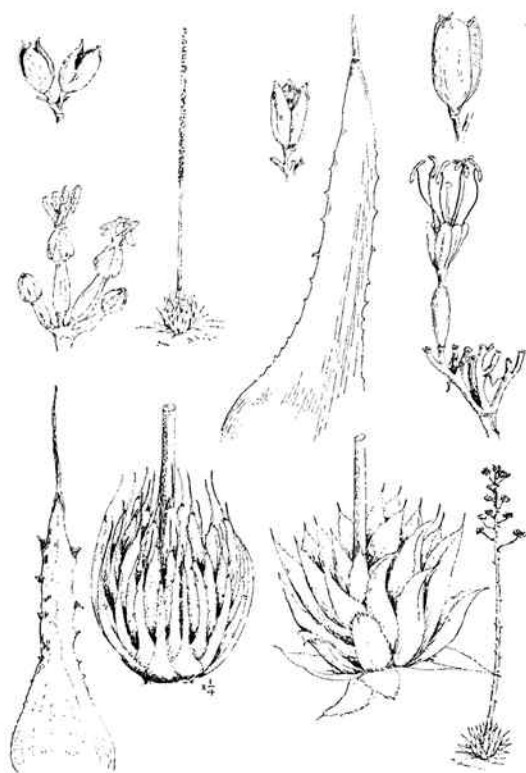




In memoriam  
HARRY PARTCH  
who was the  
most independent  
SO... ..far.

# DESERT PLANTS

CONVERSATIONS WITH  
23 AMERICAN MUSICIANS



WALTER ZIMMERMANN

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 75-414704

Copyright © 1976 by Walter Zimmermann

except where otherwise noted

All rights reserved

Printed in Canada

First edition: 1976

ISBN: 0-88985-009-7

Published by Walter Zimmermann and A.R.C. Publications,  
Aesthetic Research Centre of Canada, P.O. Box 3044  
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, V6B 3X5

MANY THINGS THEN COME OUT  
IN THE REPEATING THAT MAKE A HISTORY  
OF EACH ONE FOR ANY ONE  
WHO ALWAYS LISTENS TO THEM,  
MANY THINGS COME OUT OF EACH ONE  
AND AS ONE LISTENS TO THEM  
LISTENS TO ALL THE REPEATING IN THEM,  
ALWAYS THIS COMES TO BE CLEAR ABOUT THEM,  
THE HISTORY OF THEM  
OF THE BOTTOM NATURE IN THEM,  
THE NATURE OF NATURES MIXED UP IN THEM  
TO MAKE THE WHOLE OF THEM  
IN ANYWAY IT MIXES UP IN THEM.  
SOMETIME THEN THERE WILL BE A HISTORY  
OF EVERY ONE.

From THE MAKING OF AMERICANS by Gertrude Stein,  
copyright © 1934 by Harcourt Brace Jov., Inc.;  
copyright © 1962 by Alice B. Toklas.  
reprinted by permission of the publishers.





# I N T R O D U C T I O N

*One rainy day in Cologne I decided to go to America to visit musicians there, talk with them, and find out.*

*What?*

*I didn't know at the time, but at least to find out what they have in common besides being different.*

*So I took the next charter flight to New York, one suitcase with the necessary clothes, a tape recorder, two mikes, a camera, tapes, IVES' MEMOS, GERTUDE STEIN'S THE MAKING OF AMERICANS, JOHN CAGE'S A YEAR FROM MONDAY, JEROME ROTHENBERG'S AMERICA A PROPHECY, and my little red scrapbook, which at the beginning just had a few basic addresses in it such as FELDMAN, WOLFF, and CAGE.*

*I found a forty dollar per week hotel in Greenwich Village, which was close to most of the New York musicians I wanted to visit. (See picture on the left side.)*

*The first thing I did was to find out if CAGE really lives on Bank Street. Yes, it turned out to be his studio. He was busy working on a piece about the weather. THOREAU'S JOURNALS were all over the work tables, and it was a mess you find in people's places who work hard. He told me about some people I should go see first. And if I THEN still felt I should have a conversation with him, I should come back.*

*The next day I visited the CENTER FOR NEW MUSIC to ask GREGORY REEVE for more addresses. He had a whole wheel full. He told me about his center, that it's the only place in New York which lets the people know about what is going on and where in new music. And that it takes a lot of his time to let them know.*

*On that evening I was invited to dinner at RICHARD HAYMAN and BETH ANDERSON, both editors of EAR, an independent paper about the new music scene in America. CAGE characterizes EAR in his article "THE FUTURE OF MUSIC": "The difference between closed-mindedness and open-mindedness in music is made readable by the difference between any issue of PERSPECTIVES IN NEW MUSIC and any issue of EAR."*

Richard told about the financial problem of keeping it alive, and Beth was very enthusiastic about the growing activity of American women composers and the newly edited booklet WOMEN'S WORK.

The next days I spent on the phone arranging dates. Among them was LA MONTE YOUNG, who I would be calling up at least a dozen times during the following six weeks. And he would each time ask me if I had come up with any money yet, and that he would think again about giving me an interview. Well, finally he agreed to printing one of our phone calls.

I had my first conversation with PHILIP CORNER. He lives in an apartment on 96th Street, where you leave your shoes outdoors. I sat down on the floor, put the mike up close to him, and then began to tape. And Corner began to talk so fast that it was hard for me to follow. I felt like a cat being thrown into a swimming pool. Finally back in my hotel room, as I played his tape over and over again, I began to understand that it was very important to me that I had met him right at the beginning. His talk was about how to use the place you live in not as a boundary but just as a place to look out from. And if you feel the place is a boundary, then the boundary is first of all in your own mind. And that challenged me to forget part of the time some of my prejudices, something that would be necessary in going to see all these different characters.

The other person CAGE told me to see was JIM BURTON, because he built up the KITCHEN into one of the few places in New York where new music is performed. Jim is remarkable for one who is doing everything with his own hands, from the conception of a piece through the building of instruments to the staging of it.

PHIL GLASS next interested me because of his hand-made universe of sound and his working together with his group and how that helps the music. The conversation went back to his original motivation to making his kind of music. And it was basically a longing toward leaving European ways of musical expression.

There was no way to have a conversation with STEVE REICH about that. But he wrote something down for me about where his music led him. When I arrived at his house during a heavy rain, he told me, "You must love music or be a duck."

The talk with ROBERT ASHLEY was somehow a conversation about a conversation. He put conversations on stage and tried to get mixed up with the other person as much as possible. So he talked about how it's done, and what happens doing it, and that it is important for him to be conscious about from which persons one builds up his ideas.

With new ideas about techniques of conversation, I went to Middletown, Connecticut, to meet ALVIN LUCIER, who showed me how stuttering can be poetry, and how to make people more aware about their physicality within environments.

In New York again I listened to JOAN LA BARBARA's voice producing multiphonic sounds and overtones. I've never heard that done so beautifully except perhaps by Tibetan monks. She described her technique of singing clearly enough to let other people try to do it themselves.

Before leaving New York I wanted to visit JOHN CAGE again. I set up the tape recorder, and it was broadcasting FM stations. So I tried to fix it, and we began. After five minutes talk the noise still hadn't disappeared. So, I exchanged the mike and began again. This time I was getting nervous, but his unique humor eased the situation, and he opened my eyes to see technology as something which can bring our attention back to nature. His piece about the weather is probably the only contribution to America's Bicentennial which calls for a new revolution.

Next I met CHRISTIAN WOLFF in a German Wurst Haus in Cambridge. The Bavarian music in the background and the somewhat rough atmosphere of the restaurant reminded me too much of my own basic character to adapt very easily to the clarity of his refined ideas. I was impressed by his careful integration of experiences he made as an avant-garde composer into his politically conscious writing now.

MORTON FELDMAN was fascinating to listen to also, but from a completely different point of view. I felt like a son. He was sitting in an antique upholstered easy chair, and I was put into a Shaker child stool. He took the part of the composer who is left alone. So he said that what the young generation has to learn again is how to be lonely, and that the young generation doesn't listen any more. Actually, listening to him, and especially to the long pauses between what he said was a good exercise to learn it again. And then he said that if something is beautiful, it's made in isolation. His music actually is very beautiful.

From Buffalo I flew to Toronto over Lake Ontario, which divorces the U.S.A. from Canada. I was curious to see what DAVID ROSENBOOM was doing with his brainwave music research. And he is very into it. So I let him talk and at the same time listened to his brainwaves processed through a synthesizer into sound. What you see is an astonishing valuation of that what he's saying through what the sounds are pointing to.

RICHARD TEITELBAUM liked to be photographed in front of a map of Canada's population density, but so that the sparse population areas can be seen. Actually he talked so softly about his THRESHOLD MUSIC that he was very often on the threshold of acoustical understanding. He opened up for me a dimension that electronic music, much better than any other music, provides possibilities of self-experience.

PAULINE OLIVEROS, who came from San Diego to perform her CROW OPERA at DeKalb showed me that even instrumental play can lead you to the awareness of yourself in locking on of the playing to body rhythms. She is one of the few I know for whom art and life are intensely one.

So far I had reached the Midwest of America, and didn't have any more money to go to the West Coast. So I cancelled my flight and made a phone conversation with JAMES TENNEY, who gave me enough information about what's going on there to make me feel very sorry not to get there. TENNEY does a lot of digging out of unknown or forgotten composers of PARTCH's generation.

About one of the composers TENNEY mentioned I got some funny stories from J.B. FLOYD, a pianist from DeKalb. In Mexico City he met CONLON NANCARROW, who defected during the American-Mexican War and has lived there ever since writing player piano music which sounds absolutely fascinating. GORDON MUMMA, who is writing a book about NANCARROW, helped me out with material.

Again in New York I met CHARLEMAGNE PALESTINE who worked with TENNEY at CAL ARTS. He likes Javanese cigarettes, Boesendoerfer concert pianos, and is searching for the "golden sound". He has a really good ear to shape overtones out of the piano.

Then I listened to CHARLES MORROW between a dozen phone calls, which surprisingly enough didn't disrupt his flow of thoughts. He's a very busy and energetic person

experimenting with his voice on Indian songs, animal sounds and children's speech. He's doing rituals to turn the people on to the powers in themselves, one step away from the performer-listener separation.

In the conversation with GARRETT LIST, who is organizing the KITCHEN concerts right now, we talked about how to distinguish the superficial from the basic in the music going through the commercial channels. And about the whole world kind of feeling, which can only exist when each locality has its own strength.

Meanwhile, a letter from JOHN MC GUIRE reached me from Cologne, where he has been carefully composing for five years now. He writes that he had first to leave America to see how one's imaginative make-up is defined by the environment that one lives in.

FREDERIC RZEWSKI just came back from Rome, and so our intense talk was about the political scene there and here and what musicians can do to help the revolutionary movement. I began more and more to think about my situation as a musician at home. Also, he said some things about the political situation here in America that can't be taken serious enough.

In Urbana I met suntanned LARRY AUSTIN who came from Florida to a computer music conference to talk in an easy-going way about his realization of IVES' UNIVERSE SYMPHONY, employing the computer for the unplayable parts.

And I finally visited BEN JOHNSTON, who was so self-forgetful, telling unforgettable stories about HARRY PARTCH, who was the most stubborn and independent fellow of them all, who wanted to reduce alienation but became alienated.

For six weeks I had practically every second day a conversation. And every day shifted my understanding to a better one..... and I hope the English formulation of my questions as well. Nevertheless, the book is stuffed with clumsy formulations resulting from the spontaneity of my reacting and having just a limited repertoire of English language knowledge. And that sometimes produces funny situations, so please laugh.

I know that the realistic transcriptions of the dialogues, leaving in the background sounds, the "ums", "ah's", "likes", the coughs and the laughs sometimes make it harder to understand what we want to say. However, it

strengthens the attention to far more interesting things, namely allowing the reader to follow the FLOW OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

The efforts to form spontaneous ideas, the forming of words on the spur of the moment, and the adapting to one person's individuality, to challenge him to his most personal statements, these efforts failed as often as they succeeded. But each failure helped me understand. And that growing of understanding gives the book its basic tendency. And this is also the reason that I'm leaving basically the sequence in which I met the people. And I think this is the best way to let the reader understand.

Meeting all these people made a lot clear in myself, about my view of American musicians and what I'm going to do as a musician returning to Europe. How to SUBSIST during a time where practically no attention is paid to individuals if they are not useful for any commercial tools. And what puts these individuals into a situation where they are challenged to think about the nature of their integrity, and that because of their integrity become alienated. From there they are getting to understand the necessity to do everything to reduce alienation.

So I found out what they have in common besides being different.

The ways of SUBSISTENCE.

How to survive under hard conditions and the resulting beauty and vigour of this existence, which is one precondition for the necessary revolutionary changes.

This book is dedicated to the memory of HARRY PARTCH, because I feel that he lived in the essence all that of what it means :

T O B E A D E S E R T P L A N T

Walter Zimmermann  
Dec. 1975 Michigan  
Big - Star - Lake

# C O N T E N T S

Introduction	vi - xi
MORTON FELDMAN	1
CHRISTIAN WOLFF	21
JOHN CAGE	47
PHILIP CORNER	69
JIM BURTON	93
PHIL GLASS	103
STEVE REICH	117
ROBERT ASHLEY	121
ALVIN LUCIER	137
JOAN LA BARBARA	149
PAULINE OLIVEROS	163
DAVID ROSENBOOM	183
RICHARD TEITELBAUM	193
LARRY AUSTIN	207
JAMES TENNEY (Phone conversation)	221
J.B. FLOYD about CONLON NANCARROW	233
LA MONTE YOUNG (Phone call)	253
CHARLEMAGNE PALESTINE	257
CHARLES MORROW	269
GARRETT LIST	287
FREDERIC RZEWSKI	299
JOHN MC GUIRE (Letter)	327
BEN JOHNSTON about HARRY PARTCH	347
Acknowledgements	373

Morton Feldman







*Your pieces seem to me very enigmatic in a certain sense. If one tries to find out, he won't find out. You really don't know how MORTON FELDMAN composes.*

WELL, I don't know how WALTER ZIMMERMANN lives and spends his time, and you don't look to me like an enigmatic young man. Well, when I first started to work, that was my fault. Now it's becoming my virtue. Haha, as a man gets older, his SINS become charming.

One cannot help but notice in the course of writing a piece that some underlying principle seems to be ah..... there. Now, the question is to what degree you want to embrace this underlying principle. And also every piece has a different degree. Sometimes you meet it halfway. Sometimes you just shake its hand and it leaves. Sometimes you decide not even to use it, though the suggestion hovers over the piece. Why don't you do this? It's crying out for this. And it's not done. And it is almost as if it's in. Only because of its impact it's ah..... like a ..... So I'm aware of these things, and ah.....

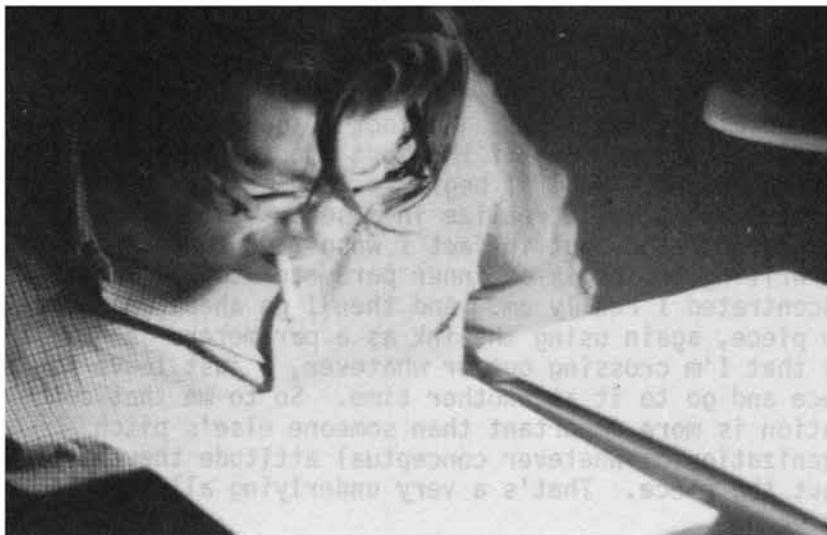
But ALL this in a sense is really not a compositional problem. I think I can make my pieces the way I do. And recently in the past six years, I've been writing very long pieces..... only because of my concentration. My pieces are to some degree a performance. I'm highly concentrated when I work. In fact I found ways to arrive at concentration. One of the most important ways is that I write in ink. So if I begin to work and I see that I am crossing out time, I realize in a sense that I thought I was concentrated, but in fact I wasn't concentrated. So the writing in ink is an inner parameter to how concentrated I really am. And then I go ahead and write the piece, again using the ink as a parameter. And if I see that I'm crossing out or whatever, I just leave the piece and go to it at another time. So to me that concentration is more important than someone else's pitch organization or whatever conceptual attitude they have about the piece. That's a very underlying all important approach.

*I see in your pieces that every chord which follows tries to establish a completely different world from the former one.*

Yes. Actually now I just try to repeat the same chord. I'm reiterating the same chord in inversions. I enjoy that very much, to keep the inversions alive in a sense where everything changes and nothing changes. Actually where before I wanted my chords in a sense to be very different from the next, as if almost to erase in one's memory what happened before. That's the way I would keep the time suspended...by erasing the references and where they came from. You were very fresh into the moment, and you didn't relate it. And now I'm doing the same thing with this relation. And I find it also very mysterious.

But let me play you a series of chords, which is exactly the same chord. Now, I'm not improvising the time. The time is actually there. I'm playing exactly what happens.

(Feldman goes over to the piano and plays softly some chords.)



I think there are three things working with me: my ears, my mind and my fingers. I don't think that it's just ear. That would mean that I'm just improvising, and I'm writing down what I like, or I'm writing down what I don't like. (COUGH) But I think those three, those three parameters are always at work. Not that I write EVERYTHING at the piano, but ah .....

Well, one of the reasons I work at the piano is because it slows me down

and you can hear the TIME element much more, the acoustical reality.

Ah, you cannot hear these time intervals, especially if you work with larger forces like orchestras. You can't hear the time between. Ah, just sitting down at a table, it becomes too fancy. You develop a kind of system, either asymmetrical relations, or of time. You get into something that has really nothing to do with acoustical reality. And I'm very INTO acoustical reality. For me there is no such thing as a compositional reality.

*And exactly that's what distinguishes you from the European approach to making music. You once said, "For centuries we have been victimized by European civilization." So I see this working together with CAGE and WOLFF in the fifties as one step out of the victimization.*

Yes, I think one of the interesting things in a sense where CHRISTIAN WOLFF and EARLE BROWN and JOHN CAGE and myself met, I think we might have met in some kind of common field was one week. (LAUGHING) But the week was important.....  
was that we began to listen, we began to listen.....  
for the first time.....

Jazz musicians they work within changes. They listen for the kind of change that might go into a more innovative change, you know. But they're working in the confines of given situations even when ORNETTE COLEMAN took the piano out, so it wouldn't influence the harmonic thinking of the trip.

But MY argument with past music is that in fact .....

I noticed how..... say with beat..... even if you want to say, say twenty-five years ago, "Let's get rid of the beat," you only got rid of the beat by pulverizing it, which means..... that you were finding ways to get rid of the beat..... which means ..... that you were working WITH the beat, you see. And I felt the thing about the beat was to ignore it. And that's why alot of my early music at the time didn't look to interesting to alot of people, American and European.

*But now you've regained a kind of a pulse through the experience of listening over the years.*

Yes. One of the problems about my chance music is that essentially it was too conceptual.

*It's like one of the paintings hanging on the wall here, like RAUSCHENBERG and those.*

Yes, well, they were my friends. They were my friends. But not only that. There's something about a concept that is impregnable, it's hard to break into. So you have for lack of a better term what is an image. And then you leave it alone. One of the big problems in my work was that, you know, as everything started to go into motion, I always felt that the performer in a sense didn't. They were sensitive as to how to play the sounds, but they were not listening. And they were not sensitive to the pauses I give. So, the reason my music is notated is I wanted to keep control of the SILENCE, you see. Actually, when you hear it, you have no idea rhythmically how complicated that is on paper. It's floating. On paper it looks as though it were rhythm. It's not. It's duration.

*You just mentioned that there was one week, twenty years ago, where CAGE, WOLFF, BROWN and you shared some experience together. And WOLFF mentioned too that you have like attachments to this time, and you look back onto it as a "Garden of Eden".*

YES..... You see, the difference between America and Europe in the relation to the Garden of Eden could be best explained by VOLTAIRE. Let's say VOLTAIRE is Europe. You can't be more Europe than VOLTAIRE. And let's take a book like CANDIDE. In CANDIDE there were three gardens. Each one, the first two were very sublime. In the first he

discovered making love to somebody else's wife. And he's thrown out of that garden, down the steps. Next we find him in Eldorado, also the Garden of Eden. And he finally has to leave there. And in the END he's in a little garden outside of Constantinople with a lot of junk. You see? (LAUGHING) The Europeans change, because they're thrown out of Eden. Plagues come, upheavals come, cultures come, and they have to get out, from tonality, from atonality.

Well, Americans in a sense LEAVE the Garden of Eden. I'm a little too esoteric perhaps in my thinking, but I think that Americans have the ability to get OUT while the getting is GOOD.

*There's first more space.*

There's CULTURAL space. There's ARTISTIC space.

*And also not this feeling of being embedded in a culture.*

OHHH, our CULTURE in a sense, I don't know to what degree we don't have a culture.

*I didn't say THAT.*

No. WELL, for example... we found beautiful substitutes for culture. For example, it would be very interesting if you would look into nineteenth century painting. So we had no culture. No matter how good you were, you were an amateur.

*But exactly that's the advantage.*

No, but it wasn't an advantage. It wasn't an advantage in American painting in the late nineteenth century. Let me tell you a little bit about it. Because it's a field in a sense that most Europeans don't know, American painting in the nineteenth century and what happened, especially earlier. So no matter how good you were, you were an amateur. So, being that we were still part of England, the young American, English American would go over and study in London. And all he was doing here was he was painting portraits. And he goes to London and he sees..... Well, it's like ME going to Europe for the first time. I'm painting portraits, and I see that there's not enough

INFORMATION, that the portrait in England is out in the garden, that you have to handle nature AND the sitter or family, you see.

And what happened to most of the early American painters is that they started not only to have more information, but they had to deal with significant material. So they started to paint great things. They were told by important English painters that you must look for things outside yourself. Otherwise you just repeat yourself, you see. And so forth and so on. And THEN toward the middle of the nineteenth century they still didn't have a thing. They had no history. And they discovered something else. They discovered something in a sense that Europe really didn't discover. But they discovered landscape painting. So nineteenth century American painting is where landscape painting became a subject. Now I'm not just talking about a field and a cow. I'm talking about a whole LANDSCAPE became a kind of philosophical and aesthetic prerogative. They discovered what ah someone called a kind of pantheistic idealism, where nature became the ideal, not as a subject for art. But it became a little ..... It became in a sense ..... perhaps not as great as a COURBET, but philosophically it became a little more interesting. Well it was STILL a work of art, but it was a little more. It started to get involved with the metaphysical aspect of nature. Now this metaphysical aspect of nature, I think began to effect the literature - Hawthorne, Melville - that's all strange stuff in relation to nature.

And I think it had a lot to do with the music in the fifties. That is that pantheistic idealism. If you substitute sounds for nature, you see, and try to arrive at some philosophical truth about it. But CAGE and myself are more lucky than the nineteenth century painters, because we KNOW as much as the European, and we're just as SMART as the European..... We are on equal footing, you see. And that's why the work, you see, has a terrific SURVIVAL element. There's no question about it.

Va.

If we wrote this music like IVES did, I think in a sense we wouldn't be able to survive. We would take too much. It would be too LITERARY. One of my problems about IVES



is that the work is just too literary. It's too pragmatic. It's like an objective MAHLER. You know, where MAHLER was subjective, and yet it's literary. But even that objectivity has to do with the fact that a self surrenders into this kind of pantheistic idealism. In other words...

*Ya, because it was never important for IVES to write just music. It was only important to transport thought through his music.*

RIGHT. But unfortunately for me it was really not musical thought, you see. I think where CAGE and myself differ from IVES in a sense is we're writing MUSIC. In fact, one of the most interesting things is perhaps at the time we were the ONLY ones writing music.

*Because you didn't use anything which was transported by historical...*

Well, that's right. We weren't fed in.....

Well, let's say CAGE'S relation to DUCHAMP is completely misunderstood. So they're the other side of the coin. I mentioned it to CAGE, I mean just in conversation. And he didn't say anything. He just listened. They're the opposites. For example, the interest of DUCHAMP for so many young people is that he took the experience out of the eye, out of the retina, and he made a conceptual. CAGE took it out of the past conceptual nonhearing aspect, formal aspect of putting music, and he put it directly to the ear. So that's absolutely the difference, you see? For all I know the greatest musical DUCHAMP was BEETHOVEN. Ha ha ha ha ha ha.

*And it's true with IVES. He's transporting thought within historically and musically accepted structures.*

WELL, that was the historical period. Let's not hit him over the head because he was born in that time. I mean he was just an outstanding person, but he wasn't.... But to what degree would he have existed without his literary references..... is very difficult to ascertain.

*But he at least stimulated, and I think he is still stimulating the practice of living where you are and finding there universals, even if you're in the midst of*

*a cultural desert. And that's a typical advantage in America for doing art.*

Well, you're certainly more successful than HAUER, you know, the Viennese twelve-tone architect. But there is this difference I think in America. And America is in a sense ah..... I think the references are more hidden.

*Another thing that I like, or just what I see here in American individuals is the aspect of being a ROUSSEAU type, living in a ROUSSEAU like situation.*

I think that's a mistake. We're not primitives.

*I don't know if that's the only thing which characterizes ROUSSEAU.*

I think ROUSSEAU is a very dangerous, very dangerous..... ah..... There's only one ROUSSEAU.

*And then there is another one, THOREAU, who is more and more referred to now.*

Well CAGE is.....

*But I see your music as a kind of living on your own, and that goes along with THOREAU.*

I think one of the things has to do with identity. Either I have NO identity as a composer, which makes me do what I do, or I have SO MUCH identity that I could open up and not worry about my identity. And I think the latter is true. I feel that I have A LOT of identity as a person. And so I don't ask myself, "Is this music?" For years I didn't even ask myself, "Ah, how could I be a composer and not living a professional life?" But the Americans I know, even of other generations, never THOUGHT of composition as a profession. Yesterday's amateurs become today's professionals. Yesterday's professionals become today's amateurs. But I always felt that the European needed that identity in order to survive. And consequently they had to pay tribute to historical processes.

And of course this attitude also produces very funny and at the same time very tragic attitudes. Like CARL RUGGLES. He just didn't write enough music. He painted

water colors for forty years, you see. So.....

But what I asked you earlier, when you came into the house, about why is CAGE and myself and WOLFF in this whole series of conversations that you will be having. Most of the people you mentioned to me are completely different interests. Where do you see the tie-up?

*First of all, I don't care if you are from a different generation. It's just that your music is still interesting. And all these people I'm going to visit demonstrate in their work being real American composers in so far that they are as independent of European-like historical thinking as American-like commercial thinking. And because of the present situation these musicians are challenged to think again about basic forms of music making. And that's what I want to find out. On the other hand, I'm presenting you at the very beginning because I would like to have a "summing up of an experienced man."*

HA, "A SUMMING UP OF AN EXPERIENCED MAN" ..... That sounds like the title for ah.....

the summing up of an experienced man. WELL, WHO am I supposed to sum up?

*Well if you especially compare the early fifties where you were together with CAGE and so on, how the music developed and how you see the situation now. And how do you think the music will grow in the future?*

..... I FEEL THAT the lesson that CAGE and myself at least ..... well, let's not even speak for CAGE. How could I speak for CAGE?..... I would feel that whatever implications in my own music is, I was telling other composers that they could be ABSOLUTELY themselves. And I feel in a sense that this message I was giving them in a sense has failed.

*How come?*

Well, I feel a failure because..... One of my complaints about the younger generation..... is that for me at least sound was the hero, and it still is. I feel that I'm subservient. I feel that I listen to my sounds, and I do what THEY tell me, not what I tell them. Because I

owe my LIFE to these sounds. Right? They gave me a life. And my feeling is in a sense is the young people.....

instead of thinking of sound as a hero, of experience as the hero, you get to think that THEY'RE the heros. And I find a little bit too much drawing attention to themselves ..... in their work, drawing attention to their ideas, whether they're anti-society, or whether it's political.

In other words, I wanted to give them the freedom to be esoteric. But evidently it's not considered a virtue. Now, I'm not absolutely clear. And one of the reasons I'm not clear is because I'm not mentioning any names. I will NOT mention names. In a sense this is not really a criticism. It's the way things are. And they're all fine men and women.

.....I feel that the whole idea was a little too hot to handle, and that one of its manifestations was: if sounds are free, then people are free. And if sounds and people together..... you know ah ha ring around the sound with society, ah hand in hand.

*This concept of art in fact doesn't work any more. Today it's more urgent to think about the people who should be free than the people who are free.*

..... To take a militant attitude towards society means that you're involved with that aspect of society. You're not involved with life. To take a militant action in relation to life, that's more mysterious. THAT needs thought. To me, I took a militant attitude towards sounds. I wanted sounds to be a metaphor, that they could be as free as a human being might be free. That was my idea about sound. It still is, that they should breathe.. ...not to be used for the vested interest of an idea. I feel that music should have no vested interests, that you shouldn't know how it's made, that you shouldn't know if there's a system, that you shouldn't know anything about it,..... except that it's some kind of life force that to some degree REALLY CHANGES YOUR LIFE..... if you're into it.

I don't know what a composer is. I never knew as a young man, I don't know now, and I'm gonna be fifty next month,

in two months.

And I think that whole business of control is very important. One wants to be in control of society, one wants to be in control of art. One wants to be in control, control, CONTROL. Now, just because the control is for something that's on the GOOD side, it's still control.

.....See, when you get into society, you see the big dilemma in society I think was expressed beautifully by CAMUS, where he says that one man, when he desires freedom, will be at the expense of others. In other words, one man's freedom makes someone else a victim. You understand? And I feel the same way in music, that if you're idealistic, and you insist that music be a certain way, then it's at the expense of the music. If you use the music for means, then it becomes a polemical thing.

*And do you think that any kind of social reality could make this understanding of what music has to be livable?*

To understand what music has to be you have to live for music. Who's ready to do that?

*Besides devoting yourself to the music to make it to a pure space in the world, you'll have to reach this point where you can afford it.*

YEAH, BUT you have to make the distinction between social realities and social anxieties. I mean, we could always be socially anxious. I mean if you think New York is bad, you should go to Calcutta!

I feel that music should be left alone and not be used as a tool for peoples' ideas..... to make propaganda, to make masterpieces, to force it to live in skyscrapers, to force it to live in mud huts. ....But a person should ah have a rapport with the sound world around him. And actually, I am manipulated. I hate manipulation. Every time I try to manipulate my work, for what I think is a terrific idea, the work drops dead. After working so many years, I'm not even ALLOWED to manipulate. I know in a minute I'd hear my music SCREAMING

HELP !

In that sense I have a very philosophical sense for my

work.

*How does it influence the thinking of the younger generation?*

I don't think it influences it at all.....

I think new music now again is used to draw attention to themselves or their ideas.....

Sound perhaps is dead. Maybe sound was just the fifties and the sixties. Maybe sound just dropped dead, or will drop dead with me, or will drop dead with CAGE. Anyway, it was a marvelous period as long as it lasted. For the first time in history sound was free. But, like most people, they don't want freedom.

They don't know how to handle it. With CAGE freedom became license, so they could act like idiots.

With ME, my freedom was misinterpreted as TASTE, as an elitist approach.....

What I want to say is I feel VERY ISOLATED from everybody you are going to interview. I don't feel any connection at all. And to be connected with them, as if you would bring me a photograph of someone, and say, "Do you recognize it? I mean it's your DAUGHTER." ....And I would say, "Well, it almost looks like my daughter, but it's not my daughter."

And some of them work so closely together, you know.

I think, there is nothing wrong there. There is a kind of sociological need, a phenomenon.

*Maybe you have the most patience of all of them.*

Also a lot of them are very ambitious. Now, if the time says everybody loves each other, everybody's good to each other, everybody has to help each other. I find that as true. At the same time I find that an aspect of careerism at its height. When I was young, nobody liked each other. Nobody loved each other. And careers just happened. Even to STOCKHAUSEN, it just happened. Versteh? He was a young man with fantastic energy, with fantastic intellec-

tual curiosity. He wasn't arrogant. He didn't think of himself as a hero. I think he'll wind up a hero. You don't begin as a hero.....

I think that's essentially the difference..... that everybody waited.

*And so you're the perfect example of one who is true to himself over the years then. But you see, time changes.*

LISTEN! This is a big problem. OBVIOUSLY things change. See, I lived with the thought that my whole life might be a mistake. But if someone who is writing a piece for ATTICA, I don't think that their life is a mistake.....

I feel that the young people, and this is also related to the whole sociological change, the young people just don't wanna compete. That's a big mistake amongst young people now anyway.

*Because they have seen where competition leads.*

Not that much in a sense, that I was competing or that I am competing. But when you recognize very strong voices around you. You are on another consciousness level. I had to bring myself into a certain creative pressure, and concentration. But what I do is what I mean, not just some idea that is gonna knock off in the afternoon. The word competition is not right. But I was perhaps one of the last survivors in a kind of ART ARENA. And I think the young people are not in an arena.....

You see it comes from within. They think about society because they are directed by society. And they get their cues from society. And when society says, "Well, that needs changing!" they cannot be oblivious to this change. I think the big problem in a sense is that they've been victimized and manipulated by society. And their whole thinking in a sense apes, reflects society in terms of what they wanna manipulate.

So they are not competing with ART. They are competing with society. And the values of society. Remember, society changes. To compete with art is like competing with LIFE. It's too much of a force. The dynamic is too powerful. Understand? It's like jumping into a volcano.

*So, people who want to establish this idea have to remove themselves from society.*

NO! I never remove myself from society. These people have to depend on themselves. They need an inner strength..... to function in life and society and art at the same time. It's an escape. That's my question. Das ist die Frage. It's an escape.

The big problem is that we have to differentiate too between culture and art. Art is done just by a few people. Culture is the manifestation. Publishers, students, teachers is culture. I'm a volunteer of culture, not art. And one of the things about culture, and I feel the young people are more aligned to culture, which again is society, than they are to the other things. Because in culture one has to have the illusion that one understands. You see?

I'm in a situation for example where a situation has to exist, where a twenty-four year old student has to assume that he can understand what I'm doing. That's almost insane. He must be my equal. He must be WITH me. That's culture. Culture is mutual understanding.

That is not communication. Communication is what I have in my music, with myself. Do you know what communication is for me? Communication is when people don't understand each other. That's what communication is. Because then there is a consciousness level that is being brought out of you, where an effort is made.

*But there are situations where this not understanding is such a gap that any effort evaporates.*

But you're not supposed to UNDERSTAND art. You are supposed to understand CULTURE..... And culture is just a department store which allows you to go and take what you want, if you can AFFORD it.

*Va, if you can afford it, that's the thing.*

And I feel that too many of the young people are involved in a manifestation of culture. The thing is, how does one remove oneself from culture?

*Not remove. But I see first the necessity to reestablish*



*new department stores, like department stores where you get your food somewhere else.*

But that's the whole BASIS of department stores. You're going to Bloomingdales, and the merchandise is a kind of middle class okay. You want a little better things, you go to Lord & Taylor. And if that's not good enough for you, go to a boutique.

*I just remember when I arrived in New York I lived at Washington Square in Greenwich Village, and there was a delicatessen store. And in the evenings it was surrounded by people that held out their hands every time someone came out the door. So there are SOME people who don't have access to stores. And then I actually heard that there are more and more COOP stores, where people from a block organize their weekly grocery shopping. And they go out to buy it from the country. So it's cheaper and it doesn't go through the regular channels. It's exactly that what I mean when I talk about reestablishing new department stores, to make art possible again. So I don't know if it's enough if you have enough strength and identity in yourself..... how you mentioned before....*

You can do it. You don't have to have STRENGTH. You can have weakness. Go away and suffer that it's a weakness, rather than try to tell yourself that it's a strength. I mean I don't think it's a question of one or the other. I think it's a question of.....

of learning what it is to be lonely.

I remember down in the Village when I was, you know, in MY TIME. There was never MUZAK on.

*Golden times.*

We talked. And I remember once I was in Berlin for a year or so, and I came back to the same place I used to go to. And I walked in..... There were new people there, young people,..... but there was MUZAK. They weren't talking. They were MUMBLING. I don't know WHAT they were doing. And I'm, you know.....

And that's one of the things what interested me when I was living in Berlin, is that you walked into a kneipe and

there is no music.

*But then there is too much talking.*

Oh, I don't think there could be too much talk. It's just about politics. Too narrow. The political life is too narrow. And you cannot attack it. You see, you cannot attack a political life. One is on the defensive, because the goals, the aims, are SO noble, you see? So how could you attack noble aims? It's impossible. Of course I'm at a disadvantage, because....

because I'm not involved in a political life. I'm involved in a revolutionary life. Any time I want to get up in the morning I'm making a revolution. I'm making either a revolution against history by deciding to write a certain type of music, or I'm making a revolution even against my own history. Many times I've put myself up against the wall and shot myself. Ha ha ho. I'm into a continual perpetual revolution in my own personal response to my work, which means action, immediate action, immediate decision that only I can make, and that I have to be responsible for. I don't like hiding behind issues, running to society is running back to Mama.

*That's very true. But sometimes you need your Mama.*

That's why I say that everybody has to learn what it is to be lonely again.....

That's why, WHO said it recently? I think it was PAUL VALERY, that when something is beautiful, it is tragic. And I think the implication for me as I see it is that something that is beautiful is made in isolation. And tragedy in a sense is a kind of psychic flavor of this loneliness.

And I don't think it's a reaction of some of the young people against art. And I don't think it makes any difference really what kind of art they make, or who they follow. I think the reaction is against being lonely.

And I think that the whole social change among young artists and their concerns for being together has a lot to do with this. They can't BEAR this loneliness.

*I can very much imagine that you're lonely, because that's the basic aura of your music.*

I mean it just in a sense of divorcing oneself from just the kind of camaraderie and group spirit in the sense that the young people seem to share together.....

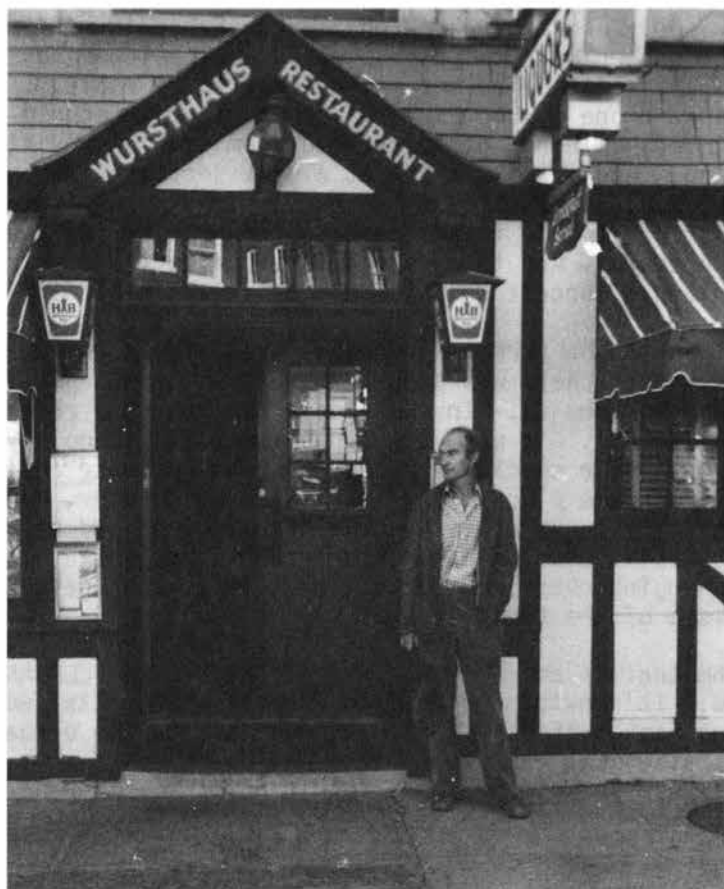
Just the idea of just going into a room and having to work six or seven hours because he has to do what he has to do. That's the price we have to pay. And I don't feel they wanna pay that price. And it has nothing to do with art. They're always on the PHONE. They're either HERE or they're THERE.

*There's certainly righteousness in what you're saying.*

But God bless them, and good luck to them..... and all I could wish them in life is to be lonely.



Christian Wolff



WOLFF

(in the Harvard Square Wurst Haus, Cambridge, Bavarian music playing in the background)

*Meeting you here now in Cambridge I remember a piece by MORTON FELDMAN called "CHRISTIAN WOLFF IN CAMBRIDGE". What is so remarkable about Christian Wolff in Cambridge?*

Well, as I was saying before, I've lived a long time in Cambridge. And I think ah what FELDMAN had in mind was, ah, he's been here twice in Cambridge when I was here..... And the first time he met me, he came to my room. I was staying in one of the Harvard dormitories, in an old-fashioned building, old-fashioned room with a very high ceiling. And I was sitting at a desk sort of with books all around, and sort of my nose..... I'm short-sighted.... my nose very close to the paper. And he came in, and he saw me there. And then we had a very nice time. I had organized a concert on which his music was played.

And then um, oh perhaps several, five, six, seven years later, again there was a concert. And FELDMAN again decided to come up. In those days FELDMAN very rarely left New York. It was very unusual for him to go anywhere. This was quite special. And my address was once again this very same place. And he knocked on my door, and there I was in exactly the same situation he had seen me five or six years before. And I think that sense of ah not changing over long periods of time is what gave him the idea of the title.

Beyond that, I don't know, like everything in FELDMAN'S music. It's extremely hard to verbalize it. Its techniques, its methods and all the rest of it. By verbalizing I also mean analyze. Like um there's no system. He works just by sort of sheer intuition, I think.

Ya.

And our own relationship has a little bit of that character. We don't ha ask too many questions. And um I think some of that also is expressed in the title of the piece.

Girl in the restaurant: "Um, it wasn't his fault or my fault.... It was just sort of a DISASTER...."

Yeah, also I think FELDMAN has ah very strong emotional attachments. And I think he also has a strong sense of that period, when he and CAGE and myself were living in New York, and EARLE BROWN. And like always comes back to that. You know, it's a kind of um, it's like being in a Garden of Eden. (LAUGHING) This is an area that, ah..... And I think he, I believe that he must have changed. I also saw him recently in June. He got a chance to see me where I talk now, and I don't think he likes it anymore. Because he, I think he regarded me for a long time, because I was the youngest also, as the surviving representative of that golden era, you see of the fifties.

Va.

I like his music very much. There's no question about that. And I think I've learned a great deal from it. It's effected my own music too.

How?

Well, for example, the one thing I can always put my finger on is, it's I think from FELDMAN'S music that I first had the sense that all intervals are equally accessible or equally useable or equally beautiful..... which is curious. I learned that from JOHN CAGE. All sounds are alike. But FELDMAN chose the intervals, rather than allow them to happen by chance. Also, he restricted himself mostly to pitched sounds rather than using noises.

*I've just read one statement of CAGE about your music in his article, "THE FUTURE OF MUSIC", where he says, "WOLFF'S works invariably reveal to both performers'and listeners' energy resources in them themselves of which they hadn't been aware, and put those energies intelligently to work." How do you relate to this statement? Do you think it's a good description?*

It's a very nice one. (LAUGHING). Well yes, I mean clearly if that's happening, then I think I'm doing the right thing, yeah.

*Could you describe this process of revealing energy resources?*

I think it has to do with two things. One is the fact

that my music is often just material. But not raw material exactly. It's set up in such a way as to require anyone who wants to seriously deal with it to exert themselves in a particular way. Not just technically, to learn how to play it, but also imaginatively..... how to fill out what's to be filled out, how to use the material. And so that's just the individual in relation to the score. But most of my scores have to do with groups of people. And it then turns out that a lot of the music making, and this comes out of the score too, has to do with how the individuals relate to each other as they play. And that in turn opens up a whole other set of circumstances, which of course take on a special character, but which is focused by the music.

*So you put the musicians in situations where they are producing structures that they never thought of before.*

Well, they are faced with things to do that they don't usually have to do, yeah, but which are still musical at least as a basis. So that it's not that you're asking somebody to do something like to play a game that they've never played before.

*Could you describe this technique of laying out of material, and how do you give the musicians ways to actualize these materials?*

Well, I suppose the simplest idea, and the one that keeps coming back in many of my pieces, is the idea of coordinating sounds.....which is really, you know, the basic idea of any music that's played by more than one person..... that you play together or you don't play together. And there are two extremes I think. One is that two people are improvising more or less simultaneously, which you get say in jazz occasionally on the one hand. Or on the other hand you devise a structure with bar lines and strict rhythm. And then you assume that there's this sort of arbiter, or there's a conductor, which keeps everybody together. And everybody has to toe the line.

So I do away with both of those. Occasionally one or the other might in fact turn up. And instead I try to make the coordination, or the way people play together, depend firstly on not being predictable. That is to say, you can't lay out a whole map and know exactly the path you're



going to go. So that means that you may be at a certain point in a piece where you suddenly don't know what's next until someone else tells you. That's the one thing. The other thing is that the other person may not know that they're telling you something. The point of that has to do with eliminating as much as possible total control by any one person. It's almost impossible to conduct my music, for example. Everybody has to conduct, not all at once, but they take turns. Or they do it unintentionally. And well the simplest way is where your coordination is say, one person plays a sound, and then another person has to play a sound which has to follow directly on the first person's sound.

*Do you employ in your early pieces too this social relations of people, or are your early pieces strictly aesthetic? It seems like there is a kind of social situation you find in streets and everywhere mirrored in your music.*

Yeah, I didn't have that notion in my head to begin with. I think I stumbled on it. I mean it's not entirely an accident, but I think I just had a chance to do that and stayed with it. But I didn't decide like ah, "Now I'm going to make a social kind of music, and this will be the right thing." It came about in musical ways, and just partly technical reasons. Originally it had to do with ideas about rhythm, which is that you produce a certain kind of rhythm by these kinds of coordination and these techniques of coordination, which I found you could hardly produce any other way. It's a rhythm that has to do with being surprised, and having to wait on other people to do what you want to..... what you are supposed to do.

Ya.

In some of these it's the simplest coordination. Player one plays a sound. And as soon as he's finished, player two plays a sound. Now, however the duration of the player one's sound is indefinite. He can play as long or as short a time as he wants. And player two simply has to, as soon as player one starts to play, he knows that any minute, and second now, and fraction of a second, he's going to play. But he doesn't know quite when. And the rhythm produced by that situation is like no other rhythm. Especially if you imagine like more complicated versions

of this, like say three or four players in different variations. So, it partly came out of something like that, to make a certain kind of rhythm. And it's clear that it's a rhythm that depends upon feedback, rather than an idea about rhythm. And if you will, there the social relations come in.

*So I know that BURDOCKS was played in London. I heard about this performance from someone who participated there. What are your experiences actually? Not to talk about the sophisticated techniques of conceiving it, but now what are your experiences in realizing it?*

It depends on the pieces. I mean some pieces are, ah pieces in the sixties for instance like SUMMER, the string quartet, or DUOS. Those experiences are pretty consistent, because the musical demands are fairly precise, even though the pieces come out differently. It's like chamber music. BURDOCKS on the other hand is an orchestral piece. It's a large group piece. It can be done by fairly few players, but the London performance used about forty players. And that was a very different kind of situation. I thought it was fantastic. I mean it's one of the finest performances I've ever had. There also the techniques were quite different, because the piece as such..... Do you know the piece at all?

*We made it once in Cologne, privately done.*

But there are many different things to do. I mean certain things are quite precise, and there are other things that are.....

*I remember these wheels where you can change from one to the other.*

Well, that one you see is fairly, that's really fairly restrictive. I suppose that the most unrestricted one is the one at the very end, which simply says "flying". Anyway, it's just a few suggestive words. Nothing else is said. And of course there are many ways you could do this. You could make sounds that suggest flying. And in the BURDOCKS performance one fellow came in with a pair of little wings tied to his shoulders. That was his representation of that one. There was also in the course of the performance a little lecture about the history of

flying. And of course all of these things, some of which I'd thought of, some of which I hadn't, you see are available.

The thing that interested me in BURDOCKS was to make many different things go on at once, and really make a kind of MESSY situation. It's an idea close to CAGE I think. You know, you have many different things happening. But I was also interested that each should have its own distinct character. In other words, you could go through the performance of BURDOCKS, and you didn't know anything about the piece yet. You knew just what everybody was doing at the time. Again, that was nice about the performance. I mean one reviewer had taken the trouble to look at the score beforehand. And then he just sat back. I mean he didn't know what our plan was, because you don't need to do it in the order of the score. You can just make any arrangement that you want..... And he simply described what had happened. That sort of clarity remained. But at any given moment, at the same time, it could be like ten different things, totally different things, going on.

*In writing the piece did you have the texture or the character of the plant, of the burdocks, in mind?*

I don't know if you have much experience with burdocks. They're a weed. And they're messy. People who do gardening hate them, because they get into everything.

*"Unkraut", like we say.*

Exactly, exactly, although they have medicinal properties, for instance. And you can make tea out of it and things like that.

*Va.*

It was also related to a music festival that I organized in Vermont, which we called the BURDOCK FESTIVAL. That existed before the piece did. So that was called BURDOCK FESTIVAL because we played the music outdoors, and we were involved with burdocks quite a lot. Because it was just in an area where there were a lot of burdocks.

*One of the next pieces that you wrote after BURDOCKS is ACCOMPANIMENTS. I see it as an example of music which strengthens the attention to social facts. Because there*

*is first a text involved. Also the title points to it. How do you relate like in the first movement the music to the text CHINA: THE REVOLUTION CONTINUED ?*

hm hm, hm hm, um it's very difficult. The summer before I wrote that piece..... I mean I had always been interested, but not very vigourously, in um more or less political questions. But then that interest was strongly intensified, partly by my friends, through CARDEW, RZEWSKI. And so I began to read a lot. And I decided that I would like from then on as much as possible to associate text with my music. So one of the books I read was this one about China and the cultural revolution, and I was struck by it, and moved by it. And I thought people should know about it. And so I thought I would try to..... And the same time RZEWSKI had asked me for a piano piece. So that it seemed appropriate to put those two things together since he's interested in political music.

Then you asked me a technical question. You wanted to know how the music goes with the words.

*Especially since it's a very realistic description of the hygienic situation and its political implications. And so this very concrete, realistic text and these chords are going along? How do you relate it to the words?*

Well, I guess the chords are, like the title of the piece says, are accompaniment to the text. And what I wanted was something that was not a song, since there is a great deal of text. There are far too many words. They are far too concrete to make a lyric, like a "Lied", out of it. You couldn't do anything like that. On the other hand, the thing that comes to mind with that kind of text is like a recitative. And that seems to be musically not so interesting. So, why not try to do something in between? And it is a kind of recitative, really. Except that instead of having one chord and then a sentence you have a chord with every syllable of the text.

The other thing I wanted to do is preserve the prose text. On the other hand, I did want to give it a certain amount of structure. Because it was appearing in a musical situation. And so the chords are intended to do that. (You don't use them all.) They come always in groups of sixteen.

*And there are always four notes, which is astonishing.*

Well, that's a very simple-minded device, I'm afraid. But it's one that I stumbled on, and it worked out very well harmonically. What it is simply is each sequence of chords is based on one chord. And if you wrote four notes, and then allow any note to be either base or treble clef, you will generate fifteen more chords.

*And that explains the shifting of ranges.*

There's more to it than that. The thing has been very carefully put together. There's a sequence of perhaps fifteen chords, right? Then what happens next is I think the sequence may be repeated. Then it repeats. It's transposed up maybe a minor third. But then there's a section that you get thirty-two chords, where you get both the original and the transposition. And then finally you get just the transposition in the last run through the cycle. That's a rather simple-minded idea, but it suggests a movement upward, (LAUGHING), gradual but distinct.

*That's one relation to the text.*

Yeah, progress if you will, or something like that. Um, the other one that I've noticed is just in the look of the music, which is just purely subjective. But China of course is a very large country. It has many many people in it. And if you look at the pages of the music, they're very crowded and populous. I mean, I hadn't written so many notes I don't think..... There are more notes in that single movement of the piece than all my previous pieces of music put together. As I say, that's trivial, that's not serious.

*How is the performance of the text related to the chords?*

For each syllable of text you play one chord. And you have again, like my earlier music..... some people criticise that..... you have the performers left with the choice, because you can use the entire text and make selections from it. So as long as they make sense..... You can't make arbitrary selections. They still have to be intelligible.....

Because that's partly, that's a practical problem.

Because if one did the whole text, just that part alone would take half an hour. Any normal audience wouldn't stand that. In other words, the effect of the text would be lost, because people would be irritated by the length of it.

Well, the other thing is, for each run of chords there is anywhere from one syllable of text to sixteen syllables. If it's sixteen, there are just enough chords for every syllable of the text, yeah? If there are fewer numbers, then you can, you're allowed to repeat the text until you've used up the chords. But you don't have to. So, if you have a one-syllable word, you could repeat that word sixteen times. What happens there again is the text is turned more into a song, when you suddenly lose sight of their syntactical continuity and it becomes a purely musical one.

*And strengthens the rememberings to certain words?*

Yes. There's an element of that, right. But there, that's the point where I could be criticised, because I don't specify.

*You mean where you go to propoganda?*

No, no it isn't that so much. It's where the performer goes to propaganda without my having told him one way or the other. So in other words, the text could be done, I mean one could emphasize parts of the text to make it sound ridiculous, which is not my intention.

*Like MAO Mao Mao Mao Mao Mao.....*

For instance, exactly. And I guess I fall back there on something that I've fallen back on all along, the assumption that people who come to this music come to it seriously, with good will, and they will just do the right thing. Sometimes they don't, and that's the problem. Well, it's my problem too. I mean I have set up a situation. In other words I've become much less optimistic in that way.

*But you offer the performer the responsibility.*

That's true. But I also thereby no longer take it. And yet I still have it.

Hygiene (8)

is a political question. (2)

The bad old habits (3) are deep-rooted, (4)

but we're fighting them all the time, (1) and things are (5)

getting better every year that (2) goes by. (8)

This work we do during study (1) meetings. To study and apply (2)

Mao (8) Tse-Tung Thought is a good method. (1)

Good things can be praised. (3) During these studies (3)

many people have come to realize that la- (1) -trines, too, are a po- (3)

-litical question. (3)

Copyright © 1973 by  
C.F. Peters Corp.  
373 Park Avenue South  
New York, N.Y. 10016  
Reprint permission  
granted by the  
publisher.



Think of a concrete example. Say you have a rather large audience, which is politically well-disposed with what you're doing. And a performer comes along and plays that piece in a politically irresponsible way. Well that's a very bad situation. And It's one for which I'm basically responsible. I mean that's something which I have not yet resolved. I'm still, I suppose, interested in that question of ah.... well that thing of energy we talked about earlier, which stems to mind from the fact that the performer does have to make some of those decisions.

I mean, it's difficult to play that piece if the words mean nothing to you. In other words, the performer can't function as in our sense a professional performer. Say you hire a musician, and you put a score in front of him, and he's agreed. He's signed the contract. You give him an advance, or whatever. He knows he's going to get paid, and he knows what he has to do, and he will do anything which you give him to do. It could be about MAO. It could be about KISSINGER, right? It doesn't matter, right? OK. Well that situation seems to me almost impossible. I mean that's what I'm trying to avoid. Ah, it's true that you might get someone. My problem if, you will, is that let's say the man who is sympathetic to KISSINGER, I assume that he would not do that. He would not play that piece. I mean, that's my naive assumption.

*How did you implement social reality into pieces like CHANGING THE SYSTEM ?*

That's a very abstract question.

*The title implies more to me than changing just MUSICAL systems.*

Of course. Well, the text in that piece CHANGING THE SYSTEM, which is where the title comes from, and that's what it's about, says very simply..... Ah, it's the same idea which is also in the ACCOMPANIMENTS piece, which is one that I'm sort of "stuck" with, is about specific social and political and human problems, which cannot be treated in isolation. But they have to be related to the entire society in which you live. And if there's something locally wrong, you can't change it properly unless you change everything. Which is, it seems to me, what is now being demonstrated by the various communist

revolutions, or has been in various ways. And it's really that idea that is in the text. It's put much more modestly than that. But I try, I think, to avoid in the pieces too abstract statements. That's why I like the Chinese text, because it's about a very specific practical problem, which is dealt with on both that level and on an ideological level. I mean, these people are aware of that. We may think that they're very simple people. But they realize that in order to make their sanitation system work, they relate that to the thought of MAO TSE TUNG. And that's perfectly natural. To us it seems bizarre, you know, to us, that's a technical problem and not an ideological problem. But they understand it as being coordinated. And it's that idea that I'm trying to get across, to get people to be aware of.

Um now, you talk about social reality. What you do is raise another problem, which is this. You might say from a political point of view a defect of my music, of my so-called political music, which is that it is too general. In other words, to that sense it doesn't address itself to social reality at all. Social reality is a specific problem, which can be analyzed in a general way, say in terms of class conflict. But it's also exploitation that you can, you know, actually document, put your finger on.

Now, to take that kind of thing and put it into music seems to be difficult. You need the specific event or moment in order to be there in a revolutionary-historical situation where something is happening. And then you will make usually a song about it. And that song will be appropriate to that time, and then become part of the history of that time....which is very different from my usual "Einstellung" to music, "ja"? Namely that we make something that can be played a number of times, and each time the piece will be unique. I mean it would somehow not have a historical character.

So, as I say, I don't know what to do about that. There are two kinds of political music. Let's put it that way. There's the kind that is generated directly by your own political experience in a given situation. The best thing I probably can think of. You see, the thing is there are not that many, right? Most of our lives we don't run into..... Maybe you take part in a demonstration or something like that. Or you go to Cuba or drop out or do

something like that. But in most of our lives there isn't much directly happening, at the moment. (I really should just speak for myself, my rather safe, middle class situation.) So we can't write music about it.

I don't know if what I'm going to say now is in my music or not. But, I think we have this notion that there is propaganda music, political music, and then there's the other kind of music which has these humanistic values and this universal hm and so forth. But I think that's wrong. I think ALL music is propaganda music. Ah, the humanistic, so-called universal music, is propaganda for that kind of music and for the society which produces it. And first of all I think we all should become aware of that. I mean, any piece of music expresses something, even those pieces that deliberately try to express nothing, sort of like certain pieces of JOHN CAGE'S.

That too, ah, nothing is something. There is no such thing as nothing. And I don't see at the moment why that should be any less a kind of propaganda, even when it's unconscious. Although in a sense, I mean in the case of CAGE it's quite conscious, because he knows exactly what, you know, he has a whole philosophy of life he means to express by his music. And his music is a perfect example of propaganda music. It expresses a way of understanding the world, which implies a whole way of acting in the world.

Most composers don't get that far. I mean they don't think about those things very much. But you know they do it more instinctively if you will. Or, so, I guess, well mostly what I'm saying is that I'm objecting to this distinction. And then, so the aesthetic value of say the so-called humanistic music as opposed to music that supports the Chinese Revolution. Um, it seems to me ah that's what we mean by one being aesthetically more limited is simply that we have accustomed ourselves to the one rather than to the other. I mean, yeah, it's a very large question. (LAUGHING) I don't think that I can solve it. but um.....

*I don't know if I can express really my thought in English, but I just want to say that.....*

So, say it in German, because you know I understand.

*Okay, ham hm heh, was ich meine ist, dass es sich ausschliesst, nein, es schliesst sich nicht aus. Aber es ist sehr hart zusammenzubringen, dass..... Musik die man ah.... It's oh my so hard to speak German now.....*

*I I see that it's like, you know..... on the one side you have um music which is so precisely directed politically that it has to limit itself in its own variety to realize political goals. On the other side, you have um um new music which is related politically too, but which beyond that tries to realize in its genuine structure the ideal state this music wants to establish.*

Okay. Yeah.

*I see you tried to realize both in your work.*

Now I recognize that, and it's probably true. I do just what I can, and what I have to fall back on is at the moment the very um restricted character of my political experience. And therefore I can't do very much of this kind of activity, of ah what you would call "propaganda music".

Let me give you an example from CARDEW. There is a very clear case. When he was in Berlin he was involved in a ah political agitation thing, right? ....having to do with a hospital. He simply did that. He joined this group of people, Communists, and they you know they did demonstrations, and they canvassed and so on and so forth. And in the course of this the people he was working with didn't even know that he was a composer. Ah but somewhere somebody along the line found out that CARDEW was a composer, and said, "Well listen, why don't you write a song that we can sing at the demonstration?"

So he did write a song. Other people helped with the words. And in fact at one point in the song one of them suggested a change which he put into the music. So they wrote this song, and they sang at the demonstrations, and it caught on. So, that's a good example of how to express precisely the needs of that moment. And that's a very good song and is now part of the folk music of Berlin. You'll find it in little books, right? So, that's one kind of music. Right?

Now, that kind of music can only arise through a specific

political experience such as that one. Um, I would be delighted to devote my life to writing that kind of music, but honestly can't do it, at the moment anyway, unless I'm willing to you know give up everything and go.

*And I think the United States is not provided for this type of composing.*

Well, not entirely. I mean we have a tradition which is somewhat submerged of political music. I've just been learning about it, and it's very beautiful and very extensive.

*The music of the South somehow?*

Well the South. And then there's the labour movement, which has a tremendous amount of music associated with it, much of which, as I say, you don't hear much. And occasionally it surfaces through somebody like DYLAN, who makes it very personal and makes it very subjective. But he is ultimately related. His great master is a man called WOODY GUTHRIE. Well, I'm just learning myself. But ah, there's a lot of stuff there. So that there is a tradition that exists. It gets submerged and is completely submerged now commercially by the rock and roll scene and by the whole rock business.

But there are some, oh, PETE SEEGER, a famous example of somebody who is a folk singer who is involved in political causes. You have your equivalent in Germany with EISLER and that whole tradition you know. He's having a kind of renaissance, and so that's that side of it.

Ah, in the meantime, and also in my case because of my background and my experience and what people want me to do, I still want to write my music. You know, I can't sit around and wait. So I do the other things. And in the other things I try to.....(And that's what you were talking about over here)..... I try to possibly relate them at least to a political orientation that seems to be progressive, and that of course is much more generalized.

*FREDERIC RZEWSKI wrote a song called APOLITICAL INTELLECTUALS. And I think it belongs to a lot of the American artists. Why are they so apolitical?*

Well, I don't know all the reasons. But again it's a political position that they're maintaining. Because for them to be apolitical is a kind of protest. Avant-garde musicians imagine themselves to be in a protest situation. I notice that in a sense, although they will not say it. But that to them is..... that's their politics.

The other thing I think is that the tradition is not weak, but it's submerged. It's something that we're simply not exposed to..... which is not accidental, I think. That is to say, for us political music has invariably an element of popular music going on. It has..... music that repeats has larger groups of people, whereas avant-garde music has a very, very small audience. I mean, even CAGE has a larger audience, but really more for himself, his personality and for his ideas and for his books and his presence than perhaps for his music.

*Va, true.*

And the other people, they have their audiences, but they're concentrated in New York or a few spots on the West Coast. And well, it's very tiny. It's a very esoteric movement, whereas any kind of political statement assumes you know a group, a realistically sized group. Now, that automatically suggests you know music made for masses of people. And that immediately to a composer suggests either commercialized pop music, which is regarded as essentially degenerate or in any case manipulated by commercial interests. Well, you know there's some very interesting music there. And I think people like REICH and GLASS are aware of that. There's a certain relationship between the way they present their musics and the way rock and roll music is presented. But still, generally speaking, that music is regarded with some distrust.

And then the other kind of music that's sort of for large groups of people is the old bourgeois music, which some of us like, some of us don't, but we all agree that we don't want to write BEETHOVEN or BRAHMS or that kind of thing.

And then finally there's something that I guess in my education has simply been..... you're just not exposed to it, neither at school or at university, which is the folk music of this country. There were people in college that were sort of devotees of it. They had their guitars and

so forth and played this music. But on the whole, it was a minority. And people seriously interested in music were not interested in that. It's a kind of cultural ah.....

*Ya, and to really try to function here as a political musician goes right into the commercial mechanism.*

Well that's the danger.

*That's one reason possibly for the apolitical intellectuals. It's just resignation in not having access to the political scene.*

There's something like that. But I think that RZEWSKI'S song is meant to be an attack on that. And it is certainly a position that can be questioned, that you assume that there's nothing to be done.

*Then I think beyond that. It has something to do with "the" American too, and in CAGE because it's somehow in the SONG BOOKS and this THOREAU statement that the best government is the government which governs least, and that every American is somehow a stubborn, independent.....*

That's it, that's it, an anarchic individualism, yes.

*So this kind of solidarizing is only possible under high social pressure.*

Yeah, I mean America has a tradition of utopian communities. But they all are..... But that's in a sense a positive side. But it's again a very small and isolated thing. Yeah, now your point is right, that we have a very strong tradition of independence.

*What are your projects now to realize yourself as a socially conscious composer?*

I try to do most of the things that I do with other people. That's quite a practical consideration, because I'm not that good of a performer. So it would be difficult for me to carry anything off by myself. But I try wherever possible to encourage group activity, ah to involve as many people as possible with other composers, discourage competitive sort of careerism if you will.

It's something I learned from CAGE long before I was interested in communism. He always, I mean, that was what was so beautiful about the early fifties, that it was really a group. To be sure, it was just these four people, and each has gone his separate way. But the idea was that we would appear together. And everything was done so that all of us would be involved wherever possible. And there's quite a bit of this I think that goes on, and it's true you got to say with REICH and GLASS, it's REICH and GLASS. GLASS really means an ensemble of four or five people. And this whole movement of making up groups, I think that can be useful.

*This community feeling is one of the best moments you get from his music.*

FREDERIC is very strong on it, and GARRETT LIST is very strong on it.

*So they all reestablish somehow a tribal feeling with their music.*

Okay, yeah, something like that. Or just give, communicate a sense of cooperation, and above all the pleasure that it gives. In other words to satisfy yourself you don't need to be a winner, but that a whole group of people, first the musicians, and eventually presuming musicians and audience, who make a community that enjoys itself together. That's what CHANGING THE SYSTEM is about too.

*So what are you writing next? Do you integrate these kinds of folk music experiences you're making at the present time?*

That's extremely difficult to do. That's because partly my own musical background is limited.

*That's the background where we are, here at Harvard.*

Yeah, right now, I didn't learn anything musical from Harvard at all. (LAUGHING) But, well what I'm doing right now for instance, I'm just finishing a piece that I started doing in Berlin, which is a string quartet, which is not exactly peoples' music. But here you can see the various forces at work. Ah, where I am at Dartmouth we



have a resident string quartet, and it seemed nice to do a piece for them. And then it turned out they wanted a piece. And then there's a decision I came to. I decided two or three years ago not to include text in my music.

I suddenly came to the realization that my music is really very esoteric in its character. It's very introverted, and very sophisticated, and I got tired of that. For instance, I just noticed that I have many friends to whom my music means nothing..... FRIENDS, mind you, not just people out of the street, but people with whom I in other respects communicate very well. That's ridiculous. I mean that, I, everytime I hear them say, "Ooooh, come, let's hear some of your music!" I feel apologetic about it, I mean like, "You're not gonna like it". You know.

*It's just a burdock, your music.*

Ah, well BURDOCKS is already a step out of that, because BURDOCKS can be done in a way that a lot of people enjoy it.

*I'm thinking of the plant burdock now, that it hurts.*

Oooh, okay. Yea, um..... no, they really don't hurt so much. They stick. They're a nuisance, an irritation rather than a pain. ANYWAY, so that bothered me. And so I felt quite simply to try to do something that would be more successful to do, that people might like to listen to without, you know, being meretricious about it.

*How?*

Well like for instance in ACCOMPANIMENTS. The only reason for those chords is just sonority, you know? And the chords have a certain harmonic consistency. And they're nice to listen to.

*I think you can reestablish it from the side of rhythm and what you call continuity.*

Simply, I don't want to write sonatas again. I don't want to lose the ground we've gained the last twenty years.

*Like probably CARDEW does, whose courage to make tabula rasa is astonishing.*

WOLFF

He raises the problems in a very acute way, because he writes in a neoromantic style. And I don't quite understand that. Whereas I'm trying to make a sound which is ah..... Well, I don't do this consciously..... I've been noticing my music now as a kind of..... if it's related to sound of some other music..... probably most to a rather odd combination, of SATIE and IVES.

I thank CORNELIUS CARDEW, who sent me his arrangement of CHRISTIAN WOLFF's song "AFTER A FEW YEARS", (Words by ROSA LUXEMBURG ) which I am presenting together with Christian Wolff's original version.

After a few years of prosperity the disquieting news of a few bankruptcies;  
the national bank increases credit rates prices rise and/or money's scarce;  
unemployment rises the crisis is made to appear as something beyond  
human control, an ordeal from heaven, a storm, earthquake or flood.  
But what is a modern crisis? The manufacture of commodities,  
the production of food— their sale, trade, industry— all  
these are relations of human society. It is people who produce  
these commodities, who buy them. Exchange takes place from one person to  
another, and you will find in the factors which make up a modern crisis  
not a single circumstance which would fall outside the sphere of human  
activity, your activity. Who, now, where, now, is your enemy, your friend?

After a few years

flowing, persuasive



After a few years of prosperity

the disquieting news

of a few bankruptcies



The national bank increases credit rates

prices rise and/or



money's scarce

unemployment rises

The crisis is made to appear as something beyond human control

push on

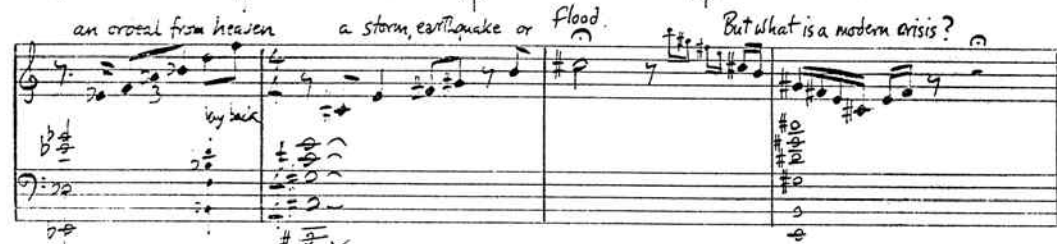


an ordeal from heaven

a storm, earthquake or flood

But what is a modern crisis?

by him



The manufacture of commodities.

The production of food, their sale, trade, industry, all these

a Tempo



are relations of human society. It is people who produce these commodities who buy them. (C)

Handwritten musical score for the first system. The vocal line (treble clef) contains the lyrics: "are relations of human society. It is people who produce these commodities who buy them. (C)". The piano accompaniment (bass clef) features chords and rhythmic patterns, including a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4.

Exchange takes place from one person to another

Handwritten musical score for the second system. The vocal line (treble clef) contains the lyrics: "Exchange takes place from one person to another". The piano accompaniment (bass clef) features chords and rhythmic patterns, including a triplet of eighth notes in the fourth measure. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4.

and you will find in the factors which make up a modern crisis

Handwritten musical score for the third system. The vocal line (treble clef) contains the lyrics: "and you will find in the factors which make up a modern crisis". The piano accompaniment (bass clef) features chords and rhythmic patterns, including a triplet of eighth notes in the second measure. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4.

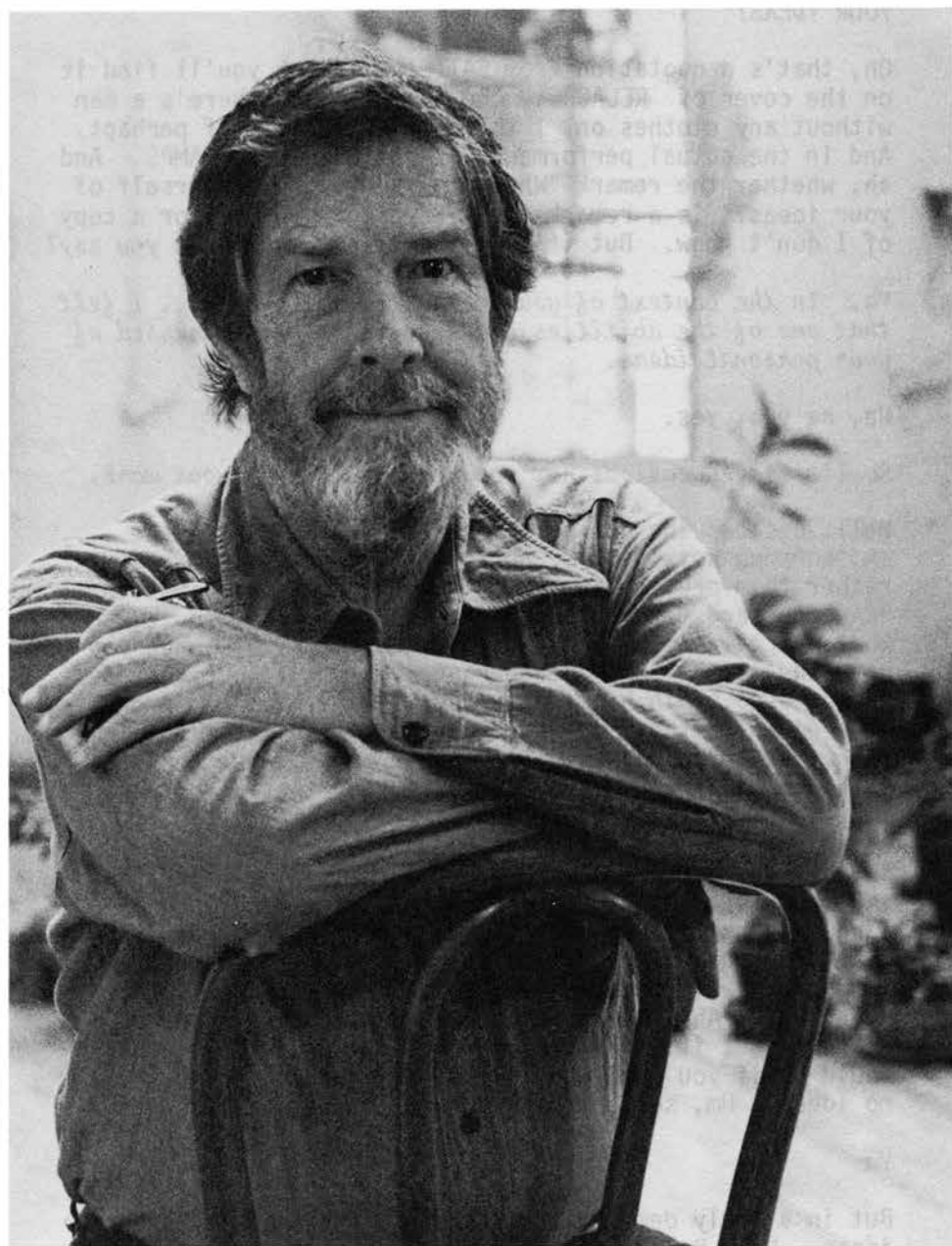
not a side circumstance which <sup>would</sup> fall outside the sphere of human activity, your activity.

Handwritten musical score for the fourth system. The vocal line (treble clef) contains the lyrics: "not a side circumstance which <sup>would</sup> fall outside the sphere of human activity, your activity.". The piano accompaniment (bass clef) features chords and rhythmic patterns, including a triplet of eighth notes in the second measure. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4.

Who, now, where, now is your enemy, your friend?

Handwritten musical score for the fifth system. The vocal line (treble clef) contains the lyrics: "Who, now, where, now is your enemy, your friend?". The piano accompaniment (bass clef) features chords and rhythmic patterns, including a triplet of eighth notes in the fourth measure. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4.

John Cage



CAGE

*In your diary I read, "WHEN WILL YOU UNDRRESS YOURSELF OF YOUR IDEAS?"*

Oh, that's a quotation from SATIE. I think you'll find it on the cover of RELACHE, the ballet. And there's a man without any clothes on, I think, with a fig leaf perhaps. And in the actual performance it was MARCEL DUCHAMP. And ah, whether the remark "When will you undress yourself of your ideas?" is a remark of SATIE or of DUCHAMP or a copy of I don't know. But it's in the spirit, wouldn't you say?

*Va. In the context of your diary I read it as..... I felt that one of the abilities you have is to get undressed of your personal ideas.*

Ha, ha yes, yes.

*So I'm really curious how you realize this in your work.*

Well, besides the use of the chance operation and the .... (MICROPHONE NOISES)..... performance of certain freedoms rather than prescribing exactly what they should do, ah, I have more and more and more in recent work introduced the, what we call the "Principle of Circus"..... of, when you have the intention of one person, you still have that person dressed up in his ideas. But if you have two people dressed up in their ideas, and you hear both at the same time, rather than one..... In other words, when the attention is not focused, the fact that they have ideas modifies the ideas themselves.

So the idea of speech becomes less clear simply because the two are together. And when this is extended to a larger number, to a multiplicity, then you have a situation very much like that of nature, in which to quote from the New Testament, you can say um "It passes understanding." Ah, they speak in the New Testament of the Peace, isn't it, that passes understanding. Well, this would be if you have many ideas, eh you have so to speak no ideas. Hm, so that everyone could keep his ideas on.

*Va.*

But in a truly democratic situation, there would be NO ideas. Hm. Don't you think?



*Va, that the multiplicity of the individualistic ideas... like, um.....*

modify, they modify one another. So that what you see is from another distance. It's what I call in another chapter of the text "Rhythm Etcetera". (MICROPHONE NOISES) It's a question of focal point, or focus. When you're taking a picture, ah the picture changes according to your distance from the subject. And if the subject is multiplicity, and you are very far away, the whole thing is quite different from..... (MICROPHONE NOISES, AGAIN)

For instance, people think of organization. And they can show that it exists in a plant or in an animal or in a wheel or something like that.

Exchange of the microphone.

*(Taking a DEEP breath): I relate this remark of your diary to pieces then like ah CHEAP IMITATION or ETUDES AUSTRALES, where you have material of SATIE or certain ah stars.*

*stars, and I just am curious how this composition technique works. It's like an exercise for me in "self-forgetfulness". That's how I see that.*

mm, it it it can certainly be seen that way. It can also be seen as changing the responsibility of the composer. in making choices to asking questions. And then the questions come by means of oh one thing or another that is beyond the control of the person asking ah the question.

*Va. So ah in CHEAP IMITATION you use SATIE'S music.*

I start with SATIE, and I list the questions. Have you seen them? Have you seen the score of the questions I ask?

*No.*

Just a moment. (CAGE gets the score.)

Ah, the first question I ask with regard to the original, to SATIE'S original is if we use only the white notes of

the piano, and we distinguish then seven modes, ah my first question is, which of those seven modes am I to use in order to imitate the melody of that in the SOCRATE?

Ya.

And then the second question is on which transposition of the twelve chromatic possibilities?

Then, having found seven notes, I ask which of those seven notes I am to use. And always, the I-Ching responds. And the I-Ching works with the number sixty-four. So to ask these questions, I've related the number sixty-four to the number seven and to the number twelve.

Ya.

Here are the tables that relate all numbers lower than sixty-four to sixty-four. And I've published these in the SONG BOOKS, where they're also used by the performer in order to ask any questions that come up in connection with his performance.

Ya. *I understand. So, in ETUDES AUSTRALES it's similar.*

Except that there I have also the star maps of ATLAS AUSTRALIS. And whenever a question arises, ah, that the stars don't answer in that piece, then I ask it by means of this I-Ching business. So what I've had to do is to decide what questions to ask.

Once I've decided that, I become as it were ah simply a means by which other things can happen that are um outside of me, in which I don't myself change. Um.....  
..... I hope in that way I become open to possibilities and events that were not in my mind to begin with. So it relates to this remark of SATIE about being "naked" with respect to ideas.

*Because the process of working this way surprises you with a lot of new possibilities.*

And I HOPE, you see, that this will be the situation for a listener, first for a performer and then for a listener. Those circumstances of course are entirely different from the circumstances sitting here at home, ah preparing the

music.

*Ya, ya..... So um it's really devotion to all these ah different materials. And I see here THOREAU'S JOURNALS.*

Ha, yeah.

*And ah I'm assuming that you're working on this project which started with MUREAU, and now*

And now I'm working another way with the drawings of THOREAU. Did I show you the other day?

Yes.

These are the drawings. Well, now I make the next piece using the drawings. And just before you came I finished the first step in the piece. The title isn't given yet.

I want also to make a circus of music that one might have heard in 1776 in this country. But I'm already running into the al..... conservative feelings of the society with respect to such an intention. Because music, of all the arts, has been the one which has tried to focus the attention of people on a particular thing. And so much of that music in 1776 was ah what we call "sacred". It was church music. And the people think that I'm being sacrilegious to want to have two or three at once, you see.

*Ya.*

And so they they refuse to cooperate. It may be that I'll not be able to do it.

*It would be a real honest contribution to the BICENTENNIAL, being independent of it.*

But our..... This is the trouble with our country, that the feelings which brought our country into existence..... ha ha ..... no longer invigorate it..... except in a few individuals. And those individuals don't..... can't act against the um ah strong institutions.

*Ya. Do you think um that anarchism in New York, is this a "should" for a better society? Or is it the only way to survive?*

CAGE

Eh what, what are you saying? What anarchism?

*Eh, anarchism, just what I've seen the last days.*

You find it anarchic?

*I find a kind of creative spirit of anarchism.*

You do? Ha ha. I don't know really, ah because I don't see the situation with your eyes. I find I am by nature kind of optimist. Hm, and I am through present circumstances in the United States less optimistic. So, I probably..... and since I like to think of myself as an anarchist, I ah don't see enough of it around.

*Va, can't be enough.*

But if you see it, there's something.....

*But I ask me if it's a positive anarchism, or is it just the helplessness of the underprivileged? I am not sure yet. Possibly because of this social pressure here. I see so many creative things going on. You can just go around the corner here, and you see some other person demonstrating how he's surviving.*

Hm hm.

*And then just, you know, using this pressure to put out as much from his own as possible. That I see as a kind of a positive anarchism.*

I don't think that I can say at the moment anything useful about this. I..... it's perhaps because my attention is going to these Bicentennial pieces. And so I'm thinking not so much about the people as I am about the institutions. And the institutions strike me as characterized by lack of intelligence, and um lack of conscience.

*Va, that they just use the ornamental function of Bicentennial.*

And I don't think I see enough conscience in the people. At the festival of the avant-garde the other day I think there was rather than intelligence and conscience, there was a kind of um, oh, general SWEETNESS. Hm hm.

*Yes, it was disappointing. So ah, I see actually the avant-garde circus of the Barnet fields more realized here in New York on the streets.*

One of the difficulties with that festival was that it was difficult to plug in with any electrical equipment. And a great deal of the work that's being done now is electronic. MAX MATTHEWS for instance was there from Bell Telephone Laboratories.

(RING, RING of the telephone)

And I don't know whether he succeeded in hooking in or not.

(CAGE takes the call, and returns.)

That little book beside you, if I could have that.

*So, I wonder how you integrate loving THOREAU and living in New York.*

Well, it's a situation like oh..... ah, making noise when you're devoted to silence. It's the same thing. Ah, you know the poetry of Wordsworth, who went in the nineteenth century to the lake district of England. In other words, there was a tendency on the part of people who became interested in tranquillity.... He was interested in tranquillity..... to go to tranquil places. But see in Zen Buddhism you will find that what is necessary about tranquillity is to be tranquil in a situation which is not tranquil.

*Va, like SHUNRYU SUZUKI says, "In the midst of noise your mind will be quiet and stable."*

Yes, the same thing about THOREAU and ZEN and so forth in the city. I mean, if we thought otherwise, we would be thinking as our governments do. They think for instance that um we must just go on using oil until the cows come home. Ha ha ha.

*Va.*

ha ha ha ha ha ha..... hahahahahahahahahahahahahah

CAGE

*the cows in New York*

hahahahaha

*I mean ah, it would bring the need for nature back, actually.*

hahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahaahahahahahaha ooh  
ha ha haha ha haha hahaaha haahahahaa ha ha

It's very beautiful. The Westside Highway, which isn't used now, the part up above, is turning into a horticultural garden. Have you noticed?

No.

And the people bicycle there. And the plants are growing up. It's becoming a charming place.

*Yea, that was one of the first feelings I really liked here, to see SO much GREEN in such a city.*



ha ha ha, yes. yes.

*Like in every street there are three or four shops selling plants.*

Well, actually when you come here, when you come here from Germany, it must be as though you're coming to the old world from the NEW world, hahaha. Don't you think?

*Perhaps.*

It was GERTUDE STEIN that said that the United States is the oldest country of the twentieth century. But we're also the first to fall apart, you see, hhhhh

*Hm..... the thing about nature. What I see in your pieces too, um your recent works, that you are going to use more of the nature aspect and the organic aspect of music producing. Is this true?*

Yeah, yeah, I hope so.

*I hope so too.*

hm hhhhahahahahahaah ooooooh ..... It really, ah..

*Is this then exclusive to computer electronical media, or could that be integrated?*

The business of asking questions..... is like computer music. Hm hm,..... and what was the other one you wanted to ask?

*No, I see that you're going more towards using organic aspects of music producing, and NATURE, etc. I mean THOREAU, writing a piece about the WEATHER, etc.*

Yes, but don't you think it..... Yes, but it's actually electronic music, and the tape recorder and everything that gave us the opportunity to record natural events, and which focuses our attention back, away from theories of music to actual experience of hearing wherever we happen to be. And when I was asked, I forget now when it was, but in the early, in the late sixties or early seventies, to write a column on electronic music, I, it was then that I wrote MUREAU. I subjected THOREAU to

chance operations, because I noticed that THOREAU LISTENED the way electronic composers now listen. The electronics have brought our attention back to nature..... With electronics you can't stay with twelve tones, unless you're PIERRE SCHAEFFER. Then of course you make a machine that makes the trains and the thunder and so forth correspond to the twelve tones of the musical octave. Otherwise, you go, as I think most people do, with tape recorders into the whole world of sound rather than the theoretical musical world of sound.

*And using actually this material, with the ears like THOREAU used his.....*

Right, right, right.

*Ah ha, so bringing nature aspects into technology.*

yes. yes. There's no real opposition then we can say, as FULLER would say, between technology and nature..... However, we see many oppositions between technology and nature, but not, there needn't be those oppositions.

*Doesn't art here in New York replace nature in a certain way?*

Oh.....

*Gives this a certain feeling, a kind of religious feeling, cathartic feeling or whatever?*

It, there may be something in what you say. Um.....  
ah, when we are in a natural situation, in a situation in woods or ah sky etcetera, we we um.....  
.....the aspects of the human character that have to do with vision and intuition and so forth are stimulated. And they are not so stimulated when we are at an intersection in the city and have to stop because there is a red light. Ah, when we're in the presence of law, I think vision tends to be diminished. And so, in those city situations, it is through art that we are among other things, that the imagination again has a stimulus.

Ya.

The artist CLAES OLDENBURG, you know his work, thinks of



himself as the THOREAU of the cities.

.....hm

He looks for instance at cigarette butts. hm hhhhahaha hahahaah..... and beer cans and so forth. All those things, and typewriters. They interest him in the same way that birds interested THOREAU..... And THOREAU would have understood that I think. There are several passages in the JOURNAL where he goes to visit factories. And he himself was the inventor of the pencil as we know it.



Hm hm. So it's not ah, loving THOREAU here in New York is not a kind of a longing towards nature. It's more ah seeing within the city with the eyes of a person who lived in a kind of innocent environment, making the city to nature, not in bringing the cows in, but in ah seeing nature in what the city is. Do you think it will transform the suffering here of people and open the eyes of some others?

Now, there we come again to the situation where I, where I am not as optimistic as I was. I used to think that when we make our music and do work, that it can have a usefulness in the society. Hm..... But I more and more think it is only useful to those people who have prepared themselves to be open to it. And I think people, for instance stupid people, hm..... can go to a concert and come out just as stupid as they went in. They can ignore their experience.

*They are closed up.*

And it's precisely this ah inability of art to impose itself on people that makes us love art. That's one of the things we love about it. MAO TSE TUNG on the other hand diminishes the kind of art that can be ah used in China, restricting it to propaganda for the political situation as it exists. I don't think that that attitude toward art can long survive.

*But ah....*

And it's beginning to decay, in Russia for instance.

*I see, like in China, it has just a function.*

To help support the government.

*Yeah, but China actually is, to compare it with America, is a country of ninety percent agriculture. So there's no alienation, um, so that the people still feel grounded and realize themselves as as basic and natural. So there won't be that much need for art.*

*I see here in America, like New York, possibly five percent real nature or green compared with everything of steel that's around it. So this pressure gives eh a NEED for art, like to strengthen it, and just stimulates the*

people to WORK and to make it better and all that. You know what I mean. Function of art is not this important in China, because China is full of things.....

Things, they do that.

And it's very alienated here. So we need art because of that, to let out our..... But I see that you quote MAO in your last writings. And on the other hand you quote FULLER, who is a real kind of opposite in his whole thinking. How do you relate these different understandings? Are they just examples of the variety of your thinking? Or are they really in you mind interconnected?

I think of them as, even though they're obviously different as you say, ah I think of them as ah the same in that they both have ah.....suggested changes that would be ah... oh that would be liberating for large numbers of people. And in the case of MAO the changes have been effected. In FULLER they remain not entirely, but they remain largely theoretical rather than realized.

Ya.

But I think that FULLER'S vision is not so to speak distinct from MAO'S. It's actually greater than MAO'S..... because it is for one thing, not dependent upon power militarism. And then secondly it has to do with the whole earth rather than with just one nation.

But, then it has to function.

Ah, it, it could function. And FULLER is never tired of explaining, again theoretically, that it could function independent of politics.

Ya.

Ah, we'll see, if we live long enough. And you clearly will live longer than I. We'll see whether these changes happen. The nature of FULLER'S change is the network of utilities that is shared by all the people on the earth, so that everyone has what he needs to live.

So far as I know it needs a big environmental change, so that the people can live freely with their individuality

*as they want. So I think, is it right, that FULLER, in contradiction to MAO, emphasizes more environmental change, and MAO emphasized bringing the people towards the right understanding.*

Yes. In his new book, SYNERGETICS, FULLER indicates concern with the way people think. He would certainly never advise the use of power. I think it would be ah.... marvelous if we could bring about a change through the use of intelligence and conscience, and not with recourse to forcing the people. But then I have to at the same time say I'm less optimistic than formerly.

*Ya, because of the actual situation. It's like ah I read in the VILLAGE VOICE one week ago, "Innocence is lost." Ten years ago we didn't know what's going on with General Motors. Now we know.*

Hm. Hm.

*How do you think that SYNERGETICS, the new book which is kind of a complete and from the very, very smallest units to the whole structured, very complete vision of whole systems..... Ah, have you thought about how it would influence music?*

In the um time that I've known BUCKY FULLER, since the late forties, he has a vision of how it could influence music. And he has several times explained it to me. And I have as many times not understood. And the reason I don't understand is because I'm so busy doing the work that I am doing. So that when I hear about another way of working, I'm not as open to it as I would be if I didn't have this way to work that I do. Which in its self is changing. But the thing that puts me off is the presence of um mathematics, which has to do with specific relationships.

On the other hand, I've been so devoted to FULLER'S work that I was alarmed at the time A YEAR FROM MONDAY was being published. I was alarmed whether or not he thought of my work as antithetic to his own work. In other words, ah, the use of chance operations, did he think they were opposed to his views? He didn't. He found them perfectly compatible. And it may be that I could um..... I think though that it should be the work of someone else rather

than my own work to bring the vision and ideas of FULLER into music.

*I feel that there is a certain ah..... going along, because your work has this unpredictable flow. You never know what's coming out next of JOHN CAGE. It's like the independent function of the parts, which will form a whole.*

Well, ah, that's how FULLER would see it, I think. But I, but I want to insist that he saw ah another kind of music, that would be specifically related to his mathematics of cubes, I mean of ah not cubes, of tetrahedrons rather than cubes. Um, three's and third powers and so forth. And he would see, I think, western music as having, conventional western music, as basically having to do with squares. Don't you think?

*golden squares!*

Whereas, he you know, his involvement with the triangle and tetrahedrons ..... It MIGHT be that one could discover a relationship between the music of JOSEPH MATTHIAS HAUER. Do you know his work?

No.

And ah BUCKMINSTER FULLER. Because HAUER also spoke of spheres. And he discovered the twelve-tone system at the same time when SCHOENBERG did in Vienna.

*Ooh, HAUER, ya ya of course, I know.*

And it may be that there's a relationship between HAUER'S use of the twelve tones and BUCKIE'S um ah dimaxion hhh hhhh domes! ahahahahaah

*It would be funny to get in this marriage.*

*Okay... But I'm really interested in the piece you're writing now about the weather.*

It's ah responds to a commission by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in relationship to the Bicentennial of the United States. And the man wrote to me in the first place... Since he came from Canada, I accepted

immediately. And he wrote a letter suggesting that I work with the writings of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN. But after reading a little bit of FRANKLIN'S work, I felt that I couldn't do that, that I was still, as I have been for many years, devoted to THOREAU.

I tried to take myself for this occasion away from THOREAU. And I bought several books ah that are anthologies of American writing. But I found that I can't take myself away from THOREAU. I'm still too fascinated. ahahaha

The piece is for twelve speaker vocalists. And they read excerpts of WALDEN, THE JOURNAL, and ESSAY ON CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, that were obtained through I-CHING chance operations. And then they also vocalize. And in the JOURNAL of THOREAU there are illustrations, which are used oh to make the piece I showed you last week called SCORE. And now, instead of those pictures being in the parts for the Canadian piece, ah I write..... I make a notation in the midst of this text for vocalization. It's just a suggestion. In other words, the drawings have entered into the THOREAU text.

*hm hm*

And that way the musician, he will make a sound, a vocal sound, suggested by the drawing that I've made. And I ask in the preface that he use his breath completely, whether or not his breath was deep or shallow. In other words that in vocalizing that he exhaust himself. Why I ask that, I don't know. I ah intuit the the um, I have an intuition that for us to have the experience of twelve people becoming exhausted ..... when they vocalize, will be meaningful in relation to ah..... the present intellectual climate. HMMMMMMMMH

which is the weather. which is the weather.

*which is your contribution to the Bicentennial, ya, which is the weather.*

There are other things to say about it, but um..... And it will begin with breeze and go to rain and end in thunder. And it is thunder that brings about change and revolution. And what we are recalling, I hope in this piece, is the fact that this country began with revolution.

And what is so unfortunate about it at the present time is that our revolutionary spirit that existed say ten years ago haha is now somewhat decayed, or nonexistent, certainly among the young students.

Ya.

So that it takes an OLD FOGY like MYSELF hahaahah to suggest again, as THOREAU did all of his life, ah revolution.

*I think you're still the youngest.*

W H A T ?????? hahaah

VERY SLOW

THAT GOVERNMENT'S BEST WHEN GOVERNORS NOT AT ALL

APPROPRIATE

AND WHEN MEN ARE BERRAR AND WHEN MEN ARE BERRAR AND WHEN MEN ARE BERRAR  
 ED FOR IT THAT ED FOR IT THAT ED FOR IT THAT  
 WILL BE THE WILL BE THE WILL BE THE  
 KIND OF GOVERN- KIND OF GOVERN- KIND OF GOVERN-  
 MENT WHICH MENT WHICH MENT WHICH  
 THEY WILL HAVE. THEY WILL HAVE. THEY WILL HAVE.

FAST

NOT AT ALL (GOV. ERNS NOT AT ALL)

GOING ALONG

THAT GOV. ERNS. MEN ARE PREPARED FOR IT THAT GOV. ERNS. NOT AT ALL  
 AND WHEN MEN ARE PREPARED FOR IT THAT WILL BE THE KIND OF GOV. ERNS. NOT AT ALL  
 WHICH BE THE KIND OF GOV. ERNS. NOT AT ALL  
 WHICH BE THE KIND OF GOV. ERNS. NOT AT ALL

NOT TOO SLOW

THAT WILL BE THE KIND AND WHEN? THAT WILL BE THE KIND AND WHEN? AND WHEN?



SOLO FOR VOICE 35

SONG WITH ELECTRONICS

(RELEVANT)

## DIRECTIONS

32 AABA's. Having sung any one of them, the singer may substitute its A or B for any other A or B providing the latter A or B belongs to an AABA already sung. The text is from the first paragraph of the Essay on Civil Disobedience by Henry David Thoreau. Sing in an optimistic spirit as though you believe what you are singing, and in such a way as to "blurt" both the pitch and the text as though your voice had not been trained. Use electronics to exaggerate the rhythm. If another singer is already singing this solo or Solo 50, do not take the same or any easily related tempo. Let this solo be used as an irregular "refrain" in a given performance. Most of the A's have eighth-note upbeats. The third measure of each A is incomplete, completed by the upbeat of its repetition, by the upbeat of its B or by the upbeat of any other A or B (see above). The B's are notated and to be used similarly. If possible, the text should be sung by at least one singer in the language of the audience (making melodic changes where necessary). Before singing this solo, raise either the black flag of Anarchy or the flag of the Whole Earth. Having raised the flag, do not lower it at any time during the performance. Any number of flags may be raised during a single performance, one before each performance of this solo.

Copyright © 1970 by  
C. F. Peters Corporation  
373 Park Avenue South  
New York, N.Y. 10016  
Reprint permission  
granted by the  
publisher.

Copyright © 1970 by Henmar Press Inc., 373 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016

## A'S

1 The best \_\_\_\_\_ form of gov - ern - ment is no gov.ern.ment at all.

2 The best form of gov.ern.ment is no gov - - ern.ment at all.

3 The best form of gov.ern.ment is no gov.ern.ment at all.

4 The best form of gov.ern.ment is no gov.ern.ment at all.

5 The best gov.ern.ment, the best gov.ern.ment is no gov.ern.ment at all.

## B'S

and that will be what men will have when they are read-y for it, read-y for it.

and that will be the kind of gov-ern-ment we'll have when we are read-y for it, read-y for it.

and that will be, and that will be what we will have when we are read-y.

and that will be the kind of gov-ern-ment we'll have when we are read-y for it, read-y for it.

and that will be the kind of gov-ern-ment we'll have, and that will be the kind of gov-ern-ment we'll have.

Philip Corner



CORNER

*So, are these friends of yours who made this AMERICA A PROPHECY ?*

Yes, both of them are poets. They are good friends of mine, and one of them has been very much involved with the relationship between poetry and music.

JEROME ROTHENBERG

Ya, ya. We've played music with them and improvised. Ya, that whole business of ah AMERICA interested me about the idea between whether there is a separation between Europe and America, and.....

*Ya, um that's the main problem. I just want to find out if it's harder to develop alternatives in Europe, and why is it harder, and what makes the difference.*

(Taking a deep breath.)

*Like, like what I said just, ah the thing with the alternative, that it's very hard to get alternatives done*

Telephone ringing.

*in in Europe, because ah ring it's a very rigid system of historical-bounded institutions. ring*

Ah hum.

*And here the alternatives ring lay in the street. Is this true, or is this just an imaginary idea?*

Well, it's true. But that doesn't mean that um ah there are no problems involved with that. In one sense I think that ah that creates as many problems as the alternative, the problem of freedom of choice and of meaning and of value and of possibility of success and ah with all the thing going around it's very easy to see it as garbage. So that it's very difficult to see things as valuable or to make things valuable or to present things as valuable.

Ya.

Just because of that. And I think that's a part of the problem. I tell ya, I was um very impressed with some-

thing that was very different, ah when I was in Europe this summer. And that is a certain sense of historical continuity, which..... I don't feel that we have here, which means that ..... (Yea, perhaps this is only a relatively superficial thing that I've seen, but it seems to have some kind of truth from what I can see of the European situation.)..... and that is that there may be a very difficult battle to fight, both for the individual just on the conceptual or creative plain, and then on the ah the cultural plain to get something new accepted.

Yes.

But there is a terrain in which that battle is fought. And that means that like people are interested in attacking it. And then you have to. You fight your battle, and people are interested in it, whereas here it may look like it's very easy and you do anything you want. But nobody pays any attention to it. And it goes up in smoke.

And I think that even with somebody....Let's say like CAGE or you know or FELDMAN or BROWN or any of those people of that time who were fighting real battles and even had like a certain amount of like notoriety and bad critical thing ..... I mean there was a crucial issue of like what your civilization was about. And HERE, it was just like, you know, you know, some nut doing some crazy thing like lots of nuts do a lot of crazy things. And because he hired a hall on Fifty-Seventh Street like you had to pay attention to it.

So the critic, you know, it was his job to go and write something about it. So he writes something bad. But there was no sense of like there was anything crucial, that this was a challenge to the civilization, that it had to be taken seriously as an issue. And so that means like in a way when the battle is won, like in Europe, then that becomes like part of the institution. Now maybe there's something bad with that too..... you know, like now STOCKHAUSEN is the latest BRAHMS, but.....

*Yes, that's actually the problem now, that with eh what we call "new music" now is getting too institutionalized.....*

Right.

*so that the younger generation has to fight again*

Right

*against something what is called "new music". But HERE, what I think, here you have to , you CAN stamp out something from the earth with your own feet..... and, you know, you just become your own institution, but eh....*

OOokay ah, in all, I'm hip to that. I spent my whole life doing that.

*Doesn't it give more feeling of responsibility for what you're doing?*

I don't know. That, I don't know..... Well, lots of different kinds of people are doing different kinds of things. And eh, some people are getting, you know, more or less support for different kinds of things. I think that the case of CAGE is quite interesting, because ah, on one hand he's become like extremely influential, extremely successful in a certain sense. But on the other hand, that's run parallel to the institutions. And a lot of people who haven't been nearly as influential or innovative or anything less have created a kind of American music, which has gotten more foundation grants, more eh money to support new orchestras and new groups performing it, and, and, and gotten trends from the universities to a much greater extent.

So there's like these two parallel streams. I know that to express a preference of one for the other on my part would simply be too, eh, be prejudiced. And I guess like eventually we'll have to see what survives and what doesn't. But I think the possibilities of doing a lot of different things exist here. And we've spent a lot of time doing things downtown, doing stuff like in somebody's loft, doing stuff for free. And maybe those possibilities don't exist so much in Europe..... that like here's just so much space, and you can just set out an announcement and put on a concert somewhere,

*Ya, ya.*

which I think is terrific. On the other hand, the um, not only the chance but the likelihood that a lot of this



activity will attract very few people. Ah..... of the very few people it attracts, none of them will be people like who have any access to media or anything like that.. ..... if that concerns you at all, that you do it like for free. And the generosity of all the people like doing your stuff, which also may or may not make a difference. But it can be a very important factor in terms of working with people. And then that you work like absolutely disappears. You do it somewhere. And then you've done it. And that's ABSOLUTELY IT! You know.

Ya.

Now, that can be a very difficult thing to deal with, because if you say, "That's gonna be the sum total of my life. That is, there's no radiance from it, and it's just like um treating something basically for a party or for a small group of people, and there's no chance of influencing a ..... larger thing, um ...". That attitude can become a very negative one. Now, I think there are like two ways of dealing with it which I've tried to cultivate. And one is the knowledge that in fact the radiation from these kinds of things is much greater than you think. And this is beginning to happen to me now, ah ten, fifteen years after the event, like a book will come out. Or somebody will form an archive or something about some kind of work which we did ten or fifteen years ago, which nobody ever knew about and was performed once for fifty people.

*Just appears above the ground.*

And then suddenly surfaces now as an historical event.

*Because it has possibly still the aura of the self-made, of the artist as the doer, not only the man sitting in his room and concepting art, but the man who is connecting it with the people too.*

Right.

*This identity is functioning I think in America, but it's not functioning very good in Europe.*

It's not?

*Not very good. There in Cologne is one studio which is working very hard always on the zero point of income, you know on the zero point of existence, the FEEDBACK STUDIO. It's a real split between what you do. And then you have to give it to the institution and wait. And if you really wait, then you can lose, one moment you lose the responsibility for that what you've done. You know what I mean.*

Oh, absolutely, oh absolutely.

*The direct feedback is lacking.*

But I've made that choice for myself, and.....

*And this influences the pieces. It influences the pieces. The pieces get really more fixed, more rigid, more structured, because this feedback is not well organized.*

Yeah, but you know, I think that one has to fight certain battles in one's own soul. And I think that um..... I mean it may be true that there are certain terrains which are like more conducive for certain kinds of things, and certain kinds of things like MIGHT be a little bit more easy in New York or America or something like that. But I think that um there are a lot of people who have not been able to transcend the same kinds of difficulties in America. Ah, and I think that there are certain kinds of creative decisions that one has to make for oneself. And I think that that can't be too different, like no matter where you are.

Ah, there was the second thing I was gonna say, because in a way this business of doing something in a loft..... I mean I know that this exists in Europe too. It could have been MARY BAUERMEISER'S loft, you know, or something kind of underground. And then eventually it surfaces, and it becomes historical and all that. And that's happened in Europe. That's happened with SATIE. That's happened with even the SCHOENBERG society was private "Auffuehrung"; you know and that kind of thing.

Ah, but that in a way is like playing the same game. That is if you say, "This thing that I'm doing is gonna become historically significant and surface in ten or twenty years from now. And then I'll be written up in books, and

this and that and the other thing." Ah, I mean that can be gratifying when it happens, because it means you're not completely isolated and alone. And the past is still alive. But if you're really kind of basically preoccupied with that as a means of doing your work, then I think that's the same European trip.

*Va, that's true.*

And we've certainly had a whole history of that kind of thing too. The twenties is full of embittered American composers who had unplayed scores piled up on their pianos. And you know CAGE tells a story about for instance one of the men he studied with. And he made a decision to make music. And that's a decision that I've made for myself too. That is, you can go another direction and say the important thing is the making of the music. The really important thing is the integrity of your activity. And that therefore you cultivate a kind of music which you CAN do at any time, and you try to make the best of whatever scene you're in.

*hm*

And I think then, that whether it's CAGE in Seattle or whether it's..... I mean New York happens to be a very good place..... But I've found myself at various times in San Antonio, Texas, or other places like that, and there's always the possibility of doing SOMETHING. And I think that if you're really concerned with your integrity, then the success of it becomes less and less important. And the something you may do may get to the point in which it's making music like a live and real for just you.

And we have marvelous examples of that. I mean, THOREAU of course is one. And I think that that's very very important. And I really don't see that that's any different anywhere in the world. I mean, you can be in the middle of a cultural desert. And if you can say, "It's important for me to make it in my life," then you can kind of cultivate something in which you find a form which is appropriate for making it real in your own life. And that, as I say, may be something which only exists for you, but has the possibility of existing for other people. And then, when the time is conducive, it does! And there's usually at least one other person that you can relate to.

*Just means to get rid of the attachment of having success or having the feedback,*

Right!

*and just losing the motivation of that what you're doing FOR this and this, ya.*

And I'm not trying to MINIMIZE the difficulties.

*And that's something like an ideal state. I mean there are very few people who really live this consequently.*

Yeah, but, oh I understand that.

*Oh, THOREAU, okay, THOREAU is a fantastic example for it.*

I'm not trying to minimize the difficulty of it, because I'm still living the difficulty. I'm by no means presenting myself as a thoroughly enlightened person, but I think that you can define the nature of your operation, define the nature of your work and your values by such an ideal. For instance, I ask myself, "Do I want to.... Would I rather be successful, or not need success at all?" And for ME, it would, I'd rather have the second possibility. In other words, do I want to be famous, get a lot of grants, be played by major symphony orchestras, ah be the member of presidious institutions and bla bla bla? OR do I want to be able, if necessary, to live music twenty-four hours a day, completely ALONE, by myself if necessary? And as far as I'm concerned, there's no question that that's the valuable choice.

*Ya. Ya. So just to ask you straight, how are you doing that?*

Alright. Um, I've um (sniff)..... well, I feel that I've been coming closer and closer and closer to doing that. And it comes out of the kind of activity that you were talking about, that is the downtown lofts, the kind of situations where you did something for a small group, and where you sent out whatever announcements there were, and you did these concerts, and that was the beginning of a kind of activity in which you said to yourself, "It's important to do art, create art, make art and offer art apart from whatever success that's gonna come from it."

Now, at the beginning, let's say the fifties and sixties, there was a possibility of thinking of it as important in a historical sense, because it seemed new.

*hm*

I now regard that as a kind of seduction. That is, because it, at least that particular form of activity, could lead to a kind of disillusion. And now we still have the perpetuation of the same kind of thing that something else is new. So people are still saying, "Well, my new thing is better than your old thing," or something. And then you run around chasing after the latest new thing. Well, as far as I'm concerned, that's all nonsense. And what I realize now is that my attitude and that of a lot of other people at the time were wrong.

And I think that people who have a similar attitude now in relationship to what is quote "new" are wrong. And that is that the phenomenon of "newness" or potential historical importance or attacking the old and all that was of no importance whatsoever. The only thing that was of importance was that you had something that you believed in, and you DID it.

Okay, so I think that since that time in my case, there's been a gradual attempt at purifying my own mind and my own attitudes of certain kinds of illusions, like one of which was the fact that I was creating something that was historically important, because it was new and revolutionary and bla-bla-bla and bla-bla-bla. And, in a way that's the way Zen helped me. It obviously helped CAGE in a completely different way. But to me the important thing was that attitude that you just cultivated things for what they were and you did them with a complete, full kind of integrity.

*hm hm*

And that led me into a kind of work and a kind of research which I think has kind of led me up to the present, which I'm still continuing, and paradoxically enough has been the basis of whatever success I've had. Yeah, and I've had a little bit.

*Ya.*

And I find that that's very, very strange..... that all of my quote "success", that is people becoming interested in me, even in this particular cast that you're here because CAGE sent me, sent you, ah CAGE'S interest in me comes one hundred percent out of the things that I did, out of this state of mind which was basically renouncing the need of having that kind of success. Because in the fifties, when I was just DYING to have DAVID TUDOR play a piece of mine, you know, and be part of that GROUP..... because at that time there WEREN'T a lot of people doing that kind of thing. You know, I came back from Europe saying, "I'm all alone in the world because I can't relate to STOCKHAUSEN. Can I relate to CAGE?" Yes I could, and I gradually got to be friends with him and everything else, and I was doing that kind of music, and there were very few of us, and I was very turned on by it. And I think I really did it because I really believed in it. And that was the only kind of music I could write. But I was like DESPERATE to you know be part of that group and be performed, and I WASN'T, you know.

*hm*

And the first thing that that did was make me desire to cultivate myself as a performer, that is not be at the mercy of finding willing pianists, violinists and everything else. So that I started studying the piano again, which I've continued to do, in order to play other people's music and play my own music and be able to give concerts wherever I was, and not be at the mercy of people who would or would not be willing to do that. Now, that me in a very, very long gradual path which ended up with working with dancers, working with theatre people, being involved with that ah so-called FLUXUS MOVEMENT, being involved in all sorts of things that had to do with making art in all of these kinds of circumstances where you didn't have the orthodox means.

So that in addition to my playing the piano, where I could play classics and play my own works which demanded a lot of expertise musicianship, I started cultivating a kind of activity which didn't need that. Take an instrument like the trombone, which I don't play so well. I would do things on it which I could do, and then cultivate certain kinds of things, and eventually do things with noises, with all that and work with people who were not

a difficult solo

now thinking back from 1964.  
forward. 1975 when I first made  
this to any other next performance.

was played by trombone  
could be any thing.

what one must do for this is to set  
out a succession of "musical objects"  
in a way that nothing ever repeats.

(should have,  
probably, a score made up.  
Would, certainly, have been easier for me.)

must move then towards refinements — as the  
number of possible nuances swiftly shrinks.

Example. a length and  
a pitch and  
a register and an intensity and  
a quality of sound and  
an evolution (maybe,  
of any of these)

followed by

— the obviousness —  
of contrasting all  
of them.

This repeated  
world, necessarily,  
close the range of perceived  
contrasts towards a minimum ..... which

can be done but shouldn't so systematically  
because long before the end of that set of pos-  
sibilities comes the contrastings made possible by  
separating such factors and making of their  
combination the newness. Gradually this refines  
down ever more nicely — to this exact combination  
of exactly that with exactly that other thing, where  
every fine distinction of new exactness counts.

(see why it's so easy to lose track, go-  
ing just by improvised memory, after a while.)

The silences between them are, may become, one of the  
elements of consid-  
ered contrast. Or  
the lack of them,  
their placement so as  
to make groups of how  
many sounds together.

There is, obviously, no limit to it.

/ A good means to make  
apparent, visible, understood  
some part of the mental  
aspect of this — not detail so much  
as the idea ..... one range of possibilities  
with forms such as their evolution:

A. R. C. G. W.

musicians and do things with breathing and with activities, and the whole, you know, thing associated with happenings.

Now, where that's finally led me has been a kind of research in ELIMINATION. And that comes out of a kind of preoccupation with meditation. And I did get very much involved in meditation. And the first thing that I realized is that that puts you in a state of mind where nothing was necessary..... which meant that you were absolutely free. And because if you could consider silence an activity, as wholly fulfilling, then you would no longer be in a state of compulsion in relationship to all the things that you might do as a musician, which does not mean a renunciation of anything, including getting grants, ha ha hiring professional musicians,

*ya ya, ha, ya ya*

going on tour and all that. But it means that you don't need them. And you can make them as an extension of a certain kind of center, eh when the opportunity is conducive to doing a large scale orchestra piece.

*It's just a shifting of the motivation.*

Right, and it seemed to me that one could understand let's say the significance of CAGE'S SILENCE piece in a very important way. Because in one sense it makes it more important, and in another sense it makes it less important. Because it really from a world perspective is not a very, is no big thing. What, four and a half minutes of silence? I mean people have experienced days of silence, but not in our culture, not in the concert hall. Or they've thought of it, in relationship to like finding God or some other kind of thing that was like encrusted around the experience to make it seem worthwhile. But in effect it's simply requesting a meditative state of mind turned towards the idea of sound. That's basically what it is.

Now, once you've realized that, you realize that you can work off that, and I think that's why other people have written other silent pieces. I've done several myself. And I don't think that there's any end to it. You see, I think that there's so much in a world so rich, that even within a small area like that everybody could write a silent piece. And they wouldn't duplicate each other.



Everyone could have a different fix on it, a different state of mind, a different attitude, a different mentality.

*ya ya*

And that's true of different things, too. You start from silence, and you start well like, "What else can I do?" And I felt.....

*like changing the nature of sound from silence.*

yeah, or no, going from silence and now making sound come out of that same, that same attitude. So, I've been going through a process, which eh has been exploring the various things that one can do. So that one aspect of that was involved in the whole aspect with theater groups and happenings and things like that, because that's a kind of an uninhibited, unrational, undistilled type of dealing with the total flux, complexity, movement and richness of the world as an organic whole.

And it can lead to being very wild, to being very noisy, dealing with a very great kind of complexity. And I think that's the other side of the CAGE scene, that's the other side of the chants, where it just becomes improvisation, but not improvisation within a kind of boundary, like a tune, like a series of harmonic changes, a Raga, a Tala, anything like that. It's like improvisation in the total complexity and flux of nature as a raw thing.

*Ya.*

That's ONE aspect of it. The OTHER aspect of it is a kind of process of distillation which approaches meditation by concentration and by simplification. So I've asked myself, and of course I've had you know leads from other cultural sources, like MANTRA is a kind of simplification of melody into an eternally competitive thing in which you no longer need to be titilated by variety. So that's one aspect. You recognize that in ah some so-called so-called "primitive" cultures and even to a certain extent in our contemporary popular culture, you have the same phenomenon used in relationship to rhythm. That is the intoxicating or even transcendent mentality that's generated by repetition of a particular kind of in this case PHYSICAL

stimulation.

*Va.*

And so I've taken that as a cue and tried to see how far you can go with that. And I've done that in the three areas of melody, harmony and rhythm. And I've got a whole series of pieces that we've been doing which are representing progressive stages of distillation of those particular elements. Now, the melody one is called "OM", which is borrowed from the Hindu thing. But I think that that's ah, it far transcends the particular doctrine or significance it has there. There's a universal thing in the fact that "OM" represents not only the full vowel spectrum, but it represents a progression from the back of the throat, through the mouth, and of the ultimate closing of the lips at the front. So it's really like a metaphor for the whole process of producing sound.

So I've been doing a lot of pieces which have single sustaining tones, and some of them are very very quiet and very distilled. Some of them admit participation, and some of them admit all sorts of irregularities or other things to enter in. And again I've found that like there are SO many different things that you can do just with the idea of a single sustained tone. I think ANYBODY could do that, and the whole question of doing something new or doing something original appears ridiculous.

It's in a way like if, if the culture is writing sonatas, I mean everybody in the culture is supposed to write a sonata. If the culture is doing fugues, writing or improvising fugues, then everybody in the culture is supposed to write a fugue. And nobody says, "Oh, you haven't done something original," because you're still writing fugues. And this is much more universal. I mean this is something that could be the basis of an eternal universal culture, that is the possibility of building things on the fundamental building blocks of sound, in this case melody. So WHY SHOULDN'T EVERYBODY DO A.....

*Va, ya, ya, ya, that's okay, if you go deep enough in, if you try to see similarities in different cultures, put them together, but only under the condition that you go deep enough, and not eh just scratch about the surface....*

Oh yeah, yeah. Oh, I don't mean borrowing an Indian mode or anything like that.

*Ya, there's a certain DANGER in this aspect, that I see in "world music", of some people that just put different styles together only on the surface aspects. It's very heavy to go deep enough to put it on the universal stage.*

Oh, I understand that, I understand that, but.....

*How do you realize it then?*

WELL, I'm not making any claims for what I'm doing. But I don't see that that problem is any different from the problem of relating to one's own past. I mean, how different is that from an academic state of mind?

HM

Basically it's simply academism transposed from history into geography. And if you approach it from a superficial point of view, that's what you're gonna get. It's something superficial. And I don't see that it's any easier or more or less dangerous to approach an imitation of any other culture than it is to approach an imitation of BACH or BEETHOVEN or anything or SCHOENBERG or anything from the past..... or anything that seems very avant-garde like right now, like whether it's STOCKHAUSEN, CAGE, or anybody else. If you approach it from that point of view, that you're simply conforming to a certain kind of a type, and you're approaching it very superficially, then you're gonna get the same kind of result. And I don't see that ah there's any greater DANGER in getting your inspiration from any place so-called exotic or far away than from getting it from right under your nose. That depends on YOU!

*Ya, I think..... Right, it depends on us, on ME. Eh what's difficult is to find the right motivation for it, I think the right motivation eh which brings you close enough to the universal stage of these different cultural events.*

I mean, I think I've gotten BEYOND that, because I think that this process first of all in a way is a very western process. It's a very intellectual-analytical process,

which means I can, you know, bring it into my tradition. And that means that by going through that process we've found on the way that certain things surface which occurred and were perfected and studied in various other parts of the world. Like the drone, or the pulse, you know.

Now for instance let's say in terms of rhythm, that kind of simplification ah leads you to the idea of a steady undifferentiated pulse. Now, that doesn't mean that every time that you're doing a steady pulse you're imitating American Indian music, or that you can't use it because you're ripping off American Indian music. It simply means that on the way to that discovery you have recognized that in fact some other culture had made that discovery.

*Ya, ya.*

And the same thing is true of the sustained tone. It's like the interest of the drone. You say, "Look, western music is so much involved in intellectual constructions and compressed time and dynamic changes and everything else. It doesn't have the patience to listen to something that's undifferentiated and unchanging.

Now you don't need oriental culture to do that. SATIE for instance had made the same discovery. So you recognize that and say, "Well, then, instead of expressing total unity by a series of chords which are always moving out of it, I want to express it by a ubiquitous presence..... which means that that's tonal, which means that you've got a drone..... which means that let's say you extend a perfectly western concept like the pedalpoint throughout the whole duration of a piece. And then you say, "Well, my God, there's a lot of music all over the world that's done that." It doesn't mean that you're ripping it off.

*Ya.*

And then you say, "Well, that's so interesting, that the harmony and the melody and everything else on top of it is disturbing." So, you gradually reduce it, and you gradually reduce it, and finally get to the point where you say that that single sustained tone without anything else going on, maybe with texture variations, maybe with color

WONUKUPO , (Grizzly Bear Hiding Place)

words taken from: "Eski, Biography of the Last Wild American Indian", written down by

nei the the s w <sup>not</sup> ayning t day <sup>not</sup> help  
nor the soft p ing it. <sup>not</sup> bow. string

not any other sound or movement

In a darkened space a quiet one, say These words with a sense  
(not too) of the music in them. Leave a time for their images  
to perform in the hearers' minds.

Philip Corner

variations, maybe not even THAT.

You know, I don't know how far you can GO! Whether you can like just turn on the hum of a..... I mean, I haven't been able to get quite that far. But that's part of the research. And then you say, "My God, like that's not new either. There are yogis chanting, like they've known about that for thousands of years. And it doesn't mean that you're really like imitating them, but rather being inspired.

*Ya, so you see a new motivation basically as an artist to distillate ah layout material towards a quintessence of universal values.*

Right! I feel I'm doing a kind of a research, but a research which isn't certified by instruments, but is certified by one's consciousness. That's all I feel I'm doing.

*Ya, ya, so there is a subtraction of the ideas?*

What led me to this was to find something from which I could move into all sorts of various areas. That is, I felt like, as I think you seem to be indicating, a lot of people in Europe are, ha, a lot of people in America too, hung up by restrictions which are not only in the external institutions; they're in your own mind! Because you've been very much influenced by all sorts of things. We try to be revolutionary, and we revolt within the framework of our own understanding. The very fact that we, no matter what we do, no matter how far out, or influenced by other ideas, if it's an original composition, it's a western thing. If it uses notation, and is transmitted by, even if it's free notation and admits all sorts of freedom and so, it's a western thing. I mean, there are like lots of limitations. If it, for instance, doesn't use the total spectrum and it uses like fixed pitches, even with, even with crazy tuning systems and so, it's a western thing.

So there are lots of things where people have tried to get out of the western mode and be revolutionary, where in fact they've only succeeded in being more western. And and I think for instance the twelve tone thing is such a characteristic example of it. I mean it's supposed to

have been such a revolutionary break with the past and the tonal system and everything. It accepted the tuning, they accepted all the intellectual premises.

And, and then you look at something like CAGE, who I would say has gone like as far in terms of breaking away from that as one possibly could within those premises. And, and I look at it, and I say, "It's still within the same premises." I mean, I notice for instance that CAGE is classified among classical music in our library, as opposed to rock, jazz or ethnic music..... which I find as kind of interesting, and in one sense quite unjust, but in another sense quite just. Because even though he succeeded in transcending practically all of the MATERIAL basis for western music, in the tuning system and in all the modes of the sounds and in using noise and this, that and the other thing, he has not succeeded in transcending the intellectual or philosophical premise. And so that even though he's using chance, and even though he's trying to like make things not be based on taste, the whole thing basically IS based on a preconceived intellectual idea, which is a western premise.

As soon as you see that, you realize that any jazz musician, any pop musician, even if they're doing things that seem like very western and simple, you know they're using C-major scale and they're using I, IV, V chords, that the premise on which they're operating is so completely different.

*Could you describe it?*

WELL, it has something to do with, I think the relationship of the creator to the music, which has something to do with improvisation, which has something to do with the attitude that this is not first of all a fixed entity which is preserved in a score or so as an idea, certainly not one that can be claimed by any particular individual. That is, it's much more in a sense of like being in a process in time in which at each given moment an individual and ALL the individuals involved in it are making contributions which are based to a very large extent upon their own spontaneous awareness of what's going on. Now, I think that that's very, very different as a premise.

*So, ya, I would like to get into this how to balance then*

*the western thought, how to replace, and with which attitudes?*

WELL, I think, I think there's only one way to do that. And that is to not be afraid of this being influenced by Oriental cultures or so, or popular culture, and to enter into them as fully as possible. And in order to avoid the kind of attitude that we've also had in which you studied these other cultures from a western point of view, to challenge as much as possible the western frameworks. Which means, you know, basically that you have to be an avant-gardist also and basically revolutionary in spirit.

But you also have to be continually humble in terms of the limitations of your understanding, and knowing that your understanding of any of these cultures and the understanding of your OWN culture is very, very limited, is is is eh very, very bounded, and that it, in addition to any insights that you think that you might have, that you have to be open to wherever insights come from other people who are practicing these things or have a different slant on things. And THEN one can START trying. In other words, at least you accept as an ideal that you as an individual start from a zero point, which is NOT a representative of this civilization or of this culture or of anything else. And I think that's what you in a way mean by being an "Anfaenger".

And THEN you may recognize that in fact you can't escape being a German; you can't escape being an American; you can't escape being an Indian in 1975. But that you don't have to. And that's like not being bounded by that as a given, and certainly not you know standing up and saying, "I represent this great culture, and I'm a living manifestation of the bla-bla-bla."

You strive to start from where you are and open your mind as openly as possible to all sorts of various things, which means that you have to start listening and talking to people who listen too and cultivate an understanding of all sorts of things which you may think are beneath you. And that may be either these Oriental cultures or anything else or low-down popular AM radio kind of thing.

I think that one has to give some amount of time to all of these things and try. That doesn't mean that you will or



you should be able to accept equally without evaluation everything you hear. But it means that you break down your own prejudices and preconceived limitations which are manifestations of your class position, your social position, your previous education. And you try to open your mind to that. Then when you do that, if possible....and this may be much easier in America to do this.....

ya.

PLAY JAZZ. Hang out with jazz musicians. Play pop music. And people are doing this. And then try to integrate that with your other thing, and not try to say, "Oh, I'm reacting against Princeton University." Or, "I'm reacting against STOCKHAUSEN, and NOW I'm doing workers' music." Or, "Now I'm doing....., and that's the only "in" thing. Instead of that, try to integrate all these various attitudes that come from various aspects of your work. And instead of what used to happen, somebody would like spend part of his time playing jazz in the bars and part of his time writing REAL MUSIC.

*GERTUDE STEIN said, "People are the way their land and air is." And she was patriotic. What she meant is actually if you want to get rid of stylistic things that have become really rigid, then you have to think about where you are grounded, on which earth you are standing. Isn't that somehow contradictory to the aspect of whole world music?*

I don't think so. That's why I'm gonna say, I think that it could be misinterpreted as that. See, I don't mean that we can pretend that we're completely ubiquitous, that we're really "Anfaenger", that we start from nowhere, and that our consciousnesses are unlimited. I don't believe that. And I think that on some level it will come back to you that you are in effect an American in 1975, or a German in.. And some of those things are are not only inescapable but important.

And I've written some very militant things about American culture and the necessity of liberating it from Europe and this, that and the other thing. But what that means is that you're not in a system in which that becomes some kind of a compulsion. And that becomes some kind of a boundary, certainly not one in which you're in a province

where you're not even free to express, where you're not even free to express where you are at the moment, but you have to express where you know from some other place three thousand miles away, or something like that. Or two hundred years ago. That's still determining you. It means that you can accept being one hundred percent where you are, but that that single place where you are, both geographically and in your consciousness, radiates out, because nothing GERTUDE STEIN says about being aware and sensitive to living in America means that you can't in your consciousness and your understanding know what's going on in the whole world. That's what I'm talking about.

*But this goes along to the basic attitude of Americans, to be concerned with what goes on in the whole world, that this is a kind of identification of what an American is too.*

You REALLY think so ??

*Ya, I think so.*

I would rather see that as a universal human characteristic.

*Ya, it would be nice.*

You see, to the extent, but to the extent that someone's an American, that means he's only concerned primarily with only America. Just like you send somebody to Germany or anything else, he's only concerned with that. I'm talking about a state of mind in which you're only an American as a kind of a localized aspect of a consciousness which at least is searching, which doesn't see America or Germany or India or any other place like that as a boundary, but only as like a place. But that instead of being a wall division, it's only like a place from which you look out. Now that's what I'm talking about.

Peace, Be still. Be  
 wrapped in per-fect peace. be  
 wrapped in per-fect peace.  
 Be still - Per-fect Peace  
 Per-fect Peace  
 Peace - per-fect peace  
 Peace - Be still  
 Still Per-fect ;  
 per-fect, still, peace

This, the most complex, may be the most simple.

(I wanted to do one which would sing itself most naturally. The first 3 voices by ear.)

Add the others:  
 just the next; or any number.

Public performance / meditation

Score projected,  
 voice by voice.

support with instruments.  
 distribute registers,  
 necessary transpositions —  
 of course.

**PHILIP**



"Contemplating  
 Waterfall"  
**corner**

**Jim Burton**



I'm not quite sure what you mean by a "beginner". I mean, I've been at it for five years. You know, I don't regard myself as a beginner anymore, although you know I'm always a beginner in a sense of experimenting.

*Ya, that's what I mean. I don't mean that limits a beginner with being a dilettante.. If you've finished something, you're going to do something else then.*

Hm hum, oh, I see, hm hum.

*You know, just beginning from a zero point, ah, always beginning from a zero point.*

Well, I should probably start by explaining that I'm not a trained musician. Ah, I was trained as a painter until four or five years ago. And I can't quite explain how I got interested in experimental music. But somehow I did. I bought a tape recorder, and I started playing around at home. And ah I got so involved in it that I didn't have time to paint any more. So I finally quit painting and decided to become a composer I guess, or a musician. And ah I started from a kind of music concrete point of view.. .... but more live performance rather than making tape compositions. I never did care much for splicing you know.

*Ya.*

Making things in the studio.

*You just put the tape on and let happen what happened.*

I've done a few things like that, but ah mostly I'm interested in ah the progress of performance, the process of presenting things live to people. What's most interesting for me is the whole process of putting a concert together. I'm not so much interested in making ah immutable final products..... You know like objects.

*Ya. And that's one of the reasons you just changed from painting.*

Yeah, I think so. And then I just enjoyed the whole, you know, the live audience, The social aspect of making a concert seemed much more rewarding than making a painting and then ha ha you know trying to show it somewhere or

trying to get somebody to come and look at it.

*So you conceptualized the processes, the tape processes. Or did you use instruments or speech?*

Well, at the time I was making tapes because I didn't know anything about how to do a concert. I didn't know anything about composing per se. I was making sounds. And I was, you know, just making documents of them basically, my own.

*lum lum*

But then gradually I learned about graphic notation and various things. So I began writing pieces to be performed. And then gradually I began to conceive of concerts as pieces in themselves.

*Could you take one of these pieces for example?*

Ah, it would be most interesting for me to talk about one that I'm going to do in December. I can talk about how the idea develops, you know. Ah, I come from Wyoming. It's my home state. And my home town is Laramie, which has some famous westerns and movies and things. It doesn't look anything like what you might imagine, although.....

*Wasn't WYATT EARP there?*

I don't know if he ever made it to Laramie. I don't know that there were any very famous law men in Laramie. No, Laramie was a railroad town. Although it started off as a fort that ah JACQUES LARAMIE, a French trapper, started the whole thing back in probably 1830 or around then.....

Anyway, I was out there this summer and really enjoyed my visit. I hadn't been there in a couple of years, and so I decided to do a whole concert, sort of dedicated to my home town. So now I'm working on, I'm writing some country and western pieces. Ah you know, some western music, except that it won't be played as straight, or it won't be strictly Nashville style. It'll be more, somewhat more..... ah, if there is such a thing..... "new music" style. And I'll be also using some instruments that I've been working on. I'm building my own version of

a steel guitar. And I also have some amplified whiskey bottles I have a percussionist use. And eh I'm also making a large backdrop, ah which is a drawing. You know a pencil drawing.

*hm hm*

And it will be an enlargement of a photograph of my grandfather's bar. He had a bar years ago.

*Oh, ya, do the whisky bottles come from there too?*

Eh ha, no, they come from the Bowery, but there is a relationship that way.

*You found it at the Bowery, or you drunk it at the Bowery?*

No, I found the bottles, ha. I just needed, you know, a couple of dozen empty bottles, with lids. So, I went on my bicycle, and I found you know a basket full of empty bottles, and I brought 'em home, and I washed them out. And then I built this instrument with them..... Anyway, this is a very narrative idea, you know in a way. It'll start off pretty straight.....

Ah, I'm writing one piece called "MAIL ORDER PREACHER", which is about this guy who gets married by a mail order preacher, a preacher that got his collar through the mail. And the preacher winds up stealing the girl friend, you know. And they go off, and the guy is left alone. And the melody and everything is very much like a Nashville country and western song.

BUT the way they're gonna play it will be oh somewhat in and out of tune and somewhat exaggerated. And I'm not using the guitar. So there'll be some deviation from the standard Nashville style. Yeah, it'll be mostly like starting from that as a place then, as a form to sort of improvise with. Because I like to allow performers to use their own ideas and their own techniques as well, rather than write everything all out completely.

*So the ensemble playing this music then is consisting of besides the tuned whisky bottles and adapted steel guitar?*

and a percussionist, a bass player, JOHN DEAK of the



New York Philharmonic. I should explain that I'm also involved with an ensemble called the LAST CHANCE , which is a group of us which has been playing together for three or four years now, in various ways and in various concerts. And last year we finally decided to, you know, form an ensemble, which we call LAST CHANCE , and that'll be the core. It'll be LAST CHANCE plus a couple of guest stars on trombone, flute, piano, acoustic bass, and this percussion and the steel guitar.

*Ya, and have you got rooms to rehearse in, just to get the piece together. Do you just do it here in your studio?*

Ah, we'll probably start rehearsals here, because I have to get everything done long before the concert, because I want to cut a seven-inch 33 record, which I want to have available at the concert.

*Ah, could you talk about the process of that? It could be quite useful.*

Um, yeah. First you have to get a decent tape to use to make the master, to make the mother mold, or whatever it's called. And you know that can be an expensive proposition. So ha so, I'm just looking around for various friends and so forth that have access to..... we don't need sixteen tracks..... you know, four-track or maybe eight-track.

*Do you have to go into the studio, or just put together the material from your friends then?*

Well, no, we'll go into the studio to make the recording.

*Ya, you have to pay then for the studio time?*

Well, hopefully I can get it for very little or nothing. I know someone that works in a studio that also has a lathe to make the master mould. And then after the master mould is made, then I can take that to some small company in New Jersey or somewhere and have the records stamped from the mould.

*Ya. Are there any companies and corporations organized by musicians themselves? Or do you have to go to commercial companies?*

Well, so far as I know, the way it works is that ah recording studios are independent of a company that might make the master mould. And the place that makes the master mould is independent from the place that actually presses the records. So, there's really no one complete facility. However, there is the JAZZ COMPOSERS' ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION. And they have access to a recording studio. And they also have a distribution service. So that if someone cuts a record independently, they can distribute it for you at a much lower cost than a commercial outfit.

*But are these organizations growing here because of the commercial inaccessibility.....*

Inaccessibility? Slowly, I think. I think J.C.O.A. is, it's been around for at least four years that I know of. And ah, they're listing the records as growing. And I don't know how successful they are, because they're mostly new jazz, which I'm not so involved with. But they also handle other forms as well, ah experimental music, but mostly new jazz.

*So having your record, then you prepare a concert. So how to get a concert?*

Well, this particular concert I was invited to do because..... I'm just sort of joking..... there's a kind of an annual JIM BURTON concert at the KITCHEN ha simply because I was connected with it..... Or, at least there has been so far! So THAT one I didn't solicit. Ah, if you're just sitting around scratching your head trying to figure out where you can get a concert, ah the possibilities are determined basically by whether you feel you have to be paid for it, or whether you wanna fit the bill yourself, or you know and also what kind of audience you want to reach. So that there's several different ways of going about it. If you just want to do a concert, on your own, which is the way I think everybody starts out,

*hm*

then there are several spaces that are fairly accessible, where you might have some arrangement like the use of the space is free, but you have to take care of all the expenses..... which means that you either have to find people that are gonna play for you for nothing, and you

have to do all the publicity.

*So, the KITCHEN is a kind of an alternative then to all these ah closed commercial things. Could you describe more the structure of the KITCHEN, or what you're doing?*

The KITCHEN began as a kind of almost a kind of workshop gallery for video artists. It was started by WOODY and STEINA VASULKA, who came from Europe and started this video place. And they were interested in music, too. And so not long after they started they asked someone to bring in some music, you know, one night a week or something like that. And then somewhere along the line when ah BOB STEARNS, who is now the business director of the whole organization..... He and I were friends at the time, and we got involved. And WOODY and STEINA had other things they wanted to do. So we sort of took over for them and reorganized it. And now it's almost completely shared between music and video, I mean in terms of amount of time and money spent. And it's all done with grants, you know, from the state council and from national endowment. There is no secret. You just keep plugging away at it, and you just keep trying.

*Do you need really defined research topics, or do they give grants just for art?*

Well, that was the first problem we ran into, that not too many organizations want to fund a space, a performance space. You know, they're more interested in supporting an individual artist or an educational organization or something like that. So that was our first problem. Ah, somehow we managed to get supported anyway to some extent, I think just because there was so much interest just in what we were doing, in a certain sort of way people couldn't avoid realizing that at least something was happening. And our philosophy was basically that there was no outlet for these kinds of things. There was no consistent outlet for experimental music for example. Most of the uptown theaters, you know, were dealing with chamber groups and serial music and so forth, which was fine. But there was simply no alternative for our people, like LaMONTE YOUNG, people like JOHN GIBSON and PHIL GLASS in the early stages and so forth.

*They started out from the KITCHEN?*

Ah, most of them had at least a couple of concerts in the beginning, because there was an available space, and it had a certain amount of attention and visibility. And it just sort of grew from there. So now I think it's safe to say that it is the only place in New York City that is consistently experimental.

*Where is it located?*

The address is 484 Broome Street, which is just above Houston Street. It's the lower edge of Soho.

*So you get grants to subsist the expenses?*

Well, the KITCHEN is being well enough supported now. I mean included in the budget is fees for performers plus fees for individual artists who present things. And that's all sort of paid by the KITCHEN through their grants. Working independently, or individually, ah I think each artist has his own resources. Ah, there's one individual grant called the "CAPS" Grant, which goes to individual artists, and it can be as much as \$6,000.00 which would sort of see you through the year, ha, if you're lucky enough to get one. Now there are about seven or eight of them for composers every year. So the competition is pretty stiff. There are usually three or four hundred applicants.

There is another service called the "MEET THE COMPOSER", which is also funded by the state. And they will put out some money towards public concerts by composers. They'll assist anybody that's sponsoring a concert. Ah, but usually it's not in very large amounts, you know, two or three hundred dollars, or seventy-five dollars, or whatever the size of the scale of the concert.

*And the public you come in touch with..... What kind of people does it consist of?*

It's reaching a larger audience. There are you know I would say it probably averages maybe thirty percent of the audience will be general public. I'm just guessing about that figure. But usually the bulk of the audience is people that are interested in that particular artist. And then there are people who show up because something interests them. They've heard about the person, the title

of it sounds interesting, or whatever. They've heard about the KITCHEN. So it's not by any means a popular sort of orientation.

*I think it's growing over its initial limits, where just a few people met to make music for other musicians.*

Yeah, we used to have, three years ago we had about an average of maybe oh fifteen to twenty people was the average audience for a concert. Now I would say it's maybe fifty, forty or fifty.

*Do you see that the KITCHEN is getting more important, having new music presented, facing all these commercial you know, all the weight of jazz and rock and this kind of music. I see this as a real problem here in New York, on the one side this large spread out popular music, jazz and so on. And on the other side there's just kind of a private group.*

(cough) Well, this is something that now all of us talk about in various ways at various times. I don't think that there are any real answers, because I think that it's primarily an individual problem. Ah, some artist don't want to get associated with commercial adventures. And others would really like to, but you know, don't have any way. And then, consider the problems. Like, if you wanted to perform in a bar, for example. It would really be hard to play certain kinds of or many different kinds of new music in a bar. Either it wouldn't, couldn't be heard because of the noise. Or vice versa, it would drive the people out.

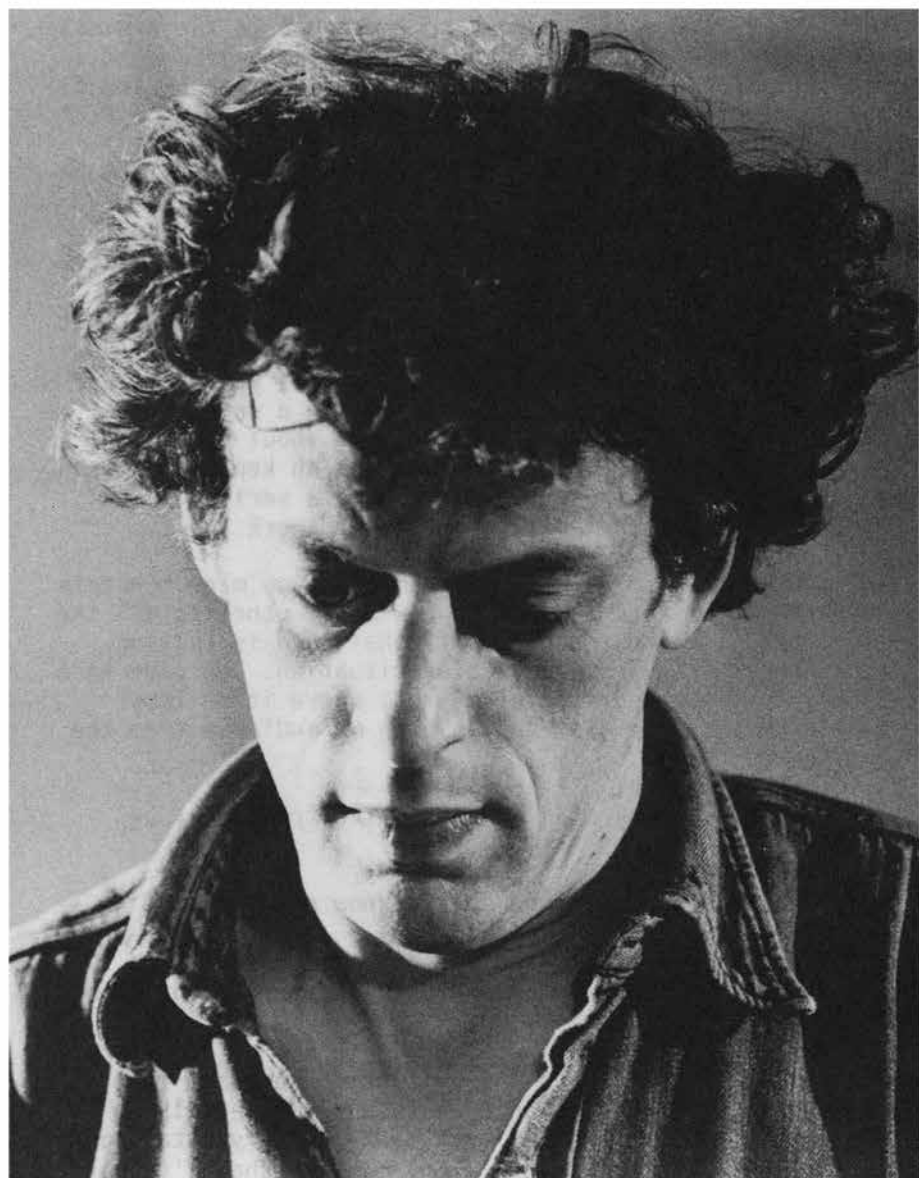
*STEVE REICH and PHIL GLASS don't drive the people out any more.*

Well, first of all, I think that they use hints of popular forms, but they aren't very literally ah..... PHIL GLASS sounds a little bit like rock or jazz.

*It's like distilled.*

That it's still pretty tightly confined, it's pretty tightly composed and rehearsed, which is fine. But it isn't, I don't think that it's as much of a performance art as real popular forms.

Phil Glass



*In his article "THE FUTURE OF MUSIC" JOHN CAGE describes your work as follows: "Though the doors will always remain open for the musical expression of personal feelings, what will more and more come through is the expression of the pleasures of conviviality. And beyond that a non-intentional expressivity: a being together of sounds and people." How do you relate this quote to your music?*

Well, I think it has more to do with his music than mine or anything. So, I think it's interesting that JOHN thought about it that way. I think I know what this is about, where this comes from. During every year I make a series of concerts downtown, usually in a large studio. But since the beginning of my work with the ensemble that I formed has always been....It's really in a part of New York where people lived in loft buildings, you know, and did rehearsals there. And since that in a way was the origin of my audience..... I'm talking about eight or nine or ten years ago..... I've always kept an attachment to that. So that every year I do a series of concerts in the places that I rehearse and work in.

Now, JOHN comes to almost, it's amazing how many concerts a year he goes to. He goes to new music concerts all the time. And I think that actually what JOHN is talking about there is a very particular situation. He came to a Sunday afternoon concert at my loft where it's almost really an audience that has been my audience from the beginning.

*This is one side of what is called the "pleasures of conviviality".*

Sure, these are people who always know each other.

*But I see this concept realized in your music. This being together of the musicians radiates a kind of homogeneity.*

Well, there's that too. I didn't think he meant that in that quote, but this is another issue. We're talking now about the ensemble and the fact that I'm very attached to working with this group now. And many of them I've been working with, like JOHN GIBSON, since 1967. You know, we're getting into eight or nine years, you know, of working together. DICKY LANDRY also about that length of



time. Most people have been in the group I think five or six years. So that ah I'm very attached to this group of people. I work with them. We're very close actually, you know, I mean ah..... And because when we travel we make most of our living, we spend a lot of time together. And I think it's something I would miss very much.

*Ya, this homogeneity on the one side comes out of playing with people that you know and like. But on the other side doesn't the music itself radiate a kind of community feeling?*

My music required a very close working together. In fact to learn a piece generally takes about three months. Because ah the music is so intricately interwoven. But ah even if one person is away, ah the smallest part of an eighth note, it ah destroys the feeling of it.

We discovered also that ah in the course of a piece the tempo is always changing. But, it changes as a group. I'm not conducting. It's just that in the course of time we arrived at a collective feeling of ah the shift of the tempo of the piece. And those are very rarely discussed.

*Does there exist like an internal signal structure to initiate these shiftings?*

No. Yes, I conduct, you know, by nodding my head to indicate where we are in the music. But, ah no, as far as the shifting of tempo, if you listen to it for that, if you're not paying attention, noone ever notices that. But that is actually the same way that a good string quartet after twenty or thirty years you know, they were playing perfectly together. And we've been together about eight years. Even so, we're arriving at a very, it's very much that kind of style of ensemble playing, of real close chamber music playing.

*How much are the people bounded, and how much have they freedom to play?*

Well I, at this point it's hard for me to say. Ah, in fact the music is all written down to begin with. But there are some pieces where I allow.... Ah, you know this MUSIC WITH CHANGING PARTS. In that piece there was free composition on selected notes. It wasn't really free.

It was a very limited kind of improvisation within the structure of the piece. That was an experiment that I did. And on that piece, I'm doing it from time to time and using that as a technique. Generally everything is written down.

HOWEVER, sometimes I'm playing, and I'll notice that DICKY is playing the same part but maybe a fourth above. And I'll listen to it, and if it's nice, we'll leave it in. Or sometimes MICHAEL will say to me,..This is the piano player...He'll say, "Well, you know, I think my left hand, I can just move it down a fifth." And so people are able to make changes.

But since the thing that holds the piece together is the rhythmic structure, and as long as what is happening is harmonically consistent, ah it's possible for players to even to participate on that level you see. But we're talking about a very limited kind of ah, it's limited in the sense that it doesn't really change the character and style of the piece. But it does allow people to add certain things to it.

*And the process of composition grows too in contact with the musicians?*

ring ring ring ring I'm sorry.

Hello. Yes. Hi. Okay. So I'll go there. Then I can have a little more time here. Then I'll be there at a quarter of twelve. Well, I'll be there at 11:30 then.

Ah, the question again was ah about, oh, how the music was written. Well, actually I go to the rehearsals, the first rehearsals with the piece all written. Now sometimes we make changes, but basically the piece is finished. Rehearsal period is not really working out material at all. But, we may work out certain DETAILS like transitions maybe.

ringggg I'm sorry.

Hello. Yes. Well, tell him to read..... Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, okay. I'm having a talk now with someone. Okay, thanks.

The problem we're talking about the ah..... However, when I am composing the piece, since I know the people, I often

write the parts exactly for them. I know which people are where. In other words, often when I write the parts, I write it by the name of the person and not by the name of the instrument. So, like JOHN's part, it doesn't say soprano saxophone. So I know. I tend to write FOR him specifically. Or for JOAN LaBARBARA. I know her voice quality. So when I'm writing the piece, I'm thinking in fact of this group and no other group.

*One actually can feel that in listening to the music. Like, I would ascribe this feeling a certain tribal character.*

Oh, yeah?

*Did you then study non-western cultures to form your language?*

Well, at an earlier period in my life I did, yes. But ah mostly ah I had a lot of contact with Indian music in one point in my life..... which of course is a very sophisticated and evolved musical culture. But again, you have an ensemble situation, small. It's really chamber music. I mean, ah, it's something where you have generally three, four, five, six people playing together. So I wouldn't say that was so much a model for my music. But it was something that I responded to, because it was something that I myself was interested in.

*So you brought a certain homogeneous corpus of musicians together?*

Yeah. But actually, Walter, one of the reasons it really happened was because at the beginning, when I was doing this music in '66 and '67, the fact was that noone would play the music. And so, in order to find people to play the music, I found ah the most sympathetic musicians to work with. And once I had them, I was, once I found a group of people who were willing and happy to play the music, I was not inclined to change that group. Because now I can find players quite easily. But in the 1960's ah the nucleus of players that I had were practically the only people that really wanted to play the music. You know, now it's quite different.

*Do you remember your original motivation to write these*

*kinds of repetitious pattern music?*

Hm. Well, that was again ah quite a while ago, in '66. And I was living in Paris at the time. And at that point I was twenty-eight or twenty-nine or thirty. And at this point my background was very traditional. I had begun music when I was eight with playing the flute, and beginning playing piano later, and composing when I was in my teens. So I went to music school full time when I was nineteen and stayed 'til I was twenty-four. And again I studied with NADJA BOULANGER from twenty-six to twenty-eight..... So ah, at that point I had maybe twenty years, you know? I have been playing and reading and writing music for twenty years, more or less. At that point my involvement in music was very traditional. And I had received all the degrees, you know, like the Masters degree from Julliard, diplomas and so forth, fellowships and so forth. I have in fact published about twenty pieces. At the age of twenty-one, I think, I began publishing music, a more traditional kind. So, at the point when I was twenty-eight or twenty-nine I had behind me already a very strong traditional background.

And really what happened was that I became thoroughly sick of it..... you know? And I didn't want to write the music any more. And it seemed to me that..... Looking at the music it seemed to me that it was mostly imitative, on the models of the teachers I had studied with. I think consciously of finding a music that had no, not even one element of the music that I had studied. The only music that I knew at that time.....(and I didn't know very well)..... were the non-western musics, you know, like Indian music. I had heard some Moroccan music. I had been to Morocco a number of times. And I had some experience of the Islamic music and African music. So I knew that there were other ways of making music that had nothing to do with my own education.

And, the way the repetition came in, it's hard for me exactly at this point. I think I came upon it mostly by accident. I know this is curious, because I've talked to other people in this area, and they had the same experience, that they also came by accident almost to this. But, the thing about accidents is that accidents happen to everyone. It's a question of whether you recognize the accident as being potential or not.

*So, you developed your language through self-experience?*

I was very much at the time, very much alone.... When I was living in Paris I had no contact with any other musicians. I know ALLA RAKHA. But the Indian music developed so clearly along different lines. It could be important in inspiration, but they didn't offer new models for my music. Because the instruments were too different. The raga system demanded a kind of PERCEPTION OF INTONATION, which I'm not particularly gifted at. Someone like LA MONTE, who works for intonation in a very precise way, could be attracted to that. But for me personally, my strong point was not that kind of precise hearing to hear MICROINTERVALS.

So, for a number of reasons Indian music was a point of inspiration, but could not really be a working model for me. Except in the rhythmic structure, where I found that's where I could get the strongest ideas from. And for a while I worked with ALLA RAKHA. I studied with him. And I learned a lot from him about rhythmic structure, and additive structure, which I've talked about in other articles and so forth. So the whole idea of additive structure that I developed in my music really came from the rhythmic structure of Indian music. But my music sounds so DIFFERENT from Indian music.

*Could you describe more your building up of this additive structure and your use of it in your music?*

Well, basically, what I noticed about western music was that for the most part western music takes units of time and divides them. You know, so like to take an example, like there's a whole note. You divide it in half, you get a half note. And you divide it again, and you get a quarter note. And you divide them again, you get eighth notes. And in fact measures are things that are a measure of music, like a 4/4 measure or a 6/8 measure, a length of time which you divide. Well, with Indian music what I discovered was that they take a much longer unit, and they work from adding from the smaller units. So that it's the opposite really.

*Ya.*

I got upon the idea of writing in small figures that would

be repeated, and then move on to the next figure. So that a piece of my music is really the sum of all the small, individual melodic units added together. Right.

So that when I write out the score, then there'd be forty figures, sixty figures, eighty figures. Now each figure is related to the next figure, at least in that early music, by the addition or subtraction of one musical unit. So that there would be a figure that had five eighth notes in it. And then the next figure would have six, the next would have seven, the next would have eight. Very, very simple.

At the beginning I used this very very simple, completely ah systematic approach. But what I found was that the feeling would change very much between the feeling of five, the feeling of six, the feeling of seven. And so that what I worked with as a composer was finding musical figures for the units that would work within that additive structure in the most musical way possible. And that's what you hear with MUSIC WITH CHANGING PARTS.

Then later, in my later music I began working with cyclic structures. That is, I would take an additive structure and put that within a recurring larger cycle of notes. For example, if you take a figure of nine, you know if you take let's say if you add together, if you have an ongoing figure of nine happening. And you have an additive figure that goes  $4 + 3 + 2$ , that also comes out to nine. So, then if you do it like having three figures 4, 3, 2, which is related in the additive way that I was fond of doing, fitting into a larger structure of nine...Then there are other ways of doing that. I'm giving the most simple example. But you can then take larger units, like a cycle of eighteen, and then start working with  $6 + 6 + 6 + 5 + 4 + 5 + 4 + 5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 1$ .

And it'll ALL add up to a larger structure of eighteen. So later in MUSIC IN TWELVE PARTS, I became very interested in the mathematics of cyclic music. And I combined the area of cyclic music with additive structure. And the origin of that music really came from my observation and study of the rhythmic structure of Indian music.

*Besides using instruments are you also using voice?*

Yes.

*Do you use the voice to imitate instruments or to represent it as it is?*

Well, really I use voice as a sound quality, in the same way that each of us has a quality of their own. So, in a way I don't use a voice for itself any more than I use the instrument for itself. Because by the time I take the instruments, and we put them through an equalizer sound system mixer, I at that point, the blend of the instruments..... It's not really possible to think, "Well, this is a flute, and this is a saxophone." I think what we're hearing is made up of the components. And in that sense the voice is one of the components.

Then over the years I've had certain instruments I've tried. We had a cello once, we played with trumpet once, with violin once, with so many instruments which you don't see now in a group have come through the group. And every time that would happen, the reason I originally would have someone play with us was because I liked the musician, and I liked the person. And I said, "Well, why don't you bring your trumpet down, and we'll see what it sounds like?" And usually what would happen is that we would take the same music, and by changing instrumentation, we would change SOMEWHAT the color of the total effect. And it was possible, we found, to integrate all different kinds of instruments, without actually changing the musical character.

*But the idea of the final color is like having the colors melted together to a new color, where the individual instruments are not recognized. Is this true?*

For me the sense of the music is really a total organic thing, of which each instrument is a contributing part. And for the acoustical reasons there are all kinds of by-products of the instruments playing together, that make that happen, that make other things happen that we're not even hearing. So that there are overtones, difference tones that are happening, that are contributing to the total effect. And it's not assignable to one instrument, because it's a combination of instruments. So that more and more the total sound really is more than the sum of the players.

Because we're talking about phenomena that happen with high, with music of high amplification, with very clean, high amplification. So there will be certain acoustical byproducts, that will be perceivable by us, but not assignable to any particular player. So that really we can't talk about one instrument, though we can talk about each instrument making a definite contribution in terms of the color

*Do you use harmony to color the structure, or do you use it as a structure in itself?*

(Police squad car passing.)

I used keys almost as an emotional color. In other words a key would be for me a feeling. And I would write a piece in a certain key because it produced a certain, very complete psychological feeling. Even though if I may not be able to describe in words the feeling, it was immediately perceivable to anyone who heard it. So, I don't like to use words like, well this heavy or sad or happy. These are stupid words to use to describe music, But in recent years now I'm now working with color in a direct way that I formally worked with rhythm. And so now I'm using harmony in a structural way. And that's a complicated subject.

It's really the content of the newer music that I'm doing now. The last piece I'm working on was called ANOTHER LOOK AT HARMONY. And in it what I was doing was trying to think of harmony as a structural device.

*Could you shortly describe that?*

Yes, the idea was that ah..... Just a minute, I want to get a match..... Formerly the music had been written in harmonic plateaus that were fairly constant for me, twenty minutes, sometimes as much as forty minutes, and ah MUSIC WITH CHANGING PARTS that was almost sixty-six to sixty-eight minutes. And in concert that could be even longer.

And then I began using modulation, even in MUSIC WITH CHANGING PARTS, which is a piece from 1970, there's a modulation towards the end of the piece, after about forty minutes all that happens is that the key signatures is in three flats. And what happened is that the A-flat became



natural. So that I had a feeling of becoming some kind of a major key. So really you could describe it also as still a minor key. But ANYWAY, it produced a very dramatic effect in the music.

Then, when I was writing MUSIC IN TWELVE PARTS, each part was related. The meaning of each part, which I think of as a scene, in the way that two walls come together in a building. So there was a place where the two places meet. And that's the edge where they come together. I was always very careful to make that harmonic relationship a very strong one.

When I started putting these parts together, I saw that that was the most interesting way to go directly to emphasize the change of the harmonic plateau. Then, after I had done that through ten parts of MUSIC IN TWELVE PARTS, in the eleventh part I saw that the device itself could become the subject of a part. So Part Eleven became a series of modulations. And simply there would be the same figure going through a series of keys, which you know from one point of view was completely traditional. But in the context of MY music, it was revolutionary.

But at Part Eleven, at that point when you hear the piece as a whole piece,.... It's a four-hour piece.... At that point you're entering the piece at the third hour. So at that point the universe of the piece is established. And its own history is established. And you don't think about the tradition anymore. And I really feel free in that sense. I feel so free from musical history that I feel that I can use it again. And this is in a sense what I'm doing.

Now, I was trying next to make it as really as strong a structural element as rhythm has been in my music. ANOTHER LOOK AT HARMONY did this in two ways. It was written in two parts. What I did in the First Part of ANOTHER LOOK AT HARMONY was that I took certain rhythmic figures. And I was then thinking about cyclic music, additive music and all the kinds of techniques I had developed over a period of seven or eight years. And I assigned really one, the first (This was the first way that I did it.) I assigned it to a certain rhythmic process, a certain key.

## GLASS

Car honking starts.

The piece moves through a series of keys, and it comes to another key. The key seems to generate a different rhythmic process. It was the first time I tried to integrate harmonic structures with rhythmic structures. Like by letting the key relationship be identified with the rhythmic process. So that in the course of the piece... you have a series of harmonic plateaus, each one generating its own rhythmic structure. Then this was in a sense ah the first attempt. I think it was one solution to the problem.

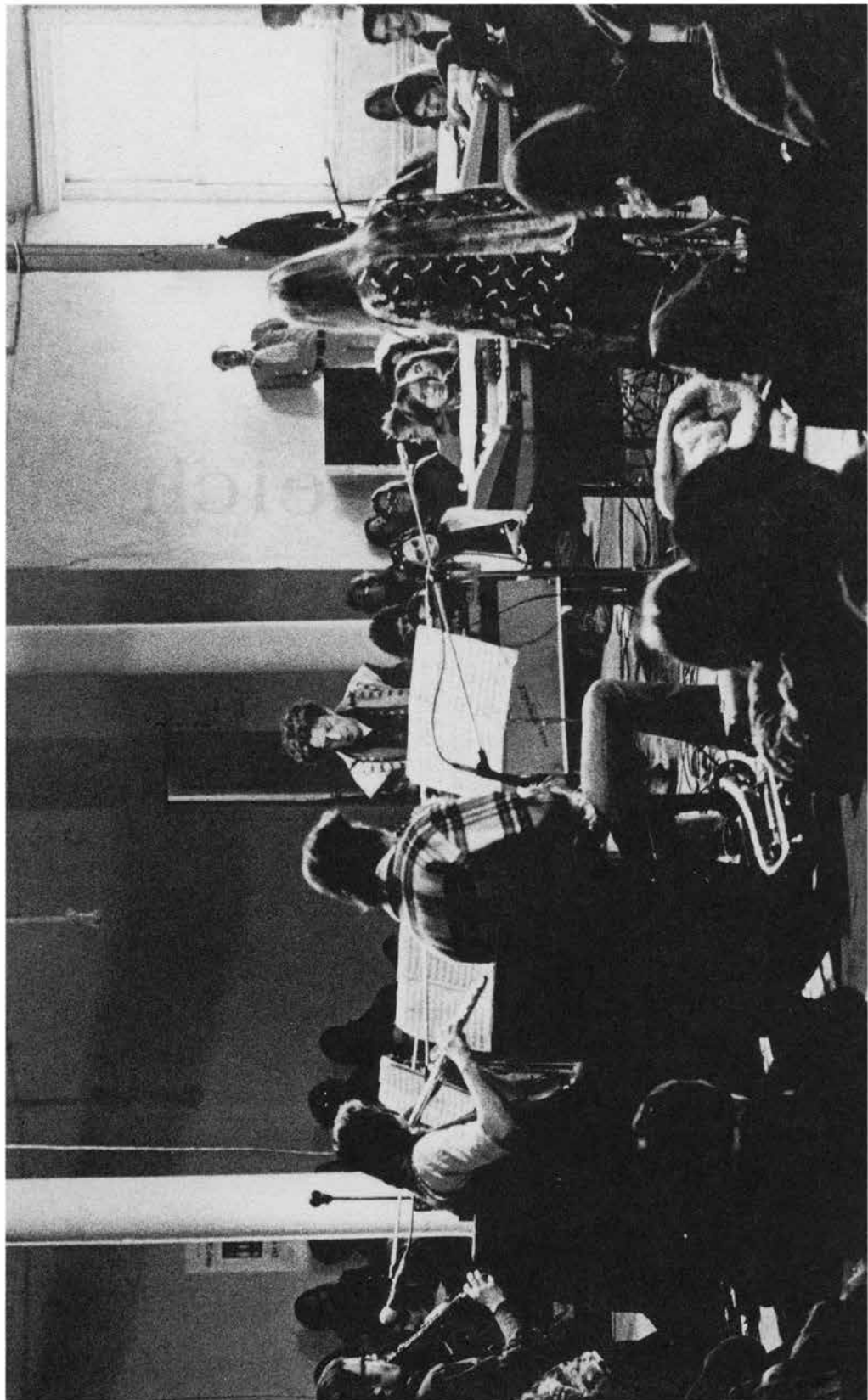
The next part, Part Two of that, I did something. I took a quite different approach. I took a very traditional harmonic progression. And I then I repeated it and used each repetition of the sequence. It was really a cadence. And I used each repetition of the cadence to become the subject of a different rhythmic expansion. Actually I could play it for you. So, in a way (turns to the organ) the most, the quintessence of harmonic music is in cadence for me..... IN CADENCE! It's the great subject of eighteenth and nineteenth century music.....

Car honking stops.

You know. So I took a cadence which was developed along very traditional lines, and I used it within the process of my own music. And what happens is ah is very curious because..... I'll play it for you first, and then you can tell me what happens..... because it's more interesting that way. It's the very end of ANOTHER LOOK AT HARMONY.

PHIL GLASS plays the organ for about five minutes.

Do you see what I was doing? You hear it very clearly in the bassline. I'm taking the cadence, and I'm applying arithmetic expansion to it. And the bassline gets longer and longer and longer.



Steve Reich



# Steve Reich and Musicians

## Work in Progress for 21 musicians and singers 18

Russ Hartenberger marimba/xylophone	Steve Chambers piano	Leslie Scott clarinet/bass clarinet
James Preiss metallophone/piano	Nurit Tilles piano	Richard Cohen clarinet/bass clarinet
Bob Becker marimba/xylophone/piano	Larry Karush piano	Jay Clayton voice
Glen Velez marimba	<del>David Lopata</del> piano	Pamela Fraley voice
David Van Tieghem marimba	Shem Guibbory violin	<del>Sheila Schonbrun</del> voice
Gary Schall marimba	Ken Ishii cello	Geordie Arnold voice
Steve Reich marimba/piano		Johana Arnold voice

Section I  
(Grand)

MARIMBA 1  
MARIMBA 2  
PIANO 1  
PIANO 2  
MARIMBA 3  
PIANO 3  
2 VIBRAPHONE VOICES  
= 2 CLARINETS  
VIOLIN =  
1 SAXOPHONES AND  
CELLO  
2 CLARINETS  
2 SAXOPHONES AND  
METALLOPHONE

LET ABOVE ONLY  
ONE MEETS

*Music for 18 Musicians - Section I, bar 4 - Steve Reich 1975*

Music for 18 Musicians is my largest work to date. The first sketches were begun in May 1974 and it was completed in March 1976. The piece is about 55 minutes long. It is scored for violin, cello, 2 clarinets doubling bass clarinet, 4 women's voices, 4 pianos, 3 marimbas, 2 xylophones, 1 metallophone (Vibraphone with wicket) and maracas. All instruments are acoustical. The use of electronics is limited to microphones for the voices + some of the instruments.

Although its regular beat and rhythmic energy are similar to earlier works of mine its instrumentation, structure and use of harmony are new. There is more harmonic movement in the first 5 minutes of Music for 18 Musicians than in all of my previous works combined. Although the changes of harmony may often be a simple inversion of a previous chord, or a change from minor to relative major and vice-versa, nevertheless, within these limits, there is more harmonic movement in this piece than in all my previous works.

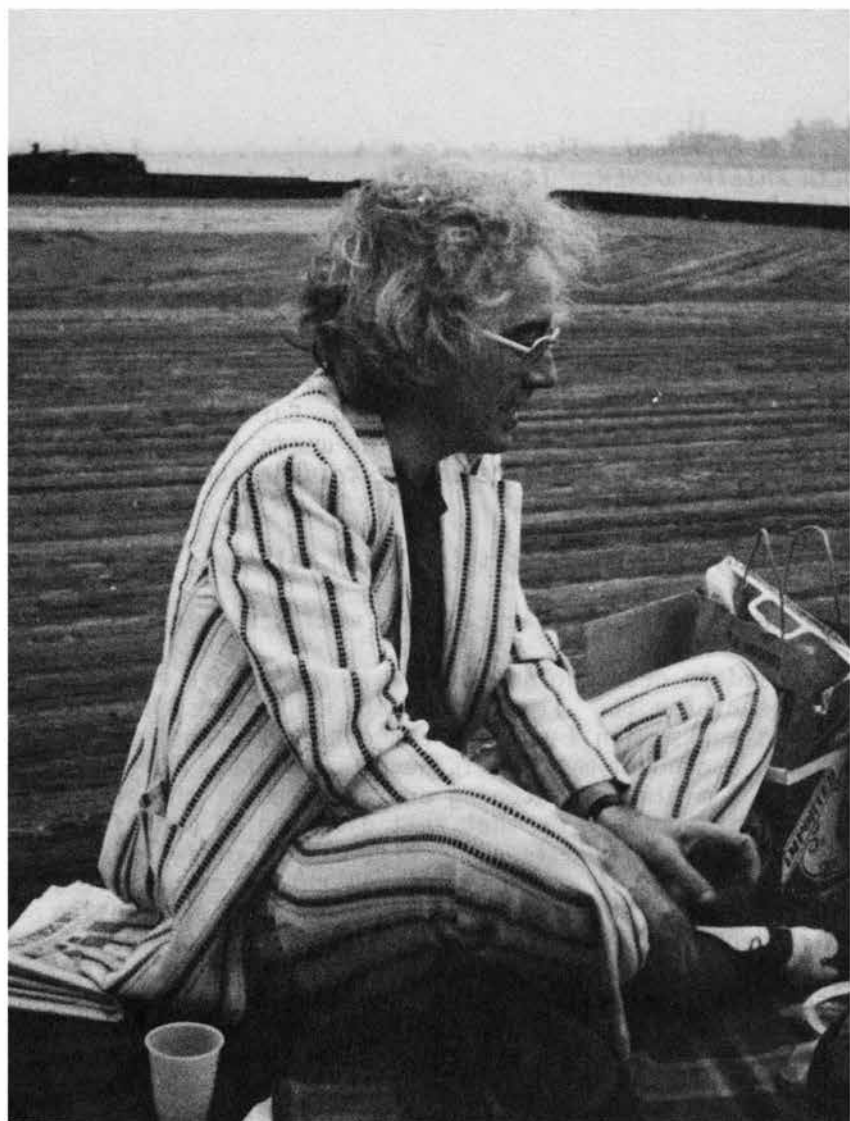
The structure of Music for 18 Musicians is built on a cycle of 11 chords which are played as a sort of pulsing cantus at the beginning and end of the piece. This cycle of 11 chords serves as a sort of cantus firmus for the entire piece. Each section of the piece takes one chord after the other and stretches it out for 3-4 minutes as the harmonic center for that section, much as a single tone in the plain chant cantus of a Prestin 4 part organum will serve as the tonal center for part of the work.

Transitions from section to section, as well as changes within sections are made by audible cues throughout the piece played by the metallophone, whose only function is to give cues. This is similar in function, though not in sound, to the audible cues given by a drummer in a Balinese Gamelan for changes of tempo or pattern, and to the audible cues given by a master drummer in a West African ensemble for changes in the music. Audible cues are in contrast to the western practice of having a non-performing conductor giving visual cues. Audible cues become part of the music and allow all musicians to keep listening.

Steve Reich - 1976

Robert Ashley





ASHLEY

Who have you seen in New York?

*I first ran into CAGE. I had his Bank Street address. It was very nice, and you know, very busy. And so we talked shortly and arranged a date for next week.*

He's just a wonderful person.

*Ya, and charming. Then ah, then PHILIP CORNER. I talked with PHILIP CORNER. It was really good, too. Um, he talked so fast I just couldn't understand. He talked like a motor. He was very profound.*

*And then, oh ya, the KITCHEN. There were people from the KITCHEN. And I talked to JIM BURTON. Then I phoned up STEVE REICH, and he said that he doesn't believe in interviews, because he doesn't believe that what you say first is what you really want to say. But he played his new piece anyway and during that he wrote something for me. At JIM BURTON's yesterday he told me about your concert with conversations.*

Recently I've been doing things with talking.

*That could be quite inspiring for what I'm doing now.*

It's hard to describe sometimes. I don't have a formula for describing it. It started with my interest in the way my mind works when I go to a concert. It seemed to me that in a concert my mind is never completely tuned to the music. I'm always listening and thinking at the same time. It seemed to me that that division of myself and the imagery involved is an important part of my culture. It's the way music works for me. I rarely experience a kind of intoxication with music, in the sense of losing your identity in the music. I don't experience that.

Also, I got interested in the idea that often there were negative feelings from the audience that could be ascribed to the music or to the musical situation that the composer had made -- we've had this experience since "Sacre du Printemps"-- but that I thought might be negative feelings that come from bringing a group of "negative" people together. I mean, if people go into a musical situation and resist that situation, maybe it's because the music opens up certain channels of feeling and the sickness of

the people is expressed in those feelings.

I became aware of how much I was interested in my own self-consciousness. I wanted to welcome that self-consciousness and work with it in order to see through the illusions that were sustaining it.

Most of my music has not been of the kind that makes people comfortable. I haven't meant it to be that way, but that's the way it's come out. My music has always made people self-conscious. People have told me it's an experience they're afraid of. Not that the music made them afraid, but they were afraid of being in that situation of self-consciousness.

*Like in which pieces ?*

Like the piece you heard in Bremen (Musica Nova Festival, May, 1972: "IN SARA, MENCKEN, CHRIST AND BEETHOVEN THERE WERE MEN AND WOMEN")

*A single-minded kind of structure.*

That was a "single-minded" kind of structure, yes. But it could happen with other kinds of structures. It could happen with the most "diverse" kind of structure, too. The structure is not the cause. The cause is the self-consciousness in the listener. I don't think the self-consciousness is "bad". If my culture keeps tending to more and more self-consciousness, that will be the basis for a new understanding of music or a new understanding of why you go to listen to music.

I began being interested in a personal sense of how that self-consciousness works and how it manifests itself from moment to moment. I feel that there must be some sort of similarity or simultaneity between the way the music proceeded and the way the self-consciousness proceeded in the audience. Otherwise, it would never have occurred to me to do that music. I got the idea from the culture. The music came out of the culture. I assume that whoever came to hear the music must be having similar feelings and having them simultaneously with the music.

I began thinking of kinds of music that would be transparent to be self-consciousness.

For one thing, I started working with the notion of coincidences. The illusion of coincidence is a peculiar kind of illusion. It's an illusion that has to do with your self-consciousness. I started working with coincidences in a minute sense -- parts of a second. I'd been thinking about those ideas then recently I've had the help of another composer, PAUL DeMARINIS, who has designed some electronic circuits that make it possible for me to realize them. The music you heard in Bremen, "IN SARA, MENCKEN, CHRIST AND BEETHOVEN THERE WERE MEN AND WOMEN", used some of the techniques that came out of the work I've been doing with coincidences.

The piece JIM BURTON was talking about uses self-consciousness in another aspect. (The performance at the KITCHEN was entitled, "YOUR MOVE, I THINK".) That performance was arranged so that the audience could OBSERVE three people talking together, in the way that we try anthropologically to observe humans in their natural behavior. It's a difficult thing to do, (and difficult to perform in), and I think it's only possible in special situations like the KITCHEN provides (and with performers like the two extraordinary people who helped me, ANNE WEHRER and KATHY BEE- LER.) The idea was just to give the audience the privileges of consciousness that the "eaves-dropper" has. It's a lighthearted piece. But it was a piece FOR an audience, not SHARED with the audience in the way the more recent pieces are.

During any conversation -- like the one we are having now, but it would be particularly more obvious if you could detach yourself from the immediacy of what's being said; for instance, if I were insane -- there's always imagery in your mind that is only remotely connected to what's being said. But you allow the conversation to dominate that imagery. In that sense, conversation is like the consciousness agreements that characterize western music; the audience submits its consciousness and the composer dominates it for a while. The white man's burden. I hoped I could get away from that ideal in myself as a composer and get away from depending on that as THE condition of music.

"YOUR MOVE, I THINK" was one attempt. The eaves-dropper doesn't give up her self-consciousness.

There is another version of the work with self-consciousness that I have done a number of times with MIMI JOHNSON. Only two people are talking and they "share" the imagery with the audience. As a musical composition it's a very simple process. We talk only at the same time, and we pause at the same time. The starts and stops don't come for grammatical reasons. In fact, I don't know where they come from. Sentences are broken up and left uncompleted. Thoughts are only half-spoken. It's a different kind of conversation. The result is a kind of imagery that seems to be generated "in the room" that has nothing to do with what's being said. The imagery definitely exists in the performer's mind, but it is difficult for me as a performer to know whether the imagery (the "idea") is mine, or whether it comes from another source. I believe that it is a collective imagery, that it is the imagery of the audience and the performers together, and that the performers and the audience are having the same "ideas" simultaneously. It's a very peculiar feeling.

*I should try that once.*

I did a "remote" version of that piece this year for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company: we phoned in our conversation during the performance.

*I read about that, that you were talking in another room and playing the conversation on the stage. And so the dancer had to react to it.*

The music was just THERE. You know, the Cunningham dances. The company dances and you make music. There's no planned connection.

*I see it's a real problem improvising conversations. If you want to ..... like you. I want to just have a real impression of you, because I don't know what's behind your pieces, or what the thoughts behind your pieces are. So, what's the best way to just let you complete yourself in the conversation? I think that would be just a kind of one-sided conversation, where one asks questions and the other just answers. Where the asking person just like is*

*outside of the whole thing. And I don't know whether this is any good.*

I think it's easier to do it publicly. Then you can stand outside of it. You don't have to see yourself so much. But, you know, if you record conversations with fifty composers in the United States, about their ideas, and if you get into each conversation deeply, then at the end, you'll have one about me and one about Steve and one about Jim Burton, and so on. But you'll have fifty about yourself!

*So you told me now about your project of interviewing and making films during interviews of these persons. Could you explain some of your techniques?*

You mean my plan to document the eight composers on video tape. My idea is to get as entangled with the person I'm interviewing as I can. I'm going to do two hours of video tape about each of the eight composers. One hour will be about the composer's work, a color video tape about the preparation and performance of a recent work. The other hour will be about the person himself or herself, talking with me about his or her ideas. These composers are all my good friends, and I want to talk in a way that it's easy to do when you have just met somebody. In order to make that feeling possible, the interviews will be done in rather unusual settings. So that we can't come prepared. It should be as easy as we are talking now.

*I've felt that for me there are really different stages of inspiration coming out of myself. I always feel after an interview that I've acted just like a mirror, in the degree of inspiration that I can give. Some people talk and really inspire me into thinking and getting new ideas about the next question. Or, with others it can just fade out into a kind of formal, and uninteresting thing. What makes me happiest is when the interchange gets so interesting that the people become very original and themselves.*

I understand. If you let yourself get caught in that illusion of your obligation to the other person, and if the other person is tired or scared or unresponsive or whatever, then you catch yourself always observing the other person. But if you could get around that illusion and if I were unresponsive, you could just talk for the whole time,

and that could be as original and as full of insights as if we had known each other for years.

*The funny thing about our conversation is we're not talking about ourselves, but we're conversing about our present conversation. And so I think it's another aspect where you can become original, forgetting yourself within a conversation as completely as possible.*

If you are talking about conversation as we are having right now, then I agree with you. But I was talking about the performance that JIM BURTON saw and about the way I intend to do the video tapes. In the piece that JIM BURTON saw or in the piece I do with MIMI JOHNSON or in the video tapes I'm not concerned at all with originality or with whether I am interesting or whether the other people who are talking are interesting. In fact, sometimes the more interesting the person talking is, the harder it is and the longer it takes to realize that you are actually thinking a thought that has nothing to do with their being interesting. I mean, as a member of the audience you are thinking a thought that is only coincidental or simultaneous with what they are doing. It's not caused by what they are doing or saying. And you can't be sure ever about whether they made the thought or whether you made it. There's always an ocean of imagery that's floating around in the room among everybody.

*So this is a kind of a getting more clarity about your illusions, just saying, "Oh gosh, I projected again," and saying, "Now, no, I'm not going to do that the next time." It's like discovering all your personal illusions in seeing what it is that you now project, or you would like him to say something which you really want to say. It's very good to stage things like that.*

It's very simple. When the performers get used to it, when they understand how much power they have in that situation, it doesn't take any skill at all. All you have to do as a performer is know what you're looking for. Once you know what you're looking for, you discover it's all over the place. It's just there, you know. And what we are doing as performers -- what the piece is about -- is to point out the moments as they pass.

It's as if the performers were psychic perceivers. If

ASHLEY

they could see manifestations of ghosts, they would be able to point out those manifestations to the audience as they occurred. But that's a special case. Ghosts have spacial or physical realities. What I'm talking about are temporal realities.

I think it's difficult for two people to do alone. It's easier with an audience.

What I will do with the video interviews is another version of this process, but changed because the "audience" during the video recording is imaginary.

*So do you point out the moments where one can test his ideas about their existence in the other person?*

Sometimes, when someone tells you an idea, you realize only then how many times you've thought that idea and how little chance you've had to talk about it. So you want to tell all of your anecdotes about that idea.

*To find out if there is any objectivity in your subjective feelings.*

For me it's a way of talking about the composers I will be interviewing and to get around all of the boring habits there are in talking. When someone wants to do an interview with you about your music, usually together you make up questions and answers that have nothing to do with the way you think when you make music --- "technical" questions. I wanted to make up a new way of talking about music --- to talk about the ideas the composer thinks are his or hers.

*Which composers are you going to interview?*

I'll do DAVID BEHRMAN, PHIL GLASS, ALVIN LUCIER, GORDON MUMMA, PAULINE OLIVEROS, ROGER REYNOLDS, TERRY RILEY and LaMONTE YOUNG. They all make a kind of music for which a new kind of consciousness is very important. The music can sustain one moment of consciousness for quite a long time.

*Many people get nervous listening to this music, because they are confronted with themselves, because there is no counterpoint to go to.*



That's right, exactly. It's like being on the desert. You don't have any choices to make.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER

Dear Walter,

The editing took longer than I expected because as it turned out we were performing the ideas we were talking about (...)

It always amazes me when I read a transcript of an interview, because mostly I am under the impression that something has been said that both people understand, and that might make sense to the world at large. ALWAYS it's the opposite.

Anyway, I have put what I thought I was saying and what I intended to say in real English sentences.(...)

Please add at the end of the interview my statement about where the ideas came from. That is important to me. (...)

Sincerely yours,

Robert Ashley

S T A T E M E N T

The ideas involved in the conversation pieces come mainly from MARY ASHLEY, SAM ASHLEY, NICK BERTONI, JOHN CAGE, BARBARA CROUSE, PAUL DeMARINIS, MIMI JOHNSON, GEORGE MANUPELLI, and ANNE WEHRER.

FANCY FREE or IT'S THERE

an obstacle illusion program

(ILLUSION MODEL IV)

The performance version of Illusion Model IV occurred to me because of a long friendship with Alvin Lucier. It resembles his pieces in many ways.

The images are my own, of course.

---

The Illusion Models were conceived as virtually hypothetical installations in which computers would control sound in such a way that certain effects would be created in the perception of the visitor that otherwise are impossible to achieve.

If the obstacle illusion were to be realized as an installation, then obviously the participant would not need to use a prepared text, nor would the feedback game need to be limited to the four durations prescribed here. The installation (computer) could be programmed to analyze speech patterns in any kind and number of groupings, and the option of changing the program of these groupings could be allowed the speaker on a deeper level of game participation.

---

Fancy Free or It's There, a concert version of the obstacle illusion program, uses five performers.

Speaker (male), text options as described.

Four cassette-recorder operators, procedures as described.

Robert Ashley  
December, 1970

INSTRUCTIONS TO PERFORMERS: MALE SPEAKING VOICE

The cassette-machine players will record your speech simultaneously on four tapes, and each of them is obligated to replay various units of the text in which "imperfections" have occurred. Thus, if you stutter or falter (Fancy Free), or if you choose a version of the text that does not conform to the version they are expecting to hear (It's There), one or more of the players will replay that "imperfection" while you are speaking.

You are to repeat the four line statement without regard to the replay interruptions continuously throughout the performance. The performance ends when you have spoken the text from beginning to end without any of it having been replayed.

---

The text of FANCY FREE is for speakers who stutter.

The text of IT'S THERE is for speakers who do not stutter.

Each of the texts is to be delivered in a special way.

---

## FANCY FREE

The enunciation of each word is an act in itself, requiring 7 to 10 seconds of preparation and release and separating each word from the following word by a period of 4 to 8 seconds of silence.

For each word, prepare your mouth (physically) for the opening phoneme. Then gradually and forcefully over a period of 6 to 8 seconds build up a diaphragm tension (pressure) that will be released by speaking the word. The word (as a unit, including the opening phoneme and subsequent syllables) should seem to emanate from the moment of release in a natural manner, as though some objective requirement had been satisfied. The word is not to be spoken as though you were being precise for the listener's sake, and no attempt should be made to separate out or emphasize syllables that follow the opening phoneme.

The result should be a word spoken rather loudly, but intact as a word. It is imperative, moreover, that the word seem spoken, not "shouted". In practice, this means (1) the word will be slightly longer than at lower voice levels, but not protracted, and (2) there should be no distortions of the voice caused by the release of tension.

In the case of words beginning with "f" or "s" or "m" the sound of these phonemes should be heard as part of the preparation of the words.

The combination "greyer than" should be treated as one word.

preparation                      release                      rest  
 (.....increasing tension.....) (word sound) (.....silence.....)

6 to 8 seconds                      1 to 2 sec.                      4 to 8 seconds

INSTRUCTIONS TO PERFORMERS: MALE SPEAKING VOICE (cont.)

IT'S THERE

Speak slowly and deliberately, but without exaggeration.

Alternative versions of lines 1, 3, and 4 are given in parentheses. For each reading of the four-line text you may vary the wording of the text by choosing among the alternatives.

CASSETTE MACHINE OPERATORS

The rule of procedure for all players is as follows:

If the delivery of the unit of text to which you are attentive contains "imperfections" then your recording of that unit of text must be replayed as soon as the unit has been completed, (but not until then!)

Machine 1 - the unit is the syllable

Machine 2 - the unit is the word

Machine 3 - the unit is the line

Machine 4 - the unit is the whole text

All machines record until an "imperfection" occurs; then;

Machine 1 - when the syllable containing that imperfection has been completed, rewind to the beginning of that syllable and immediately play back that syllable; as soon as the playback has been given, (at this point the tape will be blank), push in the "record" button and continue recording until the next imperfection is heard.

Machine 2 - when the word containing that imperfection has been completed, rewind to the beginning of that word, and immediately play back that word; as soon as the playback of the word - as delivered by the speaker - has been given (and regardless of what sounds have been recorded from Machine 1), push in the "record" button and continue recording until the next imperfection is heard.

Machine 3 - as with Machine 2, using the line as the unit.

Machine 4 - as with Machine 2, using the four-line text as the unit.

It is important to be as accurate as possible about rewinding the tape to the right place. Still, because of the cascade arrangement of the recorders, it is equally important that the element of uncertainty in the rewinding not be emphasized by any kind of "searching" for the right place. Each operator should establish for himself through practice with a particular machine the greatest possible accuracy about rewind time.

INSTRUCTIONS TO PERFORMERS: CASSETTE MACHINE OPERATORS (cont.)

## Definition of "IMPERFECTIONS"

FANCY FREE

1. any stuttering or faltering on the part of the speaker.
2. any voice breaking or distortion as a word is enunciated.
3. any interruption of the sound of the reading of the text by a playback sound.

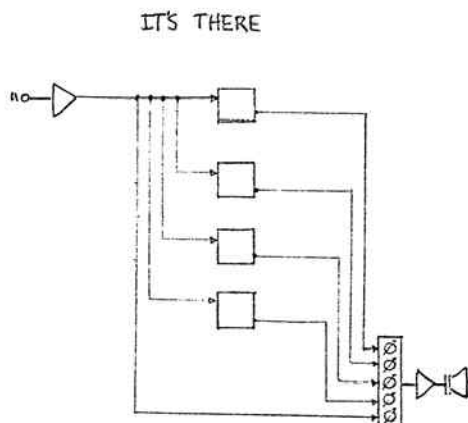
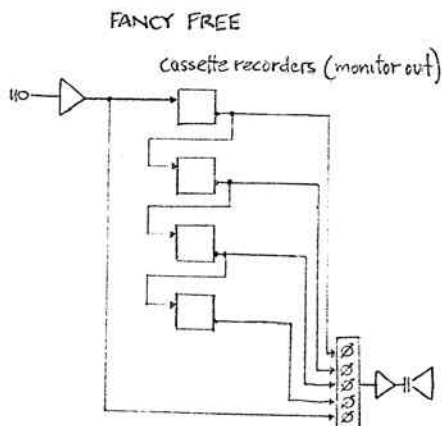
IT'S THERE

Each cassette operator is to predict (privately) which of the set of alternative versions of the text the speaker will read. These predictions may change continually, in the same way that a new choice of alternatives is open to the reader for each reading of the text.

Thus, the first kind of imperfection would be the difference between what you have predicted and what is read. The other kind of imperfection would be the interruption of the reading of the text by a playback sound.

It should be noted, perhaps, that the effect of the imperfection is different for the two texts. In FANCY FREE the fact of the imperfection is the same for all operators, and the effect is cumulative and begins with the machine nearest to the speaker.

In IT'S THERE each operator may have chosen (predicted) a different set of alternative lines. Thus, while the effect is still an accumulation of playbacks, it can originate at any of the machines.



TEXTS:

FANCY FREE

line 1 I AM FANCY FREE  
line 2 UNDER A STARRY SKY  
line 3 GREY GREYER THAN A MOTHER'S CUNT  
line 4 AND BITTERER

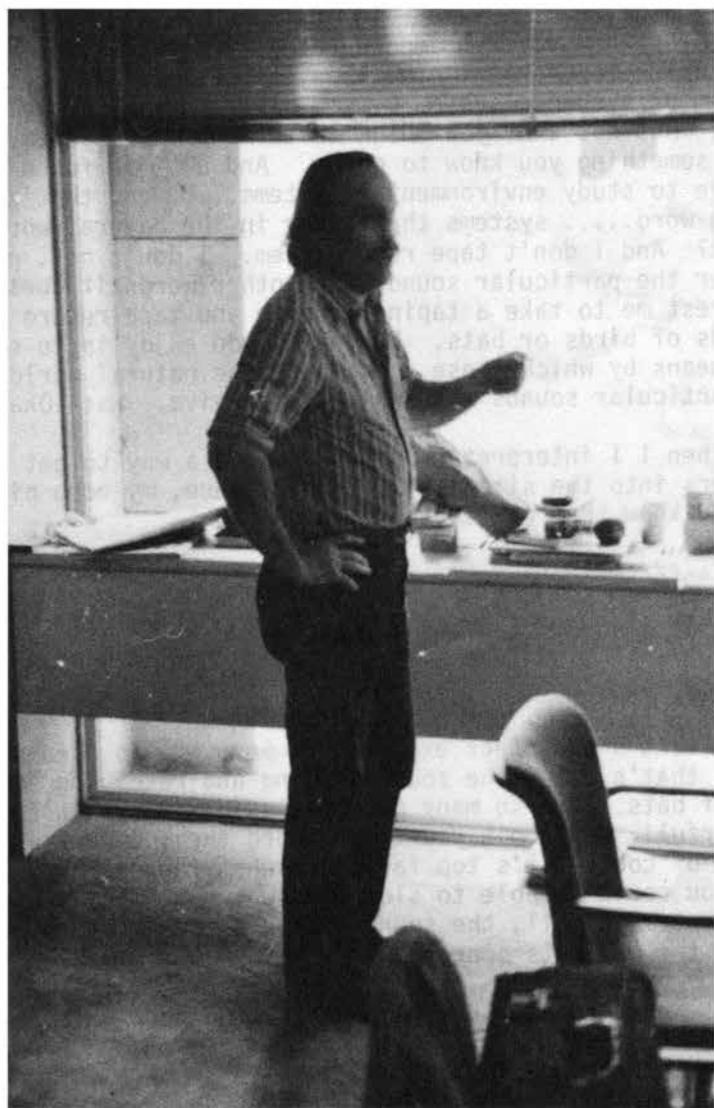
IT'S THERE

line 1 (RECENTLY I'VE FOUND IT)  
(MORE FREQUENTLY NOW I'VE FOUND IT)  
(JUST AFTER WAKING I'VE FOUND IT)  
line 2 IT'S THERE  
line 3 (A HUGE EMPTY ROOM)  
(A HUGE, HUGE EMPTY ROOM)  
line 4 (SOMEHOW I IMAGINED THERE WOULD BE A PARTY GOING ON)  
(I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I IMAGINED THERE WOULD  
BE A PARTY GOING ON)



Alvin Lucier





*So, ah I've read about in SOURCE your piece GENTLE FIRE. You are interested in environmental sounds and you relate technology or electronic media to the environment. So I'm just curious how how um um how you work.*

WELL, you know, every composer needs some kind of a system with which to operate. You know, either you have a tonal system or a chance system or you have a serial system, you know. And not that you THINK in terms of the system, but just something you know to go on. And um I've found that I like to study environmental systems..... and that's the wrong word..... systems that occur in the natural world, right? And I don't tape record them. I don't get, go to gather the particular sounds. In other words it doesn't interest me to take a taping machine and tape record the sounds of birds or bats. But what I do enjoy is to study the means by which these animals or the natural worlds use ah particular sounds with which to survive. ha! Okay?

And then I I interpret those and devise a way to get performers into the situation. For instance, my echo piece. Do you know that piece, the echo?

*I am sitting in ah.....*

No, that piece is spelled V-e-s-p-e-r-s.

*Vespers, ya.*

Yeah, that's a perfect example. I mean that's used in bats, that's using the sound sending and receiving apparatus of bats. And so many people sssaid, "Oh, that's wonderful! Why don't you tape record the sound of bats?" Well, of course it's too far above what the ear can hear. But you could be able to slow it down. But that doesn't interest me at all, the sound of the bats. What interests me is the way bats operate.

*Ah ha, the structuring of communic..., of communication.*

Right, the cccommunication ability. And um it interests me to find out about that because they do it very beautifully. They are experts at that, far beyond us. And I think it's to our interest to learn that. ha.

*So what did you use again in VESPERS to produce that?*

I used a specially designed audio generator called a sondol, s-o-n-d-o-l, which is a device which sends out a pulse, which in a crude way imitates the way a bat ah....

Yeah.

But in imitating the natural, ah the way that the natural world works, you find out about it, and you also connect to it in a beautiful way. You don't exploit it. I would feel that tape recording dolphins or bats or something as somehow exploiting ha their art. I would rather do what they do, on the level that we're able to, you see? That's the difference.

*So so this this kind of, when I remember, VESPERS is a kind of fast interchange or echoing from left to right.*

It's all about echos. It's ah employing echoes to bounce off objects in the environment, to tell you how far away you are from those objects, and to tell you what the quality of those objects are by the echo. And it puts a player or a number or players in a very like different kind of a musical situation, because they have to hear the physical qualities of the sound, not any emotional or anything that suggests anything else to the players. It's the physical quality.

*The distance, or?*

The distance, timbre, created by the echoing effect from an object, right? Now, whatever the audience finds, whatever suggestive poetic qualities that the audience finds, that's another question.

*Did you have other pieces like VESPERS where you were concerned with communication systems of nature?*

Yes. I just did a piece now that uses ah the same kind of thing you hear in I'M SITTING IN A ROOM, that you create ah standing waves by tuning oscillators, pure sounds, in a space. And you can create standing waves which I can predict where they're going to be. And I can design them, right? So that you're able to walk in a space and perceive loud and quiet spots in the space..... a sound geography. I would be able to bring a blind person into a space and be able to guide him across it by tuning the

oscillators to make the valleys, okay?

And I can make that more interesting than that. I mean, I can set up more loudspeakers and change the frequencies, so that those standing waves can spin. I do this piece where they spin. Now, they don't go from a loudspeaker to another loudspeaker. It isn't a scanning. It's not an amplitude scanning. It's untuning the oscillators, so that the lines at which the standing waves occur are always moving.

*Like phase shifting.*

Yes, yeah. So that is kind of this same thing, only.....

*it's orientation in the space you are in.*

Right. And it's not exactly communicated. I mean, it's not one player communicating with another, but it's the player communicating with the acoustics. And also if you had like a dancer and you had another dancer, if one was to move, one could disturb the stability of the standing waves. So that the other one would be able to feel that.. .... in a very kind a delicate..... It's a very delicate piece.

*It ah strengthens or sensitives the awareness of a human being moving in an environment.*

Yeah, it's like amplifying it. It's like standing in a pool of water, and if you move a little bit, you create the ah.....

Yeah.

I'm doing a NEW piece, which I haven't even done yet, which I haven't really played yet. And I'm going to play it up in Albany when I go. Which has to do with defr.... when sound defracts around an object. Ha! You see, I'm interested in very simple things. That's a very simple thing. But composers haven't been able to, so far I think, been able to employ that. It's very hard for somebody to hear that. It's a small phenomenon. But I've found by choosing pure sounds of certain particular frequencies, the length of which, the wave lengths of the you know frequency, I've found ways to find optimum frequencies to

diffract around objects. If you have another person in front of the loud..... in front of the sound, I am able to measure the body of that person. heh heh ha

*And this defines the spectrum?*

This defines what particular fff, yeah, what the sounds would be.

*How do you do it technically?*

I use pure oscillator sounds. And I am able to measure the particular width of the object. And then I choose a frequency, the length of which, the wave length of which will diffract around it. For example, you have a head that has so many inches across. If I play like a low note, the wave length of that sound is too big to make any particular difference. It just goes right around. The fact that you're standing there doesn't have anything, doesn't disturb that.

However, if I choose a pitch the wave length of which is about a half as big as the width of your particular head, then the wave length bounces around your head. And that's audible.

So, I'm making a piece where I use like a single particular object. I don't know exactly how the piece is gonna work yet, but I'm gonna use an object that stays there, that stays particularly still. Okay?

*hm hm*

I have sound behind it. I take a microphone and scan up and down in the front. I have to move it. So, the microphone picks up the diffraction of sound as it bounces around from the object. If I have an object that doesn't stay there still, if I have somebody that's able to move in front of a sound, I need a single mike. So that when the object passes, you see, as the sound goes around, the microphone is able to pick it up.

So my problem is to stage that in a very lovely way, and to make it so that the audience hears that. That's all it is, that's all it is.

*What's the title of the piece?*

Well, I think ah, I'm just in the midst of composing it. And It's gonna be called O-U-T-L-I-N-E-S.

*OUTLINES, ya. I know another piece, I AM SITTING IN A ROOM, where I really like this kind of changing, ah the recognition of the speech towards the recognition of the environment you're in. So it seems to be like a ah red thread going through your pieces, this being very interested in the environment and the situation of the person in it.*

In speech though, you know I'm interested in speech, and I've done a couple of pieces that use speech. Because I do have a problem with my speech, and I'M SITTING IN A ROOM is as much a piece about speech in a way as it is about environment. And I'm interested in going along, going on with that. And I'm thinking of doing some poetic pieces where I would talk. You see, when you have a speech problem like I do, and you're going to stutter..... You know that word?..... you're going to stutter, on say an "S" or an "L" or a particular sound, one thing you do is substitute. And you change to another word.

*Ya, I've I've ah just seen that, ya.*

And that's in, that's fun. I mean that's, when you do that, the other word that you don't find has to be ah, what word you choose to substitute has to be a very interesting connection. Because it has to be the same kind of word. It has to mean the same.

*A kind of synonym.*

Yeah, synonym. But when you stutter, you scan the language. You're scanning your past. Because why you stutter on a word must be a reason, the anxiousness, the anxiety of that, ah I don't understand. And it must have to do with the sound. And that sound must have to do with an association. I don't understand it. So when you stutter on a word when you're very small, there's probably a reason. There's an anxiousness that you have. Then when you really become a stutterer, the anxiousness gets ah generalized. ha ha.

So when you change from a word to another, it's as if you're scanning the language for all the associations that you've ever had. So I'm trying to make a poetry that would be a kind of oral poetry, where I would speak, and the choice of the words that I would make would have something to do with that. Sort of an etymological test.

*Which experiences did you have performing I'M SITTING IN A ROOM ?*

Well, I never performed that much. We've done a lot of files. Now did BOB ASHLEY..... because you've been talking about BOB, and BOB and I are very close in our ideas, and we're good friends..... When he lived in Ann Arbor, the ONCE GROUP made a series of films, and I was, I was in the films. ha haah..... And the idea was that I would talk in these films. I would just improvise, and just talk.

This was an experience that got me interested in all of this. Because before that I didn't want anyone to know that I had this speech impediment. I wanted to hide it. It's not fun to, you know, it's like having a leg that doesn't want to work. You don't want people, you know, to talk about it.

And when we did these films, it opened me up to the possibility that there was a performance kind of thing. I had kind of a SKILL haha! in speech that other people do not have.

*And you just used that.*

I used that just in a very open ah.....

*The sounds coming out through the playback and the playback of the playback and so on, until melodies are formed through the overtones.*

Well, my other pieces are sort of like that. They are very small, they pay attention to very small things. Although I'm not sure SITTING IN A ROOM does.

*So, GENTLE FIRE is now just a conception you say?*

I want to do that piece, but I never have had the time. ha.

*But you wouldn't have done it with a recording of the natural sounds?*

Yes, I would have. Yes, I would have. That is one piece that I would have.

*What would have been the process of changing into another sonic quality..... like ah rustling leaves into roaring rivers?*

Well, that piece GENTLE FIRE was supposed to be made for two performers who were good at synthesizers. You know, in America here we have all these portable synthesizers, the Moog, the Arp, um you know. And I've never been very interested in employing them. I've never liked what synthesizers do.

*Ya, they are not very adaptable.*

Yeah, I don't like them. But ah I thought if through one of these wonderful players, who can do anything with the synthesizer.....

Oh, the other thing was I don't like the particular sounds that come out of the synthesizer. But I do like when you put some other sound INTO a synthesizer. If you are able to process some other sound..... Because a filter is a filter. And it doesn't matter whether it's in the synthesizer or not. So I wanted to make a piece where performers who can really play synthesizers would have a gigantic task..... to take an original sound from the street or from the natural world, and then by putting it through parts of the synthesizers, like the filters, voltage control, amplifiers, could process them to sound like other sounds. I could imagine somebody doing that.

*It involves the listener very much in recognition of qualities, and where the limit is. The idea sounds very exciting.*

What I would need is a very good..... I need several people who really want to do that.

*You were the editor of the SOURCE, Number 10. There I see some other conceptions, like the Que... The Duke of York or the Queen of the South. Could you just explain the idea?*



Well, the DUKE OF YORK was rather similar to the GENTLE FIRE, in the sense that I was thinking of oh Lord, I was thinking of making a composite identity out of partial identities. haha! That's hard to explain. Um, I was thinking that in a person's mind the identity the person might have is like an ideal, a composite of a lot of different human beings that he or she thinks about. And I was thinking that with electronics you could make a piece where two or more palyers could connect with one another by one player making a series of utteren..... or particular sounds, and the other player trying to make them sound like other people, to build up a composite. It's very ah hard to explain.

Once you decided to make a change..... Say, I say something. You alter that in the electronics, and you make it sound like something else, like some quality of a voice that you know from another person. Then I say something else. You make a change on that change, but you have to keep that original one. So you keep building up personal-ity upon personality.

*Like the composites of one sound.*

Right. You know the police department when they draw like a criminal. They don't know who the criminal is. In America anyway. I'm sure they have it in Germany. They have a series of the particular chins. And they'll say to you, "Is it this kind of chin?" And you'll say, "No, that's not what he looked like." You finally, you say, "That chin maybe." "Okay, how about the mouth? Is this the mouth?" "No." Finally you build up a face from all the possible. This does happen in terms of speech. And it's very complicated, the connection that the players have with one another.

*Va, ya. So, what do you think basically that the electronic media could help generally to relate the person to environments, to make him more aware, more sensitive?*

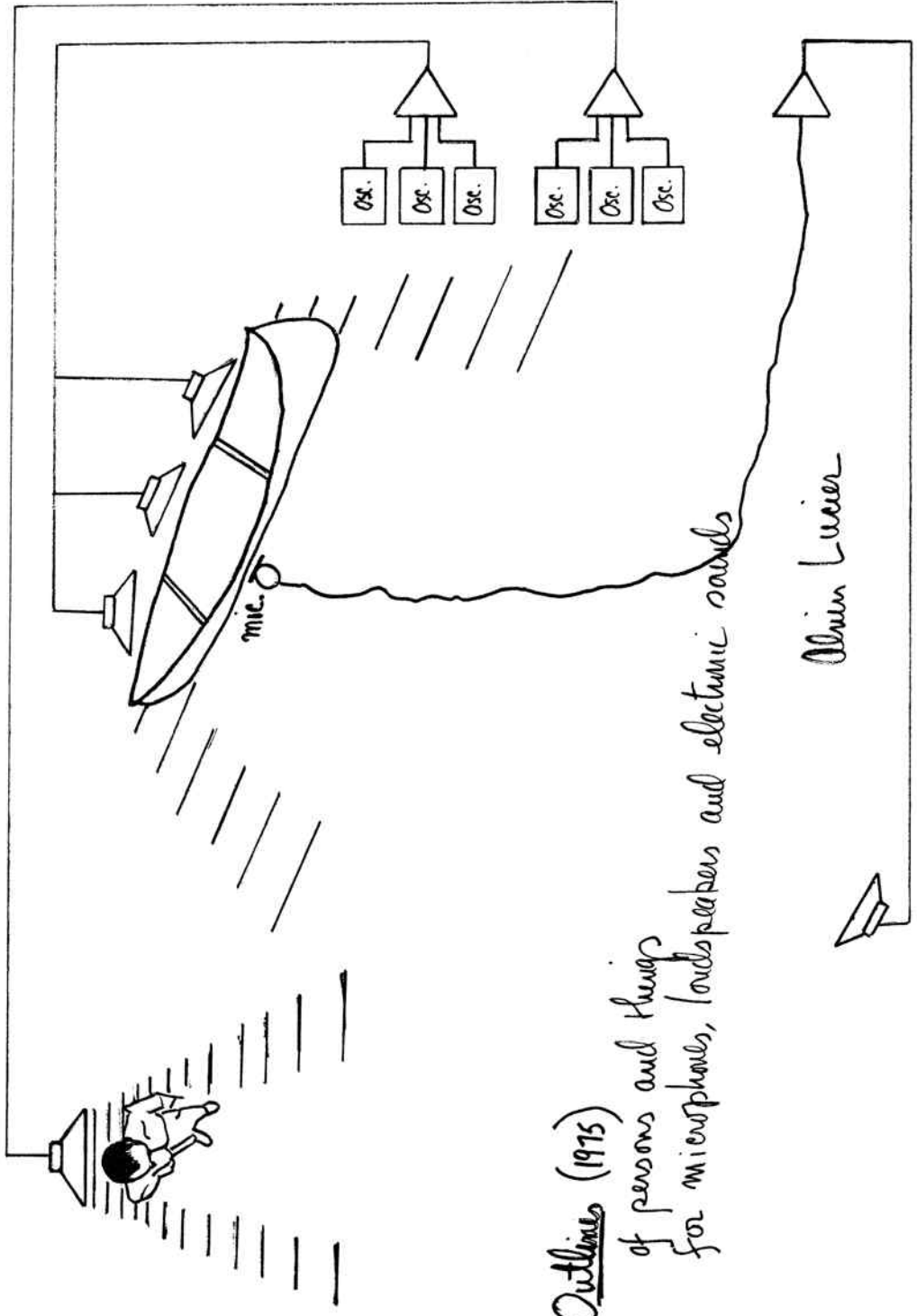
Well, we have to do that. Because most of our speech is through the media anyway. I mean the phone calls, where you're talking to one another over the phone all the time. You're tape recording my voice. I mean so often you connect with me in a media way. You have a tape recorder. You have a camera. We've talked on the phone. So it's

LUCIER

part of us. There's no way of getting around that. And as an artist I find it interesting material.

*I mean, what distinguishes you from some others is just that you use it very much in a personal way I would say.*

Yes, exactly. Oh yes, ya. Well, I think that's ah good art. hahaha hahaha



Outline (1975)

of persons and things  
for microphones, loudspeakers and electronic sounds

Alvin Lucier



Joan La Barbara



LA BARBARA

*So, I was yesterday at LUCIER, and he told me that you were concerned with one of his pieces.*

hm hm

*Um which one?*

It was STILL & MOVING LINES OF SILENCE IN FAMILIES OF HYPERBOLAS

He didn't give you the spellings? Well, I can give you that later. Um it has to do with the acoustical phenomenon of beating. You know, when you have two pitches that are very close together, they beat against one another. And he can probably explain to you much better the technical reasons for this happening. But the idea with the piece was um that he would give me pure oscillator-produced pitches from one or up to four speakers. And I would by singing very closely in tune with those oscillators ah try to find my acoustical center of the space that we were performing in. And then from there he would give me additional pitches, and I would improvise (finger tapping) beating against those pitches and creating additional tones that result from two pitches being played.

*Va, so in Middletown you had another concert?*

Yeah, I gave a solo concert.

*It was called VOICE, THE ORIGINAL INSTRUMENT. How did you get this title? Could you just talk a little about your voice technique?*

Yeah, it um, it comes I suppose from having studied as a classical singer and from being regarded by musicians as not being a musician. You know, it's probably something you're quite accustomed to. You know musicians refer to each other as musicians, and singers are referred to as singers. And I believe that the voice is an instrument, and that actually many if not all instruments were created in imitation of the voice.

Before we had language we had the opportunity to have hand signals, I suppose, sign language and picture signs and some sort of vocalizing in order to communicate with each

other. So what I'm trying to do with a number of the pieces that I do is to get back to that original use of the voice, that that use of the voice without words to express feelings, emotions, to work to get very interior things out. You know, there are some things that you can't express in words, or you have the feeling that you can't express them in words. And I'm trying to I suppose develop a new kind of language with this. And so I've tried to devise different situations that I can place myself in to not bypass the brain, but to not use intellect to make a sound. But rather to use another sense.

One of the things I do is an experiment. I tape my eyes shut for an hour before the performance. And I have a series of six or seven glass dishes that I put on a table. And whoever it is that's assisting me in the performance puts different items in each dish. And my only stipulations are that they shouldn't be bugs, it shouldn't be anything that crawls, and it shouldn't be anything that injures me. I'm not into pain. ha.

And what I do then is I try to come out into the situation. And I spend that hour in isolation, because I think your attitude when you're by yourself is very different... I mean your attitude when you're by yourself is very different than your attitude when you're in front of an audience. And I try to heighten my emotional state that way, by not really preparing myself for an audience, by preparing myself for a very solitary experience. And using this visual block as a sensory deprivation I come out and I touch the items in the dish. And I'll try to just give an immediate vocal response to that. And the idea is to surprise myself as well as the audience with the sounds. Because I'm looking for new ways to find new sounds.

Va.

And another of the things that I have done is worked with poets, where they will read their works and I will try to create a fabric of sound behind them that is my reaction to their words.

*Prime reaction to all these.....*

Yes, to their words, to what their images are creating.

And one of the things that I've found when I was doing that..... A poet named ARMAND SCHWERNER was reading some Tibetan scriptures. And as he read, one of the vocal reactions that were made was an octave split. That I learned later, but I haven't heard it yet. But I learned it's done by the Tibetan monks.

*Va, that belongs now to your miltiphonic singing.*

Yes, right.

*You should explain the technique too a little bit, how to produce that.*

Well what I do, basically..... The reason that I brought this up at this point was that it was a sound that came out, and I try to learn things from my voice. You know, instead of trying to direct the voice I try to let the voice direct me. And one of the places it led me to was this multiphonic singing. And once I have that sound either on tape or just to remember, then I can work out how to produce it.

Now, the multiphonic octave singing. There are two ranges that I work in. The one that I can best control is the lower range. And I'll work in like a middle range of my voice and make one tone and sort of pull back on it a little bit. It's its using the split. You know, sometimes if you yell, you voice will crack. Right?

*Va.*

Well, it's learning how to make that sound on cue instead of just by happening. Sometimes ah I can also do it in an upper range, but I can't control the additional note. I can split the tone, but I can't always say it's going to be an octave above or a fifth above or whatever. But with the lower ones I can.

And one of the other pieces that I do on this solo concert is called VOICE PIECE: ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION. And I'll choose one pitch that's comfortable, that I can move most easily. And by thinking different resonance areas within my head and neck and chest, I can make the tones sound very different. And eventually I get to this split procedure. And I start with the octave, and



the longer I use that it becomes an octave and a fifth. It breaks up into a three note chord instead of just a two note.

*And how do you produce it? You said you learned it from the Tibetan monks?*

Well I didn't learn it from the Tibetan monks, no. I wish I had, because it probably would have been a lot easier. Most of the things that I've learned have been through explorations and improvisation.

*So, to understand you right, you just develop your own vocabulary, first in primary reactions to events. From there you get empiric insights. And then you train yourself.*

I train myself to produce those sounds. So that I can THEN use them in pieces. I mean, there are two kinds of pieces. There are the pieces that you do spontaneously, in front of an audience.

*And are these techniques of production concerned with emotional states?*

uuuuuuuuuuha (deep sighing) I would say that sometimes the improvisations have to do with emotional states. Um, once I have the vocabulary, I don't need to recreate the emotional state in order to recreate the sound.

*Ya, right, I understand. But do you recognize your reaction to sound if you listen to yourself again on tape or what? I think the context of voice production and emotion is very interesting.*

Yeah, sometimes, if I'm listening, for instance these video tapes that I was editing last night, I put myself in a situation and one of them..... It was up in Vermont, and I was working with the natural setting..... And it happened that there were hunters shooting in the background. And my reaction, I didn't think about it ahead of time, was just when I heard the gun shots, I reacted as if I were an animal. And this was danger. And now, when I look at those tapes again, I can appreciate the sounds, but I also relive the emotion.

*So it's more an emotional state than a kind of meditative state?*

It depends on what the piece is. Now that one was not meditative. The ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION is. I remain very still when I'm singing, because it takes all my mental activity to direct the sound where I want it to go.

*Are there other experiences that you've had?*

Well, I'm also working with a dancer. And I'm trying to move more and to let the movement inspire a sound. And to work sort of circular fashion in um that I'll use the energy that I get from producing sound to inspire me to a movement. And also, you know that physical reaction and letting some physical motion direct the sound.

*Va, SO to really integrate the whole person into the piece.*

Yeah, to use as many different parts of me that I possibly can.

*Actually from where did your interest in this kind of technique grow? Did you study nonwestern cultures of singing?*

No, my training was basic western classical opera. hahaha And I just decided that I was going through the motions. I wasn't getting anything out of singing it. You know, because all of the questions were already answered. And I wanted to find something where I could answer some questions, you know? Where I could be put into a situation. Like LUCIER did. He explained the phenomenon that he was interested in and placed me in this situation. But then he let me go, you know, with that. And that's very exciting to me. I like to be able to develop a piece with a composer and myself.

*Actually how do you initiate a multiphonic?*

I can do it for you right now.

Joan demonstrates a multiphonic sound: 23 seconds.

Um, now what I was doing there was going back and forth. I would sing the original pitch and go below it. And also, it's a physical sensation. It's not something that you can actually describe how to do, although I met a singer, a wonderful commercial singer in New York a few days ago, and ah was talking to her about this. And I sang it for her. And she could do it. She just listened. But she was so in tune with her own physical voice, you know, that she could hear it and she could do it. Now whether she could do it again, I don't know. Sometimes you can do it like that right away, and then you have to go through a mental process to try to figure out how.

*Does it have limits of dynamic and limits of range?*

It does have limits of dynamics because when you're producing it, you're not pushing out so much. Most of pitched singing, single-pitched singing, you're directing all of your sound and air flow out. And with this you're not directing out so much as in. You create the initial sound which is going out. And then you sort of back up on it a little bit. I can actually feel it sort of dropping. And it has to be amplified.

*What I've just heard now is a kind of a balancing act.*

Yes, ya. And the longer you do it, the better you're able to balance it and control it. At first it sort of does what it wants to.....

*Besides multiphonics are you doing overtone singing?*

Now that's a different procedure. Producing the overtones is more a matter of um mouth position. Different vowels and placement in a particular area create different overtones.

Joan vocalizes C sharp and its series of overtones:  
ca. 20 seconds.

*FANTASTIC! ..... Could you repeat it again?*

Oooh sure, hah.

## VOICE PIECE: ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION

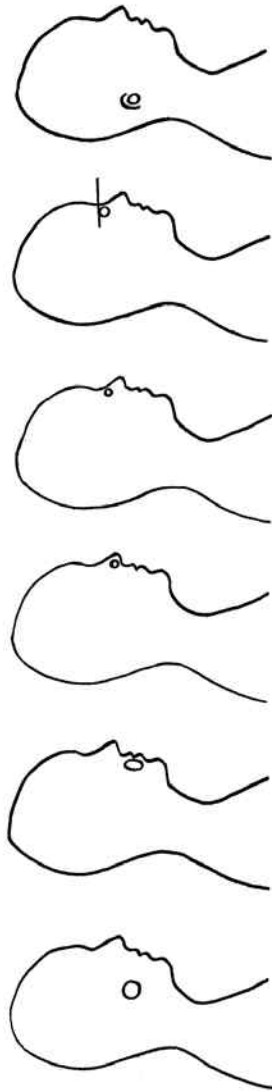
### Part I Resonance Area Identification and Placement of Sound.

The following are descriptions of resonance areas, placed in a specific order for performance, with drawings indicating exact placement of sound. The vocalist should think of the sound as a solid object — a ball — and imagine that ball in each indicated area before activating the sound producing mechanism. I recommend closing the eyes during performance and when initially locating specific resonance areas since one is able to focus sound more accurately when not visually distracted and fine tuning of pitch and placement is more precise. Vocalist should choose a comfortable pitch which can be placed in the maximum number of resonance areas. Always think the sound in a specific place before starting each sound. Each area should be identified individually for the length of a short breath. Silent spaces in between sounds allow time for the vocalist to concentrate mentally on the next area while replenishing air supply. The vocalist should not use vibrato at any time. The sound is to be clear, clean and specific.

The piece begins when the vocalist announces:

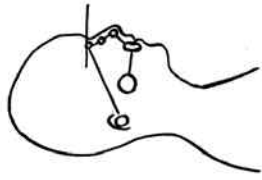
"THIS IS A ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION."

lips closed:



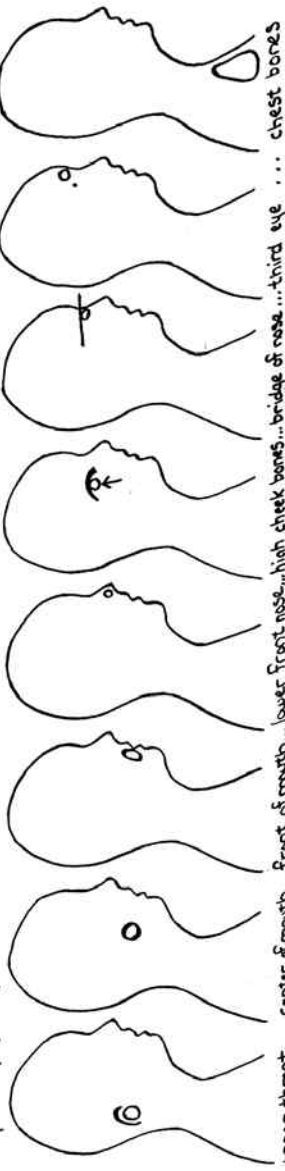
center of mouth ... front of mouth ... lower front nose ... center of nose ... upper throat (gawn)

Keeping the same order repeat these six sounds in a series, i.e. pace the air supply in one long breath so that time can be spent in each of these six resonance areas. The series should be treated as a phrase. Lips remain closed.



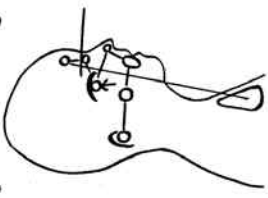
- Series :
- center of mouth
  - front of mouth just behind lips
  - lower front nose
  - center of nose
  - bridge of nose
  - upper throat (yawn)

open lips, separate sounds :



upper throat ... center of mouth ... front of mouth ... lower front nose ... high cheek bones ... bridge of nose ... third eye ... chest bones (lift cheeks)

Keeping same order, repeat these sounds in series :



open lips, separate sounds:



high cheek bones



lower throat  
front



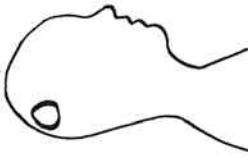
lower throat  
back

repeat these in series (Figure A):



NOTE: VOCALIST MAY  
CHOOSE TO EXTEND  
THIS SERIES BY  
RETURNING TO  
STARTING AREA.  
(Figure B)

open lips, separate sounds:



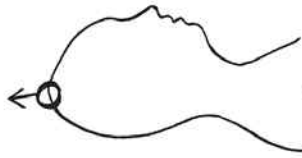
back of skull  
(inside)



eyebrow region



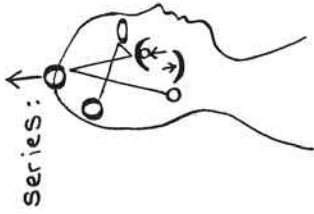
high cheek bones



top of skull  
(and beyond  
physical barrier)



back of mouth  
(drop tongue)



split tone / octave:



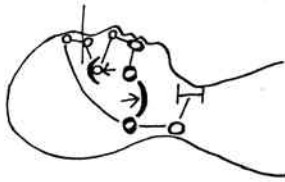
Note: Split tones are produced by focusing attention on front throat, starting the sound there and then thinking it smaller. By continuing to relay the throat and letting the sound drop it will produce additional "undertones" — tones below the original sung tone; octave, octave + fifth, ninth, seventh and others.

## Part II Series Lists

The vocalist may choose from the following series or resonance area runs, repeating sections that respond well to a particular environment. Vocalist may create new series and include them in this section. Series may be done in any order.

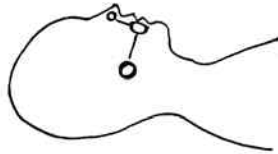
### Series 1

center mouth  
front of mouth  
lower front nose  
high cheek bones  
bridge of nose  
third eye  
back of mouth  
back of neck  
split



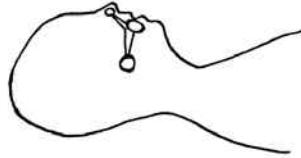
### Series 2

center mouth  
front of mouth  
lower front nose



### Series 2.0

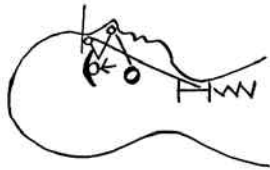
center mouth  
front of mouth  
lower front nose  
front of mouth  
center mouth





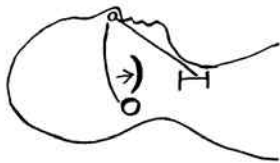
### Series 3

center mouth  
front nose  
high cheeks  
bridge of nose  
split



### Series 4

back of mouth  
lower front nose  
outward split  
(kissing nose resonance  
feeling)

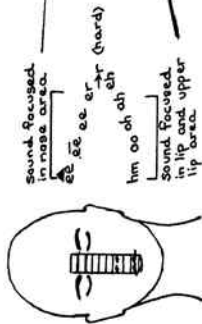


## Overtone Series

To produce overtones the sound should be focused in a narrow vertical band in the center of the face (the area from the lips to the third eye). Both the shape of the mouth and the specific resonance area affect and reinforce the overtone. One depends heavily on the ears for fine tuning. The sound moves in clearly sensible steps. The overtones can float or glide from one to the next or can be moved in stepwise fashion. The drawings below indicate the area for sound placement in order to produce most clearly audible overtones or upper partials.



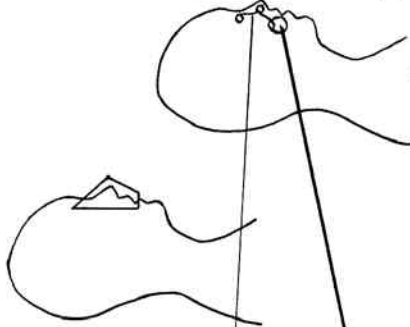
for mouth area focused syllables  
— hm oo ah — think of the sound coming through a hollow tube formed inside the mouth and ending in front of the face just beyond lips.



Sound focused  
in nose area.

ee ee ee er (hard)  
hm oo ah ah

Sound focused  
in lip and upper  
lip area.



by lifting cheeks as high as possible and forcing the hard  $\text{ee}$  into a tiny space between the eyes at very top of nose, piercingly bright high overtones are produced that buzz in the nose bones and spin very rapidly around in concert room.

Pauline Oliveros



*So how did you sleep this night in the tent?*

Eh hahaha, well we were we were sleeping fine. It was beautiful. You know, it was a beautiful night, and I was just snoring, beginning to snore when ah the flashlight in the face. And ah so the police came, "Put your clothes on and come out!" hahaha umhaumahha. So that it turned out that, the problem was that the proper authority had not been notified. See?

*I see.*

So they told us we had to take the tent down and ah find some place else. So we took it down, and we hid the tent, because we didn't have any place to put it. And ah then we took the sleeping bags, and we found another place and tried to go to sleep again. And I was just snoring when there was a search light in my face. And they found us again! ahahahaah. But..... actually they were very nice, and ah they came over.....

*Did you convince them?*

They had to take the names and make the report. But then they said, "Why don't you go across the street to any good woods, and over there we won't bother you." So, we went over there, and finally at one o'clock this morning we were able to sleep. And now they tell us that the proper connection has been made, and if we want to sleep in our tent tonight, we can.

*I see. So you don't have to stay in these dormitories?*

Well, there's no AIR in the university center, in the rooms up there.

*Everything's air conditioned there.*

Right. They can't open the windows.

*So you're taking your tent all the places you're going, or?*

No, they provided it for us. I thought it would be nice, you know, for interviews and things. If our tent was up, we could be there and ah.....

*I see. You're doing a lot on campus. Like I've read one of these pieces called "LINK" in this book WOMAN'S WORK. And what I know is that you try to mix somehow the activities of the campus with activities you put on. Could you just ah explain that.*

Okay. That was just a particular score that ah.... as a matter of fact it was commissioned by LARRY LIVINGSTONE, the man who is here. He was at Palomar College in California. That was let's see a few years ago. And the idea was a kind of environmental theater. And it occurred to me that it would be interesting if the whole campus, if the whole community would just become a theater. And everyone who was there, if the effect of the events that occurred would cause everyone to become a participant, even though they were doing their normal activities. And that piece was done over a long period of time, say a year, where every day there was some little change, something strange but not so strange that it would um not make too much notice, be very subtle, very smooth. But by the end of the year there is a complete change hahaha .... in all the hahahaah activities in the orientation.

*Did it work like for longer than one week? Did you try the performance.....*

No, this was only one day at Palomar. But it's intended for as much as a year or more.

*What I'm really most interested in your work is what you're saying like in "LINK", too, ah a person makes exercises in undivided attention to um given tasks or something like that. So, I met ROBERT ASHLEY in New York, and he told me about your work too, that it confronts a person with structures that are very steady and very static. So you just have to confront yourself with the piece.*

That's right.

*Just now we heard the drumming, and it was very steady, very similar. How is this meditation working?*

Well, the particular meditation I asked the performers to approach it in a particular way. I asked them to imagine the sound first, to imagine rate, intensity and quality. And then, ah in order to start the roll, to start the drum

roll, ah I asked them to try to allow it to start involuntarily from the image. Now, I mean it's true that ah physiologically, that if you have an image in mind, then there's a motor impulse. So that's by the hip center. So that if the image is strong enough, then the roll should begin from that impulse, but not by intending to start it, but allowing it to come out. And then the idea is to stay, to keep the roll matching the mental process. So that you don't make changes in the roll. You allow it to change. And if it's successful, there's a locking onto physiological rhythms in the body that occur.

*Ah ha, and you have to tune to these rhythms then.*

Yeah..... You can't do it consciously. You have to let it come through the involuntary system.

*Ya, so the meditation happens for the people who participate to perform the piece. What do you think the people that listen to it get from it?*

Well, if they can, it can change their own feeling, the atmosphere that's there. I mean, it's just as if say a very hypertense, hyperactive person comes into a room and is very nervous and fidgety and so on can effect the atmosphere.

*Epecially these persons get like aggressive if they are confronted with this kind of plain structure, 'cause then they are really confronted with themselves.*

That's right. That's right. Yeah. And some people are not at all ready to do that, so they..... It's better for them to leave. So that's the way that one works.

*Um then, like SONIC MEDITATIONS, it's another score I know from you. Do you do it with groups of musicians?*

Ah, yes, when I go around to other places.

*And I heard that you tried to establish this SONIC MEDITATIONS in education now, in teaching children.*

Well, in the university classes. Children are fine, too. Ah, there are a lot of concentration exercises that one can do. And I do them in my musicianship class. I devote

about ah half the class to these various kinds of concentration things, and then the rest of the traditional sight singing and dictation. But I find that the students get much more of a feeling for ensemble and how to relate to each other if you're working through these exercises.

*What did you write since SONIC MEDITATIONS*

I have CROW, A CEREMONIAL OPERA. But it's composed of meditations. I've taken a lot of the meditations that I've worked with over the last six years, and put them together in various ways. For instance for tonight, the "single stroke roll meditation" is part of CROW. And I made a new meditation for the wind players here, also because of the special conditions in this hall, the auditorium here. So it's a new meditation, but I can put it with an old one. And it's a lot of fun to work at with.

*What have the musicians to do then? Just sit there and watch their own music producing?*

Well, you mean the wind players. The wind players have.... It's in two parts. Three of them are ah doing a meditation called ENERGY CHANGES. And their task is to listen to everything that they can hear in the room, every sound, connect with every sound just in listening, consider that to be a drone. That's like a tambura. That's the whole environment of sound that's available. Then they produce the sound when there's a feeling for making a sound. When the sound is produced, then they have to return and reconnect with hearing everything that they were hearing before they made the sound. So it's a very critical and special way of listening.

*Tuning into the environment.*

Right. And the sound they make does not have to be related to anything that they're hearing. It should be expressive of ah whatever the feeling is. It may be a gathering of muscular tension, and then release. Or it may be a soft sound, or any part of the range. But if the player is actually doing the meditation of listening, then there are certain things that cannot happen. You can't play a melody or this or that. Because if you make a sound, it immediately changes what you're hearing. So you have to go back and hear it again.

*So this happens under the limit of doing music consciously. It's just this range of being aware about musicians' unconscious impulses.*

Yeah.

*Then you get ideas for new meditations from your own experience of listening to music. Ah, I've just seen you in the room now listening like forty minutes to your drumming piece. And um, I don't know if it's too curious to ask this question. But anyway, how is the process of listening working?*

Um, yeah. Well, first of all, I'm aware of my own physiology, just relaxing and ah calming. And then I'm hearing it as a whole, and I'm aware of the various rates that are going on, the kinds of breaks in concentration that occur and how they're corrected. I'm listening technically in a way, but on the other hand I'm also, I was also doing my own meditation, which I'll be doing tonight. I'll be doing a movement meditation.

*So you act to the music?*

Well, not exactly. It certainly is a supportive. You know, you feel it. But my own meditation will be to move involuntarily, so that no movement I make is a conscious act.

*So is this similar to what the Tai Chi people are doing?*

Well, in the Tai Chi movement there are traditional forms. But there's a Tai Chi feeling.

*Then I remember like last year. I visited you ah in Toronto, and ah I tried to be very nice and enthusiastic, speaking about music and began to speak, to speak and to speak. And then I suddenly realized that you were just sitting there and listening to me. It was so..... It was somehow embarrassing.*

Eh hahaha hahahahahaha haha

*And then, you know I just said, "Okay, she likes not to talk," I thought at first. And then, ah I met BETH ANDERSON in New York, and we talked about your work. And*



*now she told me that you have like silent dinners, or that you just like silence. And you invite people just to stay and ah say nothing and.....*

ah hahahaha That has been part of the work, yeah, a non-verbal evening or a nonverbal time or spending several days.....

*It must be really hard if people just meet, sit together, and stop their talking, and they feel that they HAVE to communicate..... Hm,..... There's ANOTHER thing I read in one of your articles. I have to quote that. You ask yourself questions in this one article, like, "Am I an active or am I a receptive person? Can I be either or both at will?" So is this one part of your work, to train yourself to.....?*

Right. Right. Training to listen critically and ah probing. Actively listening and following particular technical aspects is one way. Or actively trying to see the overall form. Or listening with an open receptiveness where it is noncritical listening. So that you're totally devoted to the experience of what you're hearing.

*Va, but then at a certain moment you have to um like communicate that, become active as a member of this group.*

Well, that's true. And the thing is, if you can listen in a receptive mode, then you have the music, you have it. And then you can review it critically. Whereas if you are listening actively, critically, it can be limiting. It can limit what you hear. So what I described to you earlier, the way I was listening this morning, was switching back and forth, sometimes listening just actively, sometimes just taking it all in.

*Did Zen Buddhism help you to establish this technique, or is this a very personal approach?*

Well, it's a personal approach, because I don't..... I'm not a Zen Buddhist, and I haven't formally studied Zen. I mean, I understand some of the concepts and so on, but what's been helping me also is the current research in consciousness.

*There's a lot going on there in California.*

Yes, very exciting, very exciting.

*Are there people you're working with?*

Yes. Well, one person I've worked with a lot is LESTER INGBER. He's a theoretical physicist. And he's also a karate master. I've been studying karate for the last three years, but studying it for consciousness and self development. Because I wanted to learn a body language.

And ah if you understand something about the current research of ah say the understanding of how the brain is hooked up, the left and right hemispheres, and one hemisphere apparently controlling the body and spacial organization, and the other side controlling analytical linear processes. And it's very, very interesting, all the terminology that goes with it. The right hemisphere is associated with body and nonlinear processes, holistic processes and imaging.

*I think that's the reason why I like to sleep on this side.*

hahaha ha. And the left of it is concerned with various linear processes, time, ah language, um mathematics and so on. Also, the right hemisphere has got pitch discrimination. In other words, the right hemisphere is considered the artistic side, and the left hemisphere is analytical or scientific. And if you look into the old physiology text books, you'll see the "major" and the "minor" hemispheres. ha haha. There's a discrimination there too, that one's better than the other. One is verbal, and the other is nonverbal. The right hemisphere is nonverbal.

*And you just try to establish a flow between these two?*

Yeah, right. It's becoming conscious of what modes or processes are.

*And what ASHLEY told too, that if he goes to a concert and listens to it, then he's always the analytical person and also the feeling person.*

It's a matter of not one thing being better than the other. It's a matter of balancing them, synchronizing those modes so that you have full use and full range of yourself as a human being.

CROW



TWO

PAULINE OLIVEROS

MARCH 1975

" A SINGULAR ATTRIBUTE OF MOST CROWS  
IS THEIR ABILITY TO COEXIST WITH MAN."

## Crow Two

Crow Two is part of a series of works in the oral tradition, entitled "Sonic Meditations". It is composed of meditation techniques and figurative theatrical elements. In retelling the instructions for the work the composer takes into account the occasion, the conditions, the personalities and potential contributions of the performers. Each performance, in a different place may represent an evolution of the work. Following are instructions and partial description of Crow Two, which took place March 6, 1975 as part of the dedication ceremonies for the new MaDeville Center for the Arts at the University of California San Diego: (The work was originally commissioned for the Creative Associates by the Center for Creative and Performing Arts, State University of New York at Buffalo, with funds provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, 1974. The work was composed during a leave supported by the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation.)

All of the cast except the Crow Heyokas gather informally in a large open space (ca. 50' by 40') surrounded by the audience. As the house lights begin to fade very slowly, the visiting stops, lighting for the places in the mandala shows, and the cast takes formal places as shown in the floor plan. The Crow Heyokas are out of sight. The meditation begins with the formation of the mandala. Crow Poet sits in the center, illuminated by the slowly cycling meditation symbols ☉, △ and ⊕ as described below.

Crow Poet (Margaret Porter) is in her mid sixties, with beautiful white hair. She was chosen for her attributes which her appearance emanates: wisdom, clarity and stability. She wrote a poem for the occasion which was distributed to the audience along with the program notes.

CROW TWO  
A CEREMONIAL OPERA 1974 - '75

PAULINE OLIVEROS

CAST :

CROW POET - CENTER

CROW MOTHER - WEST

CROW STEP MOTHER - EAST

CROW GRAND MOTHER - SOUTH

CROW GOD MOTHER - NORTH

CROW FAMILY - 4 OR MORE

CROW FRIENDS - AS MANY AS CIRCLE WILL ACCOMODATE

DIDJERIDOOERS - 4

MIRROR MEDITATORS - 2

ENERGY CHANGER - 1

SINGLE STROKE ROLLERS - 7

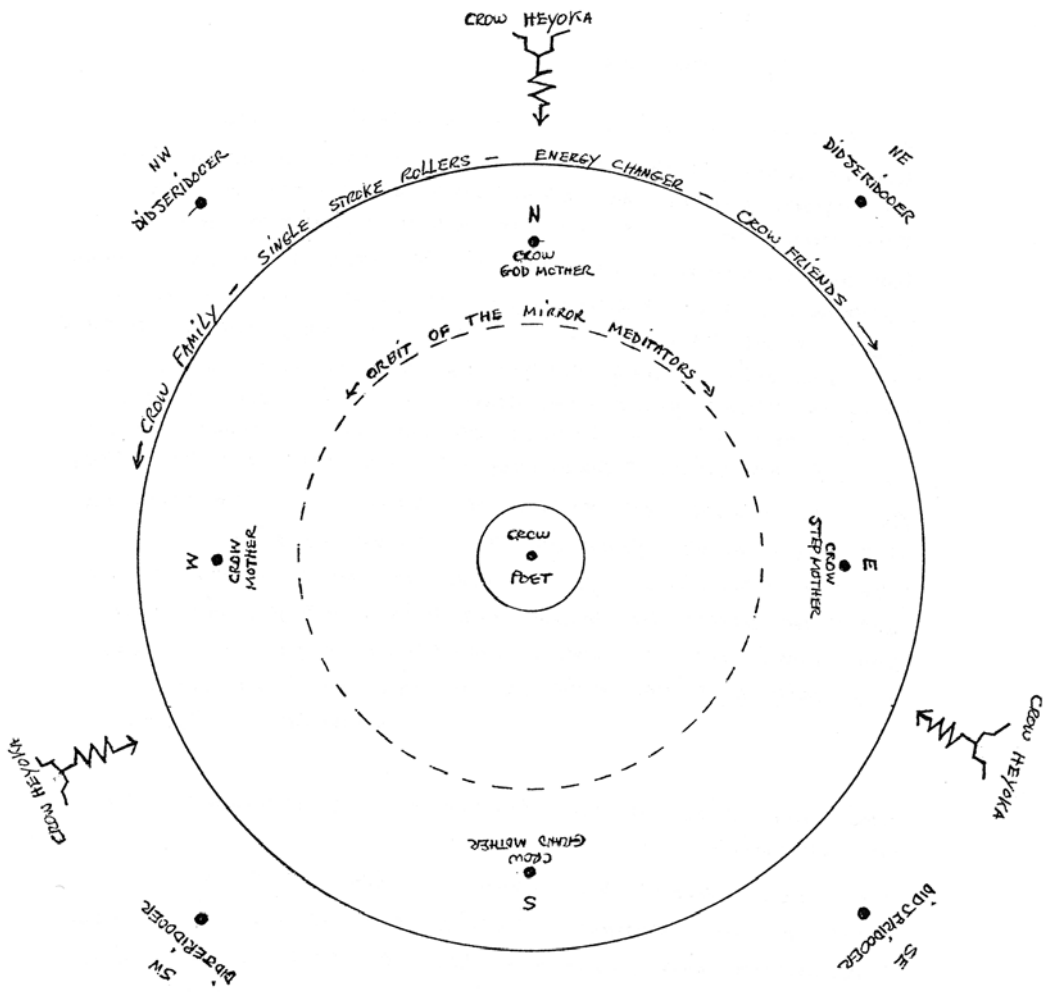
TELEPATHIC IMPROVISORS - 7

CROW HEYOKAS - 3

CROW TOTEM - 1

LUMINIC MEDIATOR - 2





Crow Two  
FLOOR PLAN MANDALA

Sky - TELEPATHIC improvisors - CROW TOTEM

## CROW LOGUE

A CROW IS NOT A CROW IS A CROW. A CROW,  
BRIGHT BLACK, FLASHES THROUGH A SUN-CRAZED FIELD OF VAN GOGH  
OIL, RAVEN, INTONES "NEVERMORE" IN THE CHAMBER OF POE  
FROM THE BUST OF PALLAS, AS ATHENA'S SACRED BIRD,  
FOR WHOM, WHEN NEEDED, SHE WOULD UTTER AN OMINOUS WORD.  
MESSENGER, BIRD OF BEGINNINGS, IT WAS CROW WHO EMERGED  
FIRST OF ALL FROM THE ARK. THREE LEGGED, CROW SITS BEFORE  
THE SUN-DISK -- YANG EMBLEM OF THE CHINESE EMPEROR.  
CROW IS CHESS-PIECE, THE ROOK; ALSO, IS SEEN TO SOAR  
IN THE CONSTELLATION CORVUS OF THE SKIES DOWN-UNDER.  
TO THE ASSYRIANS, "BIRD-PEOPLE," THE BIRD OF THUNDER,  
CROW IS SYMBOL OF EARTH, OF SPIRIT, OF MATERNAL NIGHT.  
HER CAW MAKES PART OF THE DIVINATION RITE.

"AS THE CROW FLIES" YOU GO FOR THE MOST DIRECT FLIGHT.  
WHAT HE STEALS HE HOARDS AND HIDES, AND YOU NEVER KNOW  
WHAT HAVOC THIS OMNIVOROUS CREATURE, AS A PET, WILL SOW.  
YET ONLY A HUMAN BEING CAN BE SAID TO "EAT CROW".

- MARGARET A. PORTER

CROW POET SITS IN THE CENTER OF THE MANDALA SMOKING  
AND DREAMING.

THE CROW MOTHERS SIT INSIDE THE LARGEST CIRCLE AT THE  
POINTS OF THE COMPASS FACING THE CROW POET. CROW  
GRAND MOTHER AND GOD MOTHER HAVE WHITE HAIR. CROW MOTHER  
AND STEP-MOTHER HAVE SET BLACK HAIR. EACH MOTHER WEARS  
WHAT MAKES HER FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE. THEIR MEDITATION  
IS SIMPLY BEING. THEY PERSONIFY NATURAL ORDER.

THREE CROW HEYOKAS APPEAR DURING THE COURSE OF THE  
MEDITATION. "HEYOKA" IS A SIOUX INDIAN WORD MEANING  
SACRED CLOWN. ACCORDING TO JOHN FIRE LAME DEER: "IT IS  
VERY SIMPLE TO BECOME A HEYOKA. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS  
DREAM ABOUT LIGHTNING, THE THUNDER BIRDS. YOU DO THIS



AND WHEN YOU WAKE UP IN THE MORNING YOU ARE A HEYOKA. THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT." THE CROW HEYOKAS ARE PERSONIFICATIONS OF NATURAL DISTURBANCES. THEIR PURPOSE IS TO TEST THE MEDITATORS THROUGH MOCKERY AND DISTRACTING BEHAVIOR. "HE IS AN UPSIDE DOWN, BACKWARD-FORWARD YES-AND-NO-MAN, A CONTRARY WISE." THEY APPEAR AT WILL 15 TO 20 MINUTES AFTER THE MEDITATION HAS BEGUN. THE HUMAN MANDALA IS TAKEN OVER AS THEIR PLAYGROUND. THEY CANNOT ACTUALLY TOUCH A MEDITATOR, BUT MAY TRY IN ANY WAY TO BREAK THE MEDITATION. WHEN THE HEYOKAS HAVE THOROUGHLY TESTED THE MEDITATION THEY ARE LURED AWAY BY THE SHINY, MYLAR CROW TOTEM. IT IS A KITE WITH LONG SHINY, CRACKLY STREAMERS. IT FLOATS SLOWLY, ACCOMPANIED BY MANY LOUD CROW CALLS. THE HEYOKAS LEAVE RELUCTANTLY BUT CANNOT RESIST THE TOTEM. (THE CROW TOTEM WAS MADE BY ELLEN VAN FLEET.) IN THIS PERFORMANCE THE CROW HEYOKAS WERE AL CHUNG LIANG HUANG, JULIUS EASTMAN AND PHILIP LARSEN.

#### THE MEDITATIONS

BESIDES THE ABOVE FIGURATIVE THEATRICAL ELEMENTS, CROW TWO CONSISTS OF VARIOUS SONIC, LUMINIC AND SOMATIC MEDITATIONS PLACED TOGETHER. EACH MEDITATION WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO STAND ALONE. EACH MEDITATION EXPLORES A PARTICULAR MODE OF AWARENESS, UTILIZING A PARTICULAR FOCUS OF ATTENTION. THE HARMONIZED MEDITATIONS ARE INTENDED TO FORM AN ENCOMPASSING ATMOSPHERE OF RELAXED AWARENESS.

THE FOUR DISCRIDOO PLAYERS SIT AT THE MID-POINTS OF THE COMPASS OUTSIDE THE LARGE CIRCLE. THEIR MEDITATION IS TO PROVIDE A CONTINUOUS DRONE WHILE LISTENING CONTINUALLY TO ALL OTHER DRONES. WHEN TRIGGERED BY AN INTERMITTANT OR RANDOM SOUND, OR SOME INNER NEED, THE PLAYER MAY BRIEFLY ARTICULATE A SOUND DIFFERENT FROM THE DRONE BUT MUST IMMEDIATELY CONTINUE PLAYING THE

DRONE AND LISTENING TO THE OTHERS.

(DIDSERIDOO IS A DRONE PIPE. IT IS A EUCALYPTUS BRANCH 4 TO 6 FEET LONG, HOLLOWED BY TERMITES, CARVED, DECORATED AND USED BY AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES FOR MEDITATION. CIRCULAR BREATHING MAY BE EMPLOYED IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A CONSTANT TONE. SOME NINE DIFFERENT TONE QUALITIES CAN BE PRODUCED BY SKILLED PLAYERS. THE INSTRUMENT IS STORED IN A STREAM OR IN MUD TO KEEP IT MOIST AND SOFT TONED.

THE TWO MIRROR MEDITATORS FACE EACH OTHER AND ORBIT AROUND THE CROW POST DURING THE COURSE OF THEIR SOMATIC MEDITATION. THE ORBIT IS ILLUMINATED BY SHIMMERING SOFT LIGHT, WHICH RESEMBLES MOON LIGHT, PROVIDED BY THE LUMINIC MEDITATION OF JOHN FORKNER, DESCRIBED BELOW. THE MIRROR MEDITATORS MUST KEEP EYE CONTACT AND FOLLOW EACH OTHERS ACTIONS EXACTLY, WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS: NEITHER PERSON MAY INITIATE A MOVE, ANY MOVEMENTS SHOULD BE THE RESULT OF INVOLUNTARY MOVEMENTS OF A BODY, THE OTHER BODY REFLECTS SUCH MOVES IMMEDIATELY. IDEALLY, NEITHER PERSON WILL KNOW WHO IS LEADING OR FOLLOWING THE MOVEMENT. THERE IS A CONSTANT INTERPLAY BETWEEN VOLITIONAL AND NONVOLITIONAL MOVEMENT. THE RESULT SHOULD BE SLOW CONTINUOUS MOVEMENT.

THE ENERGY CHANGER SITS IN THE LARGE OUTER CIRCLE. THE PERFORMER MUST CONCENTRATE SILENTLY ON ALL THAT CAN BE HEARD CONTINUOUSLY IN THE ENVIRONMENT. THE LISTENING MUST INCLUDE SOUNDS HEARD INTERNALLY AS WELL AS EXTERNALLY. THE PERFORMER MAY MAKE ANY SOUND, OR CYCLE OF LIKE SOUNDS, AT ANY TIME, EITHER AS A RESULT OF SOME INNER NEED TO MAKE A SOUND, OR AS A REACTION TO SOME INTERMITTANT, OR RANDOM SOUND FROM THE ENVIRONMENT. ONCE A SOUND IS FINISHED, THE PERFORMER MUST IMMEDIATELY RE-ESTABLISH CONNECTION WITH ALL OF THE CONTINUOUS SOUNDS SHE WAS LISTENING TO PREVIOUSLY, BEFORE MAKING ANOTHER SOUND. IN THIS PERFORMANCE, THE ENERGY

CHANGER USED A PAIR OF LOUD, RESONANT ROCKS, AND HER VOICE AS SOUND SOURCES.

THE SINGLE STROKE ROLLERS ALSO SIT IN THE LARGE OUTER CIRCLE INTERSPERSED AMONG THE CROW FAMILY AND CROW FRIENDS. EACH OF THESE PERCUSSIONISTS CHOSE EITHER A LOG OR SKIN DRUM EXCEPT ONE WHO PLAYED A POTTERY DRUM. SOME USED MALLETS, SOME HANDS. FOR THE MEDITATION EACH PERCUSSIONIST MUST FIRST IMAGINE THE SOUND OF HIS INSTRUMENT: THE QUALITY, THE RATE AND INTENSITY OF THE SINGLE STROKE ROLL. (AN EQUAL ALTERNATION BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT HANDS.) THE ACTUAL ROLL IS INTENDED TO BEGIN INVOLUNTARILY AS A RESULT OF IMAGINING IT. THEN, THE TASK OF THE MEDITATION IS TO KEEP THE ACTUAL ROLL MATCHING THE ORIGINAL IMAGINARY ROLL FOR THE DURATION OF THE PERFORMANCE. ANY CHANGES IN THE ROLL SHOULD BE THE RESULT OF SPONTANEOUS, INVOLUNTARY ACTION RATHER THAN CONSCIOUS INTENTION.

THE TELEPATHIC IMPROVISORS ARE SEVEN FLUTE PLAYERS. THEY ARE LOCATED IN THE CEILING CAT WALKS ABOVE THE MANDALA, REPRESENTING THE SKY. THE TASK OF THE MEDITATION FOR EACH PLAYER, IS TO ALLOW SINGLE PITCHES, INTERVALS OR CHORDS TO COME TO MIND. THE PLAYER THEN MUST DETERMINE WHETHER HE OR SHE IS A SENDER OR RECEIVER OF A PITCH, OR OF ONE OF THE PITCHES OF AN INTERVAL OR CHORD. IF THE DETERMINATION IS OF A RECEIVER, THEN HE OR SHE PLAYS THE PITCH. IF THE DETERMINATION IS OF A SENDER, THEN HE OR SHE IMAGINES THE PERSON, OR PERSONS WHO SHOULD RECEIVE THE PITCH AND WAITS TO HEAR IT. IF THE PLAYER HEARS AN INTERVAL OR CHORD, IT IS SENT TO THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER OF PLAYERS. THE PLAYERS ARE INSTRUCTED TO PLAY ONLY LONG TONES. THE AUDIENCE IS INVITED TO TRY TO INFLUENCE THE FLUTE PLAYERS TELEPATHICALLY

IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS :

- 1) SENDING PITCHES TO PARTICULAR PLAYERS
- 2) STARTING OR STOPPING PLAYERS
- 3) SENDING ATTACK AND RELEASE CHARACTERISTICS
- 4) SENDING DYNAMICS OR EMOTIONAL QUALITIES.

THE LUMINIC MEDITATION WAS DESIGNED AND PROVIDED BY JOHN FORKNER. FORKNER'S DESCRIPTION FOLLOWS:

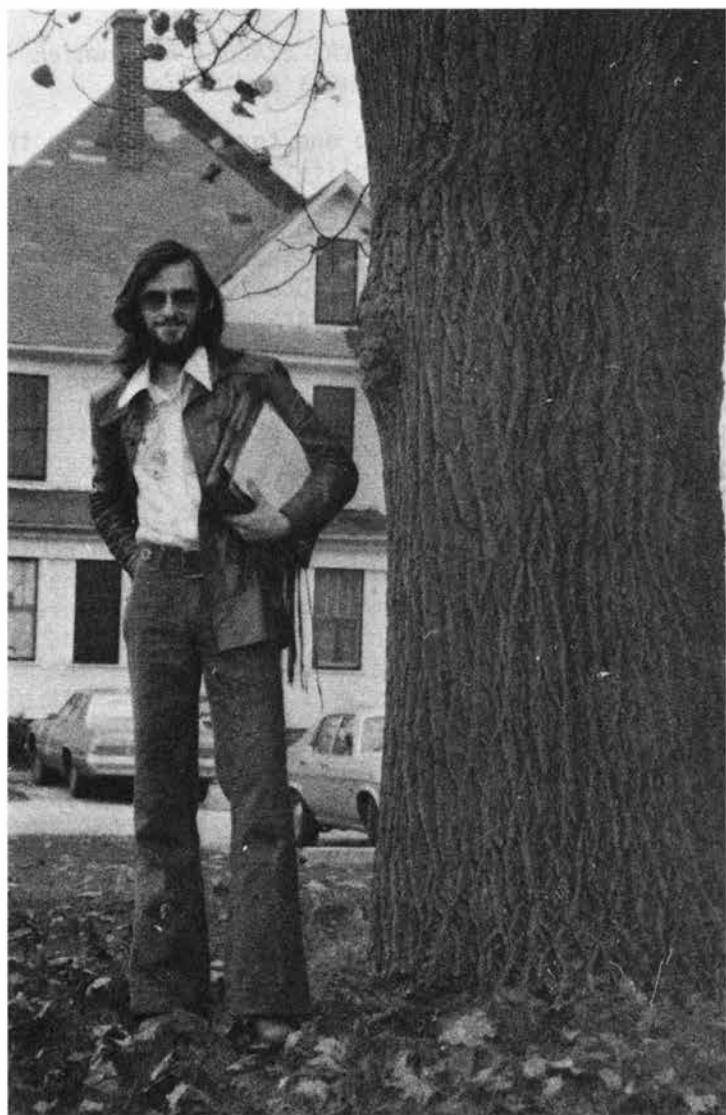
"THE LIGHTING FOR CROW TWO IS ALSO A MEDITATION WITHIN THE PIECE -- A LUMINIC MEDITATION WHICH PARALLELS THE SONIC AND SOMATIC MEDITATIONS. THE ILLUMINATION OF THE CENTRAL AND COMPASS ARRANGEMENT OF FIGURES (CROW POET, CROW MOTHERS) AND MIRROR MEDITATORS OCCURS IN CYCLES OF A LONG SLOW RHYTHM TRIGGERED BY THE SAME INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SOURCES AS FOR THE OTHER INSTRUMENTALISTS. ONE PART OF THESE CYCLE APPEARS AS SLOW CHANGES IN THE LEVEL AND PATTERN SHAPE OF ILLUMINATION PROJECTED ONTO THE CENTRAL FIGURES FROM ABOVE. ANOTHER PART OF THE CYCLE MANIFESTS AS DIFFUSE PATCHES OF LIGHT MUCH LIKE SHAFTS OF SUNLIGHT BETWEEN MOVING CLOUDS SLOWLY DRIFTING OVER THE AUDIENCE AND THE OUTER CIRCLE OF PERFORMERS. TO ALLOW A CLOSE RAPPORT BETWEEN THE LUMINIC AND THE SONIC MEDITATORS, THE CYCLICAL PART OF THE LIGHTING IS MAINLY PRODUCED BY TWO LUMINISTS FROM A SMALL PIT ADJACENT TO THE STAGE. LIGHT IS PROJECTED UPWARD TO ARRANGEMENTS OF MIRRORS AND THEN REFLECTED DOWNWARD ONTO THE PERFORMERS. THIS METHOD OF LIGHT PERFORMANCE BEING SHOWN HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME FACILITATES THE VITAL SPONTANEITY NEEDED FOR A MEDITATIONAL WORK. THE PATTERN SHAPES PROJECTED DOWNWARD ONTO THE CROW POET AND UPWARD ONTO AN ARIAL SCREEN ARE MEDITATION SYMBOLS. FIXED DOWN-LIGHTS DEFINING THE OUTER CIRCLE OF PERFORMERS COMPLETE THE LIGHTING DESIGN FOR THE PIECE."

THE STAGING OF CROW TWO WAS DESIGNED IN CONSULTATION WITH MARY NEE.

THE OVER ALL SONIC RESULT WAS A COMPLICATED, SPACE-FILLING DRONE OF MANY LAYERS. THE DRONE WAS PARALLELED BY THE STATIONARY HUMAN MANDALA AND THE SLOW CONTINUITY OF THE MIKROK MEDITATORS.

THE CROW HEYOKAS ARTICULATED THE DRONE WITH THEIR OPPOSING SHOUTS, SCREAMS, NOISES AND BY THE MOBILITY OF THEIR ANTICS AND DANCES THE CROW POET AT THE HUB, THOUGH SERENELY STILL SEEMED OCCASIONALLY TO JUMP ABOUT BECAUSE OF THE SHIMMERING LIGHT. THE PERFORMANCE LASTED APPROXIMATELY FORTY MINUTES. THE MEDITATORS SURVIVED THE TESTS OF THE HEYOKAS AND CONTINUED SOME TEN MINUTES OR SO AFTER THEIR EXIT.

David Rosenboom



David Rosenboom produces brainwave music during the conversation. Each "\*" indicates a brainwave measurement either above or below the set range of 8 Hz to 13 Hz.

*So ah could you just describe the circuit here which is established to produce alpha waves and music?*

Okay. This is a fairly simple one to one set-up in that this brain wave monitor is amplifying the pulsations that occur on the scalp that are the results of millions of tiny impulses that are circulating in the head. And when alpha appears, which is simply defined as the presence of energy in the frequency band of about eight to thirteen cycles per second, a voltage appears which corresponds to the strength of the energy in that band. If there is a significant amount of pulsation in that frequency, it means that large number of neurons in the brain have synchronized \* themselves. That is they've gotten in phase, in step.

And the results of all of the summation of these synchronously moving pulses is a pulsation of about ten cycles per second on the surface of the brain. And as that appears, it makes the tone that we heard appear more pure or more like a sine wave with fewer harmonics. And the less alpha there is, the more harmonics \* and the more impure the wave form. \* So, as a demonstration it simply allows you to follow the changes of level of the amount of alpha and therefore the amount of synchronization in that frequency range. \*

*So, you can just control yourself in producing more and more alpha, and recognizing these frequencies.*

The first step in this kind of biofeedback paradigm is usually to try to produce more. And that's of course effected by notions \* of nineteenth century progress, that the idea of feedback is to make more of something. But that isn't the object. It's useful to try and make more in order to try to isolate and identify or subjectively identify and tactilly phiosologically identify a feeling which is associated with it. But after you have made that association, it's not necessarily \* always desirable to produce more. Then the emphasis is on agility, or the ability to move in and out of various bands



or various kinds of configurations. I think that.....

*It at first more shifts you to a state of more relaxation, that of the alpha state.*

Yes, it's definitely. There are a number of ways you can look at the information you get. One of the things I'm trying to get away from is reliance on terms like "alpha waves", "beta waves" and "theta waves", which have rather arbitrarily set definitions. And what I'm looking at really is the existence of coherent phenomena or the existence of regularly pulsing energy, whatever its frequency happens to be or whatever combination of frequencies happen to be present. \*

And it's related ah to a continuum that goes something like this. If there is a lot of highly synchronous activity on the scalp, it indicates that the nervous system is prepared to act or is set to act in a certain way, in a certain modality. But it's not at that precise moment involved in focusing its activities on any one action or any one sensory perception. So the higher the frequency of this pulsation \* the more it seems to relate to a propensity for the nervous system to react in a very quick, logical, fast manner, very efficient..... things like doing mathematical calculations or making very quick decisions. Ah, that is if it's coherent. If it's random high frequency energy, it relates more to things like hypertension.

Then as this frequency decreases..... And now I've been talking about high frequency beta activity which is usually between eighteen and twenty-five cycles per second..... When it slows down to the alpha range, it generally indicates a kind of um nonspecific arousal or a state in which one is active, attentive, very very attentive in fact and very conscious of the presence of anything in the environment. But one's not focusing on particular abstractions or particular objects of \* attention. It's very much like kinds of activities in various kinds of Zen meditation exercises.

Then as the frequency gets even slower, \* towards what's called the theta range, around four \* to eight pulsations per second, (cough) it relates to more, to deeper relaxation, more yogi types of deep muscular relaxation

and daydreaming and very, very extremely calm, less aroused. Then as it gets even slower, in the delta range, which is even below four \* pulsations per second, ah one sees phenomena that only normally occur in states that we would call unconscious..... states like deep, deep sleep or anesthesia or types of hypnosis.

Then that summarizes the kind of regular pulsation that happens. But of course ah contained in the brain signal are also things like the background randomness of the universe and quasi-random phenomena which are really weighted sums of all of our activity, of all our activity, of all our history and development. And then there are short-term phenomena, which are transient and which do not repeat, and which relate to specific focus, either of attention or of action. And those transient phenonema can be analyzed, and a great deal of the information about very short-term functioning can be extracted..... like how one is processing sensory data, how closely it relates to ah stored images of things, ah the illicitation of imagined events and so on.

*So you're going to develop the youngest technique of practicing meditation then? You just go on with your project now to find qualities you find in analyzing the response patterns to stimuli like (claps hands loudly).*

Right. \* Right. It became very clear that at one point in the history of this that that ah as long as all we were doing was demonstrating a phenomenon in a piece which might be a performance like what we just \* demonstrate, ah it's interesting at first. But it doesn't for the spectator go very much beyond the intriguing aspect of making an electrical connection to the head. And ah beyond that it really is an internal experience for the participant only, and ah (cough) or predominantly..... which is an inherently nonsocial viewpoint.

It was a necessary viewpoint to take at one point in the early stage, because it's important like in any process of self-realization one has to go inside and find out things about his own functioning. Ah ah but then he has to turn around and reintegrate this new knowledge with his context. And that's what we're trying to do now, by ah ah finding ways. Ah, I decided at one point that I needed to stop doing pieces that were this this kind of demonstra-

tion really and ah..... except in a context where what one's really trying to do is present information, and then ah see if it's possible to extract much more meaningful information from the wave forms.

*Are these meaningful qualities concerned with states of emotion? Which categories do you try to find out?*

Okay, there are a number of broad categories. \* Ah one group is when we look at the general state of the brain-wave, we can relate it to things like ah expressions of emotion, ah ah ah a general state of being of the individual. When we look at more specific phenomena, we can look at things like how these states of being ah contribute to one's..... the very practical aspect of one's functioning in an environment, how he processes information, may exist one way in one state of consciousness and another way in another state of consciousness. But these two process lead to the building of very different images about the world.

*So what do you expect when the project is finally done? How do you use the qualities that you find um ah to shift people into states of relaxation or a condition of being themselves or whatever? Do you use the system as a kind of homeostasis?*

YES, using it for kinds of homeostasis which essentially tend to stabilize things, either for \* purposes of achieving a state of being or for purposes of looking at something and examining it, is very much a part of it. What we're doing right now is building a very large catalogue. Ah, I was inspired by the work of MANFRED CLYNES, who suggested the building up of a dictionary of essentic forms, which he describes in his writings and have to do with the relation of physiological events to qualities of expression in music and in language.

*hm*

And I've tried to extend the idea into these things. So that we will have ah a catalogue of events that relate to say expressions by an actor of say grief or of joy, and will relate to the processing of information. THEN that's just the information, and how we use it is what's important. So, what I've tried to do is develop a way of

researching just exactly what the usefulness of all this really is. And that means, the way I've tried to go about that is to find a way to establish groups of participants drawn from the community of both artists and nonartists in various locations across the country.

And what these groups will do is to take sections of this dictionary and through ah discipline practice explore what the experience is like. So that in hopes that there will be a fallout of knowledge, let's say, that may not depend of technology, which I hope that might then be useful for others to apply in various kinds of group dynamic situations, where we're interested in accessing more communication. \*

And then there are many things of course which are individually specific, that is things that repeat themselves within a given individual but don't necessarily repeat themselves across individuals. However, that's still useful, ah especially for that particular individual. And that's why the instrument that we're building ah is designed really to be able to start from scratch, and look at every person from a pattern recognition viewpoint, and develop an analog in its output, which is in this case music, or the patterns which it finds coming from that person. So, the information is shown to him, and he has this unique map, which is an analysis of a broad range of his functioning.

*So could you describe the details of the group application?*

Um, the immediately obvious thing is making music. Another ah ah possibility is exercises that may be developed that promote group communication on a very high level, synchronous activity of that kind of high gamelan consciousness that you might associate with improvisation. Then, ah also the development of exercises just for personal growth.

For example, here's one exercise that was discovered to actually be as enhancing for the production of alpha than any machine that I've ever used. And that is simply first of all teach someone to concentrate on his ringing patterns in his ears, which ah are closely allied to the color patterns one sees when he closes his eyes. Most

people don't listen to them because the environment is so noisy. But if you do, then it becomes a rich chorus of sound. \* When meditating on these sounds, they grow to be very stable. However, when you open your eyes suddenly, you notice that these sounds will suddenly disappear and then come back slowly, because when you open your eyes, you are involved in an objective perception, which means a separation of you and the object of perception. And that causes a decrease in the sound. The exercise then is very simple. It means just to first listen and establish these sounds and then learn to open and close your eyes in such a way that the sounds stay absolutely stable and do not disappear.

One thing we've done is taken method actors and ask them to produce a cycle of recurring emotional expressions, like take a cycle of four or five, like love, joy, grief, ah \* whatever. And then ask them for certain specified intervals of time to express the best way they can do this emotion, and then move to the next, and then move to the next. And what's happening is, that the computer analyzes the wave forms, and on the end you have an average of the kinds of states of, the way in which the nervous system environment for the psyche lives in changes. \* And that would be something which would be contributed to the catalogue. But what happens then is, in complex situations you see something which recurs that relates to a past \* experience. And it helps to elucidate the new experience. \* And so in this way one tends to develop exercises \* or patterns that are quite useful. \* hm

*Do you think that these exercises could replace the widespread use of drugs \* or alcohol ? \**

I would think yes, that many of the applications could lead towards more methods. Of course we have \* ..... But I would never say, that \* all one has to do is buy an alpha-machine, and then he no longer needs drugs or anything like that. Because the \* thing about feedback is that all one does is provide information. The application to which one puts the feedback, or how he uses the information to change \* the \* input, the original structure \* is entirely individual. \* But I certainly do believe \* that many of these techniques \* could certainly replace at least psychological dependence on \* certain kinds of drugs. \* And I think that's a positive

step. \* \*

*Va. To ah get more \* precise information about the project you're doing in your Laboratory \* for Experimental Aesthetics now. \* Could you just describe the way \* towards finding these qualities? I see that you have an interdata \* computer, a teletype, a Buchla synthesizer, and yourself, hahaha.*

ahhahaha

*And you have your electrodes \* on, and we just listen to sounds made by your brainwaves. So how do you interconnect this layout here to get brainwave feedback? What is your research method?*

The mechanics of the research. Yes ah, well, we're using vast amounts of technology right now, as \* you can see. Ah, that's something which I think sort of gives a certain responsibility to those who possess it to try and use it to \* develop things which don't necessarily depend on it. But I am in the process now of developing an instrument which is two things. It's a research instrument, which is ah \* capable of analyzing brain signals in great detail. It uses an \* Interdata Model 74 minicomputer, which is interconnected to ah electronic music generating equipment, which ah is designed by DON BUCHLA and myself, and brainwave data conversion equipment.

Now, the computer is capable of dealing with compositional language, that is the defining and developing of musical relationships of the type that one deals with in transformational grammars and ah ah generation of syntax, let's say. And then the hardware interface to the electronic music generating equipment ah essentially is hardware designed to remove from the computer those kinds of calculations which take enormous amounts of time, so that it can be done economically. And ah an interface between the compositional programs, and programs which are used to set patches, make settings in synthesizers, and generate an arbitrary number of arbitrarily complex functions, is being constructed.

Then, on the input side the brainwaves undergo a FOURIER analysis, which does things like extract correlations between brainwaves, autocorrelations of the single brain-

wave, which is a way of producing an average or characteristic or prototype of brainwaves. And then that information is fed to the computer. And then the computer essentially deals with discovering the order that exists. So the tendency is away from randomness in the brain signal, and then composing essentially. And so it's two things. It's an analysis instrument, and then it's a straightforward, simple instrument, which for me is like a highly personal paintbrush.

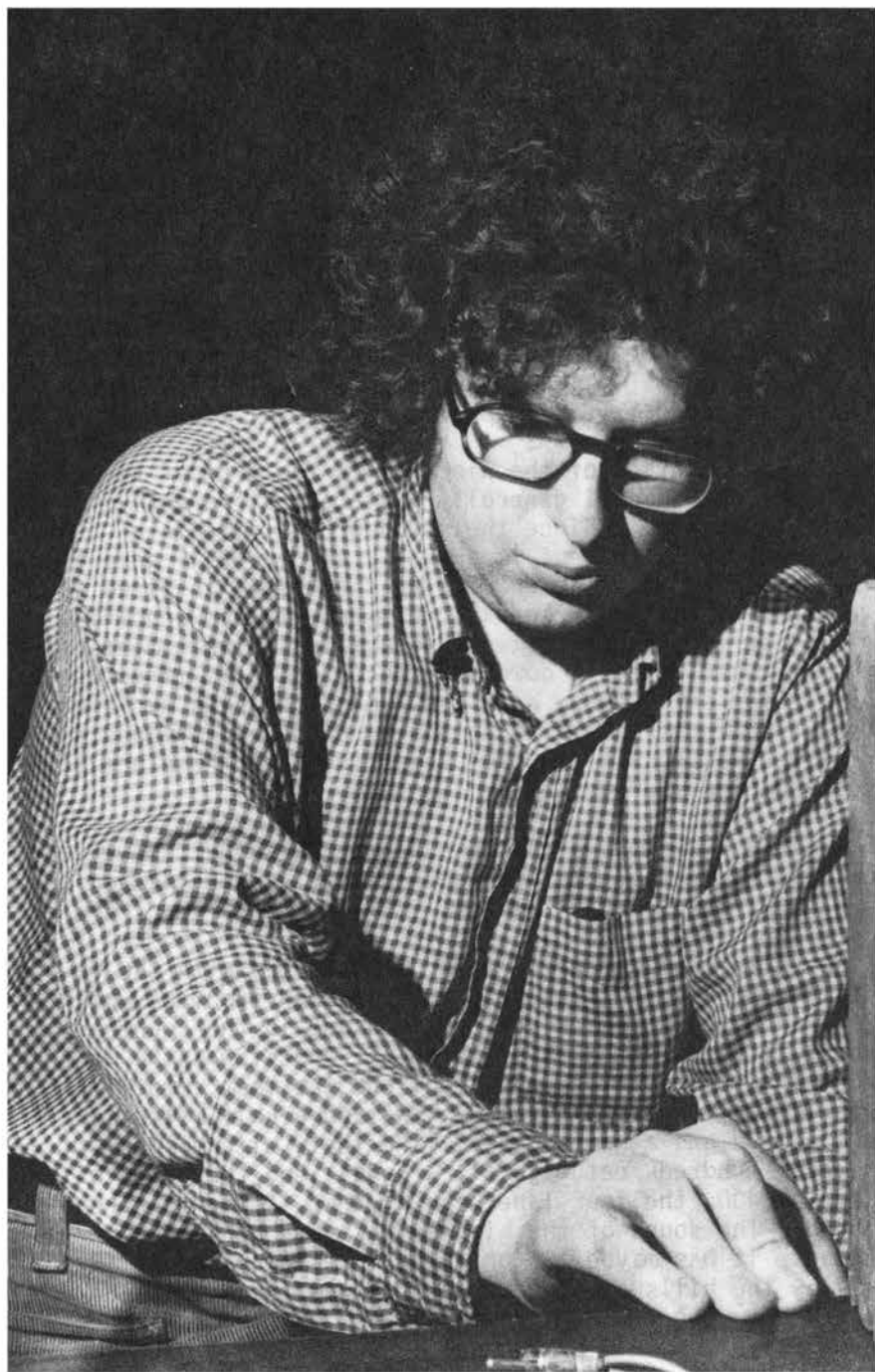


JOHN MILLER producing brainwave music on DAVID ROSENBOOM'S equipment.

# Richard Teitelbaum

Photo by Raymond Ross, N.Y.C.





*I really would like to know something about your THRESHOLD MUSIC.*

Well, I think that it's in a way the most personal music that I've ever done, the most intuitive and instinctive, the closest to me. Actually it's a kind of activity that I've been doing subconsciously for years, like humming almost inaudibly with the drone of my car motor, or a fan in an elevator or whatever. Sometimes I think I could do nothing but that. But then again perhaps it's so hermetic and personal that it's too introverted. So I keep doing other musics like playing with MEV and other musicians.

*There are like six little pieces of special music?*

Well, the notation of the piece is in the form of verbal instructions which I generally write out differently for each performance. Since the sound of the immediate performance environment is actually the score, I generally try to write it out after hearing the space, inspired so to speak by it, and also with reference to the specifics of the particular performers and available instruments. I also try and write it down very quickly and as immediately before the performance as I can, which reflects my interest in making the time of composition and performance as congruent as possible. Each time I've done the piece I've just put a number on it.

*How do you understand this aspect of threshold? Is this - um - do you use electronic music or are you recording environmental sounds?*

I do it in many different ways. It started with the experience of one particularly beautiful environment which was, uh..... Two years ago we lived out in the country, about fifty miles north of Toronto. And it was the most northerly place I've ever lived, and the most remote. It was like a large, flat valley, two and a half miles long and a mile and a half across, like that, with hills several hundred feet high all around. And the sound of Highway 400, the four-lane highway that is the main road north. The sound of the highway was very beautiful, because it was maybe two or three miles away, and "filtered" by the hills as it came across from the west. And you could hear the trucks for many miles. (A "score" representing this aural environment is published in MICHAEL

BYRON's anthology PIECES, published by ARC.) So I taped that. And I use that tape a lot in performance, played very softly, filtered and mixed, and I control the level very carefully.

*So you confront the musicians with that tape, and they find sounds fitted to the level of the tape?*

I also try to use the tape to match the level that's already there in the space. So I don't really confront them so much with the tape as with the environment they are in, into which I've added the tape as well. I don't tell 'em, "Now I play this tape." In fact sometimes they don't need to know if I actually play the tape. (And sometimes I don't!) It's really the immediate present that's the focus. The acoustic environment they are in. The score in a sense is the environment.

*To integrate themselves into the sound, to find thresholds of softness?*

Yes. To match the level of sound of the environment as precisely as they can, as closely as they can. So they blend so well that the listener (who in this case is primarily, perhaps, themselves), ah, cannot distinguish between what he is doing and what is being done.

*Did they have to play in a silent room?*

You mean in an anechoic room? I never tried that. The softer the room of course the harder it is to perform. That's one reason I've sometimes used the tape. If the rooms are very soft and the musicians are not very soft, I can bridge the gap.

*I mean rooms where the sounds just come from the presence of the people, like in one of those studios of York University.*

I have been in that situation. I don't like it as much. I've grown to like outside sounds better. In New York I performed the piece as a solo on the Moog at 224 Centre Street, which is on the main truck route in Manhattan, and I enjoyed that very much. Those New York sounds are so astonishingly strong and rich. It's hard in a closed space, though I've done it myself that way.

*I imagine that the people leave very sensitized. Is that true? Because the conception of these pieces leads always towards silence. It's a kind of a very introverted concept.*

Well, it's definitely a meditation. I regard it as a spiritual discipline. It does lean towards a certain kind of consciousness. Because what I'm hoping or assuming or theorizing is that.... ah, there's something about that threshold activity which will effect consciousness in certain positive ways. There's something about the narrowing down of perception, to zero, to the focusing on a point.... Do you know what I'm saying? It's like certain meditative practices. So it's not intended to be done in a chaotic, noisy environment like a boiler factory or something -- though maybe one could.....

That reminds me of a story that JOHN CAGE told about how DAVID TUDOR used to practice the piano (I think it was perhaps the MUSIC OF CHANGES, which is of course a very difficult piece.) in his studio in the woods by turning on the radio, television and as many distractions as possible, for the discipline. So I guess you could get to that. I'm not up to that stage yet.

Speaking of CAGE, I would like to point out that the THRESHOLD MUSIC is dedicated to him, and is very much indebted to his work. For me, JOHN CAGE has contributed a great opening up to the "outside", in which we have become aware of ourselves, and the sounds we make as merely equals in a multiplicity of sound events that constitute the environment.

It was the great contribution of LA MONTE YOUNG, some ten years later, to penetrate deeply and with a heightened intensity of perception to the "inside", the inner structure of sound itself. He did this, partly, by narrowing down the scope of perception to a highly restricted field -- just "two sounds", or even one, within which the multiplicity of events inside it, what you might call the "atomic structure" became apparent.

What I am trying to do with the THRESHOLD MUSIC is, in a sense, to combine these two perceptions, keeping CAGE's openness and breadth of receptivity to the natural environment, while adding to it the intensity of a

"microscopic amplification" of the inner structure of its longer duration events. That's what I mean by "inside and outside both together now."

*So you actually enjoy noise?*

Well, whatever noise is. (laughter) I like sounds, and that's all. Especially soft ones..... I don't particularly enjoy very loud sounds any more, in the way that, for instance MAX NEUHAUS does. He's actually been attacking the New York Environmental Protection Agency because they're trying to put the sound level down. He thinks that's "fascist". He's making an interesting electronic circuit now. It's put in a large public space with many, many loudspeakers in the whole space producing sounds which respond to the sounds in the environment in interesting, elaborated ways. In a way it's similar to what I'm doing, but I'm still interested in doing it as a personal, human activity rather than making a machine to do it automatically.

*What do you think about one of STEVE REICH's "optimistic predictions about the future of music that, "...electronic music as such will gradually die and be absorbed by the ongoing music of people singing and playing instruments."*

I think it's a beautiful thought, but I don't see any contradiction between electronic instruments and acoustic instruments. I think it's unnecessary to make this technological cutoff.

*But he is somehow right, because the synthesizer 'til now is not available like instruments which allow that the whole person be involved in acting out, etc.*

But I don't see what's the difference between acting out on electronic instruments and acting out on any other instruments.

*It's just the fact of inside-outside working. It's like you have a sound in mind, but to realize it you have to manipulate switches, knobs, and so on. But like playing a Marimbaphone you have just to hammer. And this connection of mind work with the hands is more interconnected and much more functioning musically. That doesn't mean to leave the synthesizer out, but to develop it to a highly*

*adaptable INSTRUMENT.*

That's one reason I've continued to play the same synthesizer for almost ten years. ME and IT are very close to each other. When I first got in 1966 or '67, I spent a lot of time wiring myself up to it, you know, connecting my brain and my heart to it, interacting with it physiologically. That doesn't completely solve the problem, because the instrument is still the same instrument, but I'm physically closer, more in touch with it. And I think the instrument makers are aware of the problems. Like MOOG. I saw him a few weeks ago, and he wants to become a craftsman, just to make beautiful INSTRUMENTS for people. He's teaching himself carpentry... He said he wants to become as good a carpenter as he is in electronics. He just bought a house with a big barn now, and he's going to work in his barn and stay out of the factory.

I don't know if that's a very direct answer to your question. What I mean is that it is possible to develop that kind of very "organic" attitude towards electronics as well as towards anything else. I agree that until now synthesizers have been quite crude. Remember that they're in an extremely primitive stage of development -- only ten years old!

*But you don't see any logical distinction?*

Why not have inside and outside both together?

*I think that playing instruments needs always a large amount of "Traegheit der Masse"..... um, inertia! The aspect of the connection of the human body to the instrument is much more separated in playing synthesizers. So it's much more mind work.*

I agree. There was a period where I didn't play the synthesizer for a year and a half. I had it in the house and rarely went near it. Because I was very involved with playing acoustic instruments like these Javanese gongs (STRIKING OF ONE GONG AT TEITELBAUM'S HOUSE) and studying the Japanese Shakuhachi and Ghanaian drums. I think I later translated those sorts of playing experiences into my approach to the synthesizer.

*This kind of analog control over the instruments,*

*you mostly have to digitalize in synthesizers.*

Well, that's one reason I still like analog synthesizers (and keyboard controllers), although I can see that the digital developments being made now will surely be powerful tools for what you call the "inside" aspect. At the same time I hope that the problem of the physical interference between hand and electronics will continue to be improved in the immediate future too. For instance, in the THRESHOLD piece, a very precise physical control is required to translate the level of incoming sounds that the performer hears into gestures which produce sounds of precisely matched amplitude on his instrument.

I have, as I mentioned, done the piece with both acoustic instruments and synthesizer. Now one of the things I like about the Moog synthesizer is that it has very slow attack and decay times; they can take ten seconds each if you hold down a key continuously. But if you control very carefully the continuity of touch, almost like caressing the key, you can keep the amplitude kind of "floating" about the threshold of audibility by the frequency and duration with which you suppress the key. (Looked at in another way, duration becomes translated into amplitude.) So you can control loudness by the way you play it, with touch. It takes considerable physical control and can be very refined. Again, it's a focusing down.

Like when I was working in the brainwave laboratory at Queens College in New York in 1967, they were also doing another experiment with biofeedback, training people to control their muscle movements to the extent of being able to move so slightly that they only fired one neuron. That's physical too, but.....

*Va it's less the acting out, but much more a kind of sensitizing your whole system.*

It's certainly true these activities don't build big muscles I should play more badminton (LAUGHTER) Hey, we could have a doubles match. I played badminton with ANTHONY BRAXTON recently, and he "wiped" me. I was so ashamed, I could hardly run.

*So do you like to play better alone with your synthesizer or play with others like in MEV?*

Well, I'm getting to like playing alone. Because I've rarely played alone. I guess in a way it has something to do with the sort of collective, ah, philosophy of music which I really believed in with all my heart, probably more than it was good for me.....

*So you think a kind of homogeneous group would function much better if one tries to sensitize things? But like in MEV, where everybody represents his own individuality, there's no way besides just showing it. If you want to integrate the playing together of one group, then you have on the one hand a very noisy percussion, and on the other side a synthesizer. And especially if you're playing it on the lower level of recognition. Don't you like to play then in more homogeneous groups?*

It's, ah, more pleasant. It's easier. You're right. It's probably masochistic to continue to do this..... But you should have heard the WORLD BAND. We had a Japanese musician, a Korean, an American, an Indian, an Armenian, each playing from his traditional base and yet trying to communicate musically. You see, I'm very interested in trying to keep it all together right now. And it seems to me that one of the big problems in keeping it together is just exactly in those places where where people tend to part -- disjunctions of cultures, geography, styles, concepts, etc. So if you try to bridge these gaps..... That's been a concern of a number of musicians, and a growing tendency. There a lot of people crossing boundaries. And the music is sometimes very awkward. But I think there's a certain importance to keeping communication going on the highest possible level between otherwise disparate groups. (Telephone ringing)

*But it challenges the need, then everybody gives up the self somehow to adapt to the, you know, to the group's common denominator to make it more homogeneous than it originally is.*

I don't know what to do about giving up the self in that way. I think I gave myself up too much in the past.

*But if there is a group of individuals like MEV, then it is necessary at least for the instruments that are by nature dominant to hold back somehow. In the original MEV there was a kind of unity radiating from it, because every-*



body had this kind of, um, very powerful and vigorous anarchism expressed in his activity. Now MEV is like four different poles, by ideology and nature of instrument. So you can't be anarchistic. You have to relate to each other very carefully to get these four poles to a certain center.

It's a big question. But I think that's what improvisation is: a process which enables one to try to uncover those common things in a free situation. Where no one person's will is dominant or, one person's set of ideas is being tested.

Ya, it's more a thing happening within a circle, where people outside just watch it. They don't get like emotionally touched by it. They just follow with their minds how the people communicate. But if you have a group which is playing very homogeneously, it radiates much more to the people and is made for people.

Do you think that STEVE REICH's music radiates more to the people than improvised music?

It radiates by itself. I don't value it. I don't say that the people like it more. But it radiates because of the homogeneity and its simple-mindedness. And it's made to move.

Hm..... hm.....

Do you see any kind of tendency of this kind in the current music of LIST, RZEWSKI, WOLFF, etc? This kind of song writing, narrative songs, etc. WOLFF somehow defined his new pieces as an odd combination of SATIE and IVES.

Who said that? CHRISTIAN?

Yes.

Great!

That makes me listen. And I know that like AUSTIN in Tampa finishes the unfinished pieces of IVES.

That is a project I had in mind actually.

*Wow.*

The UNIVERSE SYMPHONY. I inquired about the sketches -- They are all at the Yale Music Library. So I wrote to my old teacher, ALLEN FORTE, and asked him, 'cause he's been through all the IVES sketches. I thought that we should do it by "committee". I thought it would be nice to do it collectively by a group of American composers, and I wrote to JIM TENNEY about the idea when he was in Tampa. He is very much an IVES lover. But I understood there wasn't very much to go on.

*You mentioned JIM TENNEY, that he's very devoted to IVES and VARESE, etc.*

He's never been to Europe. Someone should bring him! It's ridiculous. He's a composer who doesn't push his career very much.

*To get back to your own music, I think it points to a basic value of electronic music to confront a person with himself, making the own self the subject of a process. And so to experience more about oneself. Like LUCIER does with his poetry, or ASHLEY with his conversations.*

Yeah, for instance, in the MEV improvisations we used to do in the sixties, there was a period of discovery for us which involved the physical and psychological effects of playing through electronic instruments and circuitry which was very much like that: the whole experience of making a physical gesture HERE, which then comes back to you from a far distant loudspeaker actually being transformed in a space electronically in a live performance situation.

There is a statement in the KABBALAH that I liked to quote very much at that time to describe the experience which says that in the state of ecstasy a man "suddenly sees the shape of his self before him talking to him and forgets his self; and it is disengaged from him, and he sees the shape of his self before him talking to him and predicting the future." Of course, that was written hundreds of years before electronics.

The piece we used to do called SPACECRAFT, and my own biofeedback pieces of that time were attempts to formalize those kinds of experiences into a process. And the process

was very involved with electronics. As a part of it, I used to connect myself physiologically into the system, using my heartbeats and brainwaves and breathing. So it became a physical, electronically-assisted Yoga you might say. This was particularly true of the brainwave and biofeedback pieces I began doing in 1967 -- ORGAN MUSIC, IN TUNE, and others, even more so than in the collective MEV pieces. The whole biofeedback experience...At this time I hadn't any negative feelings about electronics, because for me, you know, it's like the extension of the nervous system, if it's treated that way.

*So are you going to do that in your next pieces?*

Yes, I'm still interested in the application of biofeedback techniques in a musical context. Last year we did a new piece in which BARBARA MAYFIELD's brainwaves were picked up and transmitted by FM to control a synthesizer while she was practicing Tai Chi Chuan, the Chinese martial art that is itself a form of meditation. The alpha peaks were used to trigger and advance a sequencer with a pre-set pentatonic melody -- actually a South Indian vocal pattern in raga Mohanam. As the brain "played" this melody, following the rhythm of the alpha bursts, the South Indian drummer TRICHY SANKARAN accompanied it on his Mridangam, searching out recurrent rhythmic patterns and cycles in the alpha.

We also did a videotape version in which the alpha controlled the video image through the Paik-Abe and Dan Sandin video synthesizers, which was shown recently on Channel 11 in Chicago. We will soon be putting out a record of one of my brainwave pieces (maybe this one; I haven't decided yet.) through ARC with one of DAVID ROSENBOOM's biofeedback pieces on the other side.

I'm still interested in composing some structures for improvising, particularly for a trio of FREDERIC RZEWSKI, ANTHONY BRAXTON and myself. I've always been interested in the trio formulation, and FREDERIC and ANTHONY are two of the musicians I most enjoy playing improvised music with. We are planning a tour of Canada in the spring.

I will also continue to develop the THRESHOLD pieces, and I have a political piece that I'm hoping to work on also. It's been in the back of my mind for a year or so. It has to do with, ah..... the death of someone I knew, a friend.

Of course I'm still interested in working with musicians from other cultures, and studying their music.

*So you said that you want to go to Korea?*

More likely I'll go to Japan first..... I wrote a piece for SHAKUHACHI last year, and I want to study some more.

*Just the instrument of breath!*

I used to get quite hyperventilated practicing (laughs) I used to come for my lesson. I studied with a great Shakuhachi player at Wesleyan in 1970 and '71 named KODO ARAKI V, from an incredibly distinguished family of Shaku-hachi players, many generations, a very important family, who married an American woman, which gave him a different perspective than his ancestors.

But I'd come for my lesson and sit down and he'd say, "Okay, just play one long note at a time." We'd sit on the floor opposite each other. And so I'd play this one note for as long as I had breath, and then each of the others the same way. Then he'd put this notation in front of me. And it looked like Japanese, except that it was actually music. And then he'd tell me to play this. And I'd be so spaced out from just playing those notes that I could hardly see anything (laughs) And he'd look. I'd say, "Eh?" And he'd say "DIZZY ??" (LAUGHTER)

Yeah, it's an amazing instrument..... The thing is, I've been reading that Shakuhachi players were used as spies at one period. Because they had monks who used to play with baskets over their heads, and nobody could tell who they were. And it's rumoured that they often turned out to be spying for the government. This was about the Seventeenth or Eighteenth Century, I think. It's strange, isn't it? One of the highest, most spiritually disciplined instruments in the world, and yet.....

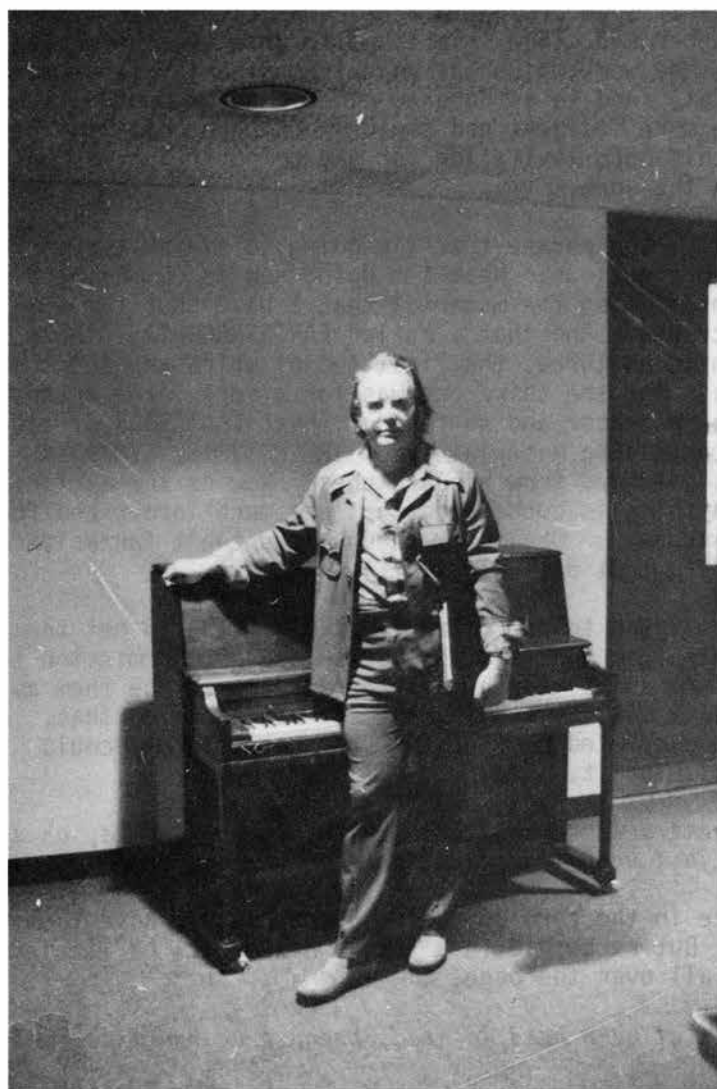
The Sounding environment is the score  
playing <sup>quiet rolls</sup> long tones on resonant metal reeds  
roll softly, <sup>without attack,</sup> on resonant metal instruments,  
choosing sounds and pitches which  
interact with those you're focusing on  
from the environment  
match your loudness to that of  
the sounds you hear as  
precisely as you can.

By making very slight changes in loudness  
should create interactions of acoustic  
phenomena, beat frequencies and melodies  
of partials between your sound and  
those of the environment.

The greater the skillness, the higher the expression

Richard Turilla  
Berlin Oct. 4, 1974

Larry Austin



*So I heard that you are going to finish the UNIVERSE SYMPHONY of IVES. I think it's a marvelous thing to do.*

Well, it was an open invitation in the first place by CHARLES IVES according to HENRY COWELL, who was his biographer and close friend. IVES knew that he wouldn't finish the work, which was an extraordinarily large work in its goal. And so as he grew older, and of course as he became more indigent and couldn't compose actually, he made this open invitation for any composer who wanted to finish the work.

Actually, the phrase that I'm going to finish the work is a bit pretentious. What I'm doing now is composing a set of fantasies on the material that I have thus far transcribed. And that's called FANTASMAGORIA. There happen to be three, the first two of which are for chamber groups. And the third one was for a very large orchestra, chorus, narrator and so forth. These FANTASIES of course were containing materials from THE UNIVERSE SYMPHONY that's extended from his sketches. Now as far as finishing anything is concerned, that's a much larger and formidable project. Obviously though, you can't fantasize on something that doesn't exist.

So what I had to do in the first place was to get the sketches from the Yale collection and get permission to copy them and so forth, and then to transcribe them as much as I could. And I spent six months doing that. And I have completed most of the sketches. THEN I could fantasize on it.

*Are there actually sketches in the form of notes, or are there just verbal descriptions?*

They're in the form of music, of course. I have them here. But as he did in a lot of his music, he liked to write all over the page.

*And was it very hard to read, because he had this hand shaking?*

Well, these sketches were done fairly early, before he got Parkinson's disease. But they are like many composers' sketches. You write notes to yourself, memos all over the place. It had to do with the aesthetics, with the



techniques that you're using.

*I heard that he had the original idea in Keene Valley. Is this true? To put the musicians on all places and heights around the valley?*

Well, it's claimed by HENRY COWELL, the biographer, again that IVES planned a work to be played from six to ten orchestras on as many mountain tops in the Adirondacks. And so he went to Keene Valley in upstate New York. He would look out over the horizon and be inspired by the scene and add a few more bars to his UNIVERSE SYMPHONY, plus the whole idea of discretely locating sound sources.

And of course when anyone read his autobiography, that he planned this work for six to ten orchestras, then they said, "Oh, hell, noone can do that." They thought it was a kind of dream, a kind of concept piece, and so forth. I have yet to find anyplace in the sketches or any of the memos that IVES wrote where he actually says that there were six to ten orchestras on as many mountain tops. So, it's hearsay on COWELL's part. It's a nice idea, and I can see where he might have gotten that idea, but I have a feeling though that the concept certainly is for spacially disposed groups, certainly, but not six to ten orchestras. Plus the fact that when you think of an orchestra, you usually think of the conventional with strings, brass, percussion and so forth. What IVES it turns out meant is a percussion orchestra, a wind orchestra, a string orchestra and so forth. So that the piece COULD be played perhaps by the combination in different orchestras made up of a total number of about three orchestras.

And so my idea is to interest three symphony orchestras somewhere in the world to finally do this piece. It will take me a long time to really get it in shape. And so I have to have support for that idea. And so before I dive into it, I want to have all reasonable assurance that the piece will get played. It makes no sense to me to do this sort of scholarly work which is necessary to realize the piece and not have a performance of mine. That's my instinct as a composer.

But meanwhile my work right now has to do with writing these fantasies. I'm becoming more and more identified with the work. And so...

*And so actually you're using computer facilities for writing the fantasies.*

Yes, because some of his concepts were so advanced that no human performance then or now could have realized them. The percussion orchestra music,

*the life pulse.*

the life pulse, involves nineteen percussionists and one piccolo. And each one of these percussion parts has its own meter and tempo relationship to the others in prime numbers up to thirty-one. For instance, there might be in a span of eight seconds the usual 8/4 measure, for instance a quarter note every beat and very second. Against those eight beats, imagine seven in that eight, or thirty-one against twenty-nine, against twenty-three, against eleven, against fourteen. Not even the best percussionist could do that. So I've had to devise a system where we could, if I was to hear the music, I would have had to devise a system where I could use percussionists, but have them play accurately in these times.

That is one application of the computer. And the other is simply to coordinate the performance. I would imagine for instance that in a performance of the UNIVERSE SYMPHONY .. if it would happen sometime..... and I believe it will.... that we would have to have several conductors, all with headphones, who would be conducting in separate but related times. And that's not an unusual thing musically. But to have twenty different ones I think is pretty extraordinary.

*So the life pulse will be taped then?*

Yes.

*And did IVES conceive of it going throughout the whole piece?*

That I'm not sure about, but I think it's twenty-four minutes long. There are ten cycles of it, and so I BELIEVE that is the case. He also had an EARTH chord, which is a drone that lasted at LEAST through the first section of the piece. There are three sections.

*He writes in his MEMOS, "In other words, giving a musical piece in two parts, but played at the same time..... the lower part working out something representing the earth and listening to that primarily, and then the upper reflecting the skies and the heaven....." And so how are you planning to rewrite that?*

Well, the music is in layers, as he says there. And what you discover when you look at the manuscripts is that there's the earth chord, which is a part of what he calls the earth music. And that's a drone, a six-note drone that lasts a long time, at least half the piece. Then there's a rock formation, which is really a kind of very disjunct melodic lines played mainly by brass instruments and some wind instruments. And so with the music and the rock formation music you have part of this horizon he talks about.

Then above that the heaven music, played mainly by strings and flutes and upper woodwinds. And so he sees the whole thing as a kind of landscape. Then, below that to give it its heartbeat, its life pulse, is the percussion, which actually does go through the whole piece of the UNIVERSE SYMPHONY. In my own fantasies of it, it doesn't. I don't include it in the middle section.

*Over this life pulse IVES wanted to have realized the whole evolution process in three sections.*

In a way, yes. There were three sections. First the past, which is the formation of the waters and the mountains. Second is the present: earth, evolution in nature and humanity. Third is the future: heaven and the rise of all to the spiritual.

*Are those three movements, or are they performed together in spacial distribution?*

I don't want to say specifically right now, because he contradicts himself in these sketches. He says just as any composer will do, one idea about how it should proceed in time. And then two pages later you'll have exactly the opposite idea. I haven't resolved those things yet in my work on the UNIVERSE SYMPHONY. Right now I tend to think however that the earth music, the drone, comes first and does one complete cycle, there being ten cycles

in the piece. The life pulse is heard. And then finally the thematic music, the rock formation, the rock themes, the heaven music and so forth come in, much as in any piece of IVES.

But one of the puzzling things..... and rather interesting things to me..... is I haven't yet figured out..... and may never figure out..... exactly how long the piece is. I think it's twenty-four minutes, but it MAY be twenty-four hours or twenty-four days or twenty-four years. That's not ever made clear to me. The piece is so huge in scope as far as the forces involved that twenty-four minutes is all you're going to play it? You wonder about that. And so I tend to think that that aspect of the performance, if it ever happens, will be somewhat left up to the performers themselves. If they want to stay out there twenty-four hours, I suppose that would be terrific. I'd have it done that way. On the other hand it could be a concert piece which would last only twenty-four minutes.

*So how do you actually realize now getting into the FANTASIES that you're writing, like the tuning he's doing. Didn't he ascribe to every group a different tuning system?*

Well, that's mainly in the middle section, the "B" Section where he talks about working with materials with different tunings, mainly quarter tone tunings and so forth. He talks about harmonics, yes. But he mainly does that in the middle section, and it's in quarter tones primarily. And he has a whole matrix of chords for instance that could be used as material for the composition.

I've defined from that also on one of the pages of the sketches that he wanted to make a lot of different kinds of scales with different tunings, say thirteen per octave rather than twelve. And in fact I theorize that in fact he must have thought about dividing the octave up into as many as thirty-one different parts, since the prime numbers up to thirty-one are terribly important to him. In fact if you do that, you get fourteen numbers, fourteen scales, and you could have the whole tone scale as the value ONE and then a semi-tone scale as TWO, and then the eighteen tone scales the value of THREE and so forth, up to thirty-one.

And I've done that with the computer. In my own FANTASIES in the middle section I have fourteen different kinds of scales, also including the seven super harmonic series made with the computer and so forth. And I took off on his idea of tracing the outlines of the mountains in the Adirondacks as being the melodic progression of these scales.

But however, I've never been to the Adirondacks. I've been told though that they're not very spectacular and kind of flat and uninteresting. Last summer when I was in Aspen in the Rocky Mountains for a performance of FIRST FANTASY I was fascinated with the beauty of the place. And there's a place called Maroon Lake, and you're surrounded by mountain range when you're at the lake. And so I was working on the SECOND FANTASY at the time, trying to figure out how I might apply these concepts of scales to the middle section. And so I came up with the idea that I'll use the Rocky Mountains instead of the Adirondacks, because they were very, very dramatic, and much more exciting.

I'm using some composer's license there. And so I did trace the outline as well as I could. Now I've realized that the sound of those mountains in scales with computer generating direct generation of the sounds. That's as far along as a matter of fact that I am now.

*That's one side of realizing the concept. I mean the computer is possibly the only corpus at the moment which can do all these kinds of tunings. I can't imagine any orchestra at the moment realizing these complicated tunings.*

Either the computer or an instrument called the "scaletron" can be utilized. But of course the string players could learn to do this, I suppose, since the pitches are continually variable. But I don't think I'd want to impose that on most orchestras. I in fact don't think that IVES had in mind to do that at all.

*He always seemed to me like a genius who like had to do something with a conventional corpus, but he had too many ideas beyond that.*

His problem was the fact that he couldn't perform the music. It was much too difficult for them. So nowadays

I think we have better performers, and perhaps those problems wouldn't have presented themselves. It's difficult to say. He did experiment with different kinds of timbres for instance, which was such a wonderful resource in computer music. Not to any great extent though. His main thing as I feel was the concept of layering in the textures meeting against one another as it were, and piled on top of one another, and getting us out of the idea that, or away from the idea, that the sounds always had to come from the same place, that is, right in front of you.

In fact, one of the most important things about the UNIVERSE SYMPHONY is the sound sources HAVE to be separated. In fact it's going to be difficult in the first performance to figure out where in the heck we're going to hold it. Probably outdoors, with one orchestra away, or several orchestras very much separated from one another. And so what the audience would do is wander around in this space, getting different perspectives on the spacial distribution of the sound. And so there's a kind of spacial factor that he has working in it. I suppose we perform much of his music in a wrong way today, because we usually put it on a stage and just let everything come straight out of us. And so many people don't like his music, because it seems so dense and thick.

*So how do you now realize the FANTASIES ?*

The FIRST FANTASY is for brass quintet, live brass quintet and recorded brass quintet, with narrator and recorded narrator, and a tape which includes the earth choir and the life pulse as well as some electronic sounds in the middle section.

The SECOND FANTASY is for a smaller ensemble, a quartet of viola, clarinet, piano and percussion, along with tape. And there much of the heaven music will be played. That piece is still in progress. And so I can't be exact on how everything is going to turn out.

The THIRD FANTASY as I mentioned will be for a large orchestra, and probably will provide all of these things.

The FIRST, SECOND and THIRD FANTASIES can be played together or singly or in pairs. And they are coordinated by a click track that the conductors or performers hear.

Handwritten musical score for strings, showing dynamics like *pp*, *mf*, *f*, and *pp*, and a section marked *L (w/ F-knag)*.

to the spiritual eternity from the great  
 inknow to the great unknown. We know  
 but little here below and of that little..

Handwritten musical score for strings, including a section marked *b.e.* and dynamics like *mf*, *p*, and *mp*.

Excerpts from  
 FIRST FANTASY ON IVES'  
 UNIVERSE SYMPHONY by  
 Larry Austin  
 published by  
 Continuo Music Press  
 225 West 57th St.  
 New York 10019

ST 2

R.H.

R.T.T.

R.B.T.

...a Symphony...the Earth and the Firmament..

N.

3.45

T.1

T.2

H.

T.T.

B.T.

APE

...a...b...c...d...e...f...g...h.....

Working when all prime factor meters are in exact time position...

...i...j...k...l...m...n...o...p...q...r...s...t...u...v...w...x...y...z...

Earth...evolution...nature...

R.T.1

R.T.2

R.H.

R.T.T.

pp



I may extend it into a larger piece than I had originally intended...But the themes and plan are quite clearly

indicated in the sketch. I want to work this out completely this summer... think advisable staying on

job refer. I don't

2.09

2.09

make more sense to anybody looking at it with this explanation.

2.41

CHARLES IVES.   UNIVERSE SYMPHONY  
BEGINNING OF SECTION B (PRESENT)  
EARTH, EVOLUTION IN NATURE & HUMANITY

Copyright © 1975  
The NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND LETTERS  
Reprinted by permission.

Photograph supplied by the  
JOHN HERRICK JACKSON MUSIC LIBRARY  
YALE UNIVERSITY

Handwritten musical score on aged paper with multiple staves and annotations.

**Staffs (from top to bottom):**

- VC:** Violin Concerto
- V5:** Violin 5
- V4:** Violin 4
- V3:** Violin 3
- V2:** Violin 2
- V1:** Violin 1
- Primo clari:** Clarinet in C
- Secundo clari:** Clarinet in Bb
- Viola:** Viola
- Cello:** Cello
- Double Bass:** Double Bass

**Annotations and Text:**

- Top left:  $\frac{1}{2}$  2nd. *leaves as form*
- Top center: *an non form*
- Top right: *in non form*
- Left margin: *Primo clari*, *Secundo clari*
- Bottom left: *End Earth*, *1st 2nd 3rd*
- Bottom center: *each group*, *1st 2nd 3rd*
- Bottom right: *1st 2nd 3rd*, *4th 5th 6th 7th*

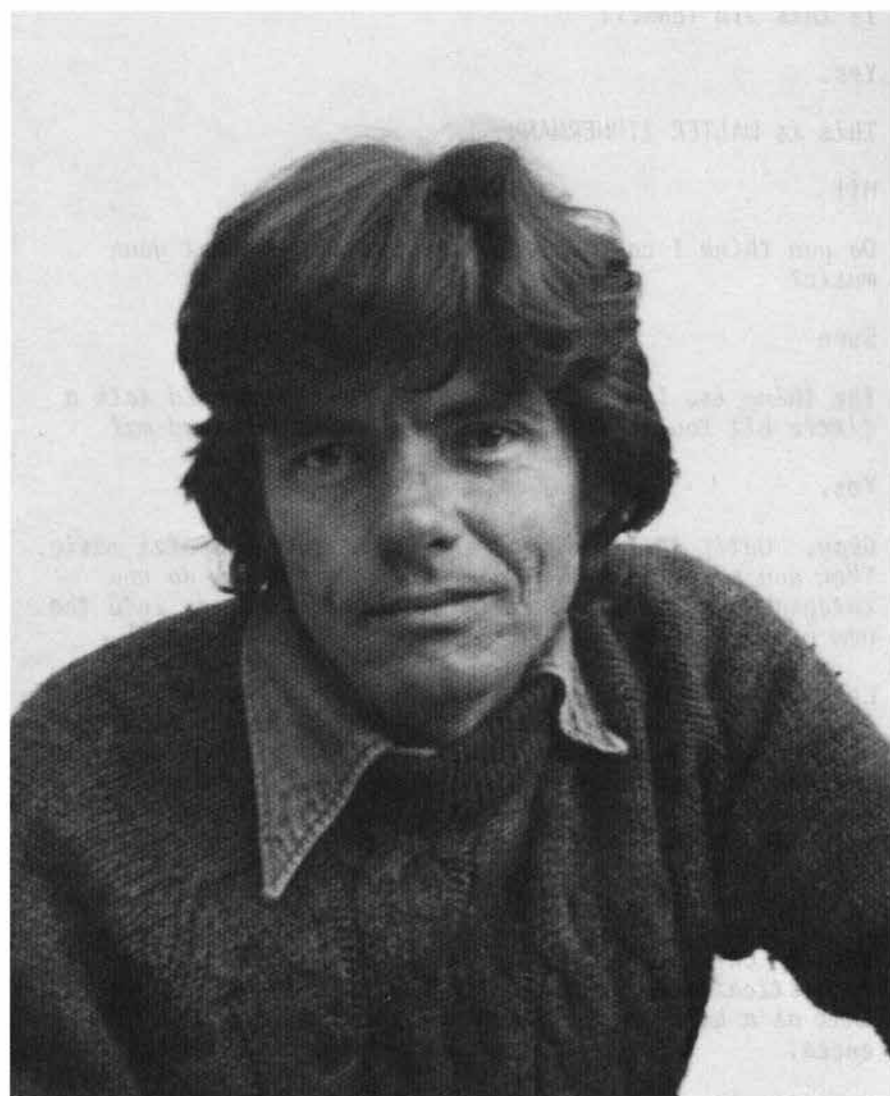
**Handwritten Notes:**

- VC* (circled)
- V5* (circled)
- V4* (circled)
- V3* (circled)
- V2* (circled)
- V1* (circled)
- Primo clari* (circled)
- Secundo clari* (circled)
- Viola* (circled)
- Cello* (circled)
- Double Bass* (circled)

**Other markings:**

- Various musical notations including notes, rests, and clefs.
- Handwritten numbers and letters (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, A, B, C).
- Handwritten symbols and diagrams.

James Tenney



TENNEY

Phone conversation:

Hello?

*Is this JIM TENNEY?*

Yes.

*This is WALTER ZIMMERMANN.*

Hi!

*Do you think I can ask you some questions about your music?*

Sure

*The thing is, I'm just taping, ya, and we should talk a little bit louder than usual. Do you understand me?*

Yes.

*Okay. Until 1967 you were concerned with computer music. Then you switched to instrumental music. How do you integrate your experiences with computer music into the new pieces?*

Let me first correct a date there. I was working with computer music from 1961 to 1969. Then I went BACK to writing instrumental music, since I had written instrumental music before 1961. And I found that the kinds of compositional procedures that I had learned and developed using the computer could be applied in instrumental music, too..... formal ideas, and ways of achieving certain kinds of textures, and so forth.

*Like in CRYSTAL CANON. What I know is they are like very sophisticated constructions of canonic drumming. I see that as a kind of fertilization from the computer experiences.*

Fertilization?

*Ya, from the computer experiences.*

Certainly, they have influenced my instrumental writing.

*Did you apply experiences with expanded time and harmonic scales, or new techniques of instrumentation? Do you understand the question?*

Well, since I've been working with instrumental music again, I don't know that I've done anything very experimental with instrumentation, as such. I've been using mostly standard instruments, in pretty standard ways. But my concern these last two or three years with the harmonic series as a basis for pitch organization probably derives from my work in acoustics, as well as a very long-standing involvement with timbre as a formative parameter in music. Aside from that, I think it is mostly the formal aspects of these instrumental pieces that have been influenced by the computer work.

*And some pieces are written in simplest possible structures and notation. I talked to one of your former students, MICHAEL BYRON, and he called it POST CARD MUSIC.*

Yes, I went through a period of about a year (1971) when I found that a number of my musical ideas were easily notated on one page or in one very small space. It occurred to me that these might nicely make postcards, or "Score Cards", and I called the series POSTAL PIECES. I am not doing that kind of thing anymore, although there are certain things about some of those pieces that I am still interested in..... a piece like KOAN for Violin, for example. Do you know that one?

*Is it printed in one of the issues of SOUNDINGS?*

No. This has only appeared in the post card form.

*Then I don't know it.*

In KOAN and some of the other POSTAL PIECES the form of the piece is so simple and linear that it will become utterly predictable to a listener after a very short time. My feeling is that, as soon as that happens, the listener then becomes free to concentrate on more detailed aspects of the sound, because he knows that he is not going to be surprised by any formal or "dramatic" turns here or there.

*I see.*

All there is to listen to is the microacoustical details.

*And the listener confronts himself much more with the music.*

Right. I realized, in writing these pieces, that this was one way to avoid drama. Haha..... which I'm still trying to find ways to avoid.

*Pieces I know from scores, like QUINTEXT, where each piece is written as a gesture for another composer: FELDMAN, XENAKIS, RUGGLES, VARESE, PALESTINE. Aren't they dedications in the best sense, because they grasp the specific personal perfume?*

Personal what?

*Perfume. They are dedications in its genuine structure, like you just try to feel in the work of FELDMAN.*

Well, the only problem with that is that in most cases it worked the other way around. That is, the dedication didn't come before the composition of the piece, rather afterwards or during the course of writing. But I wanted them all to be dedicatory. Frequently these relations were very..... how can I say..... trivial ones. Like the CHOIR OF ANGLES FOR CARL RUGGLES. You know, the music is totally unlike RUGGLES' music, but the initial chord has the same interval structure as the initial chord of his piece called ANGELS. That was deliberate, and that's something that occurred DURING the composition of the piece.

*The last piece of QUINTEXT is dedicated to CHARLEMAGNE PALESTINE.*

Yes. He was a graduate student at Cal Arts when I was teaching there. He was doing very interesting things with the voice and in piano improvisations, and this was a kind of personal gesture to him. Even though his work was very different from my own, we were both concerned with timbre and the harmonic series.

*I see. Another piece concerned with harmonic expansion is SPECTRAL CANON for CONLON NANCARROW, written for a player piano which is tuned to the harmonic series. I have just*



*seen the score, but the piece must sound fantastic. Was it performed?*

I have not yet heard it either, because it has taken a long time to get the piano roll punched. I went to visit NANCARROW a couple of months ago, and I brought the roll with me because he has a special machine for punching. We started to punch it while I was there, but I couldn't stay long enough to finish it, so he kept it, and finished punching it for me. It is in the mail on the way here now, so I hope to be able to hear it soon. So far, though, NANCARROW is the only one who has actually heard the piece.

*I heard he is living in Mexico?*

That's right.

*He is American, and just doing Player Piano pieces.*

Yes, they are absolutely fantastic!

*So far I haven't heard any pieces by him.*

He is one of the really great composers living today.

*How old is he?*

He was born in 1912, so he's 63 years old.

*You know, we should know much more about these composers on the West Coast, because Europe doesn't know too much about them.*

Do you know the magazine NUMUS WEST?

Yes.

That is one source where you can get such information.

*Then, I know the articles you wrote in the issue of SOUNDINGS about IVES, RUGGLES and VARESE. Do you see a new valuation of these composers?*

I have always been interested in those composers, but do you mean in the sense of a larger public?

*No, I mean if they are inspiring new music.*

They were very important to ME. In fact, RUGGLES and VARESE were teachers of mine. I actually knew them. I was closer with RUGGLES than VARESE, but I considered them both as teachers.

*Could you just describe the experience you had with RUGGLES, because I heard he was very strict in his composing and teaching.*

I met him when I was a student at Bennington College in Vermont, and he lived in the little town of Arlington, which was just fifteen miles away. I got to know him, and we became really close over a period of several years. We used to have long talks about things that I played for him on the piano. Later I played for him tapes of my own electronic music, and we would talk about those. I don't think of him as "strict" at all, although in his own music he worked with a fantastically refined technique..... and a fantastically refined EAR. Always searching for the "perfect" sound in a given place in a piece.

*And he worked very long on pieces, like ten years on one.*

Right. But RUGGLES developed a kind of dissonant polyphony unlike any other music, and this was done without any sort of system, which might have facilitated his compositional process, but simply "by ear", one might say.

*Do you think it is actually more his technique of composing which is inspiring, or do you think it is his music too?*

Both. His music is very beautiful!

*Ya? Like PHILIP CORNER said that his style has become watered down by the movie music composers.*

It seems to me that movie music is coming more from SCHOENBERG than from RUGGLES. What PHIL is talking about, I guess, is what RUGGLES and SCHOENBERG had in common..... sonorities based on 7ths and 9ths, and a certain kind of post-romantic or neo-romantic gesture in the melodic lines, and so forth. But you know, even movie music composers can't destroy REAL MUSIC.

*The other one you studied with is EDGARD VARESE. You dedicated to him the CRYSTAL CANON.*

I dedicated several pieces in my life to VARESE. The first one was a piece of computer music called PHASES, in 1963, and then later one of the pieces in QUINTEXT, "Parabolas and Hyperbolas....."

*I think that VARESE is still inspiring because of his opening up of instrumental music to new sonorities taken from the environment. And I just want to know how do you realize this aspect in your present projects.*

This awareness of environmental sounds will always be important to me, even when I'm not actually incorporating such sounds in a particular piece. The lessons to be learned from the music of VARESE are unforgettable, but of course many of the same "lessons" are implicit in the music of CHARLES IVES and JOHN CAGE, too. Let's not forget that!

*Are you going back to computer music?*

I've actually used a small computer for certain things in several recent pieces, and I expect to do more work with the computer very soon, but right now I am working with instruments and still finding an exciting area of things that can be done with traditional instruments. Some of these are related to my experiences with computer music, some are not.

*Could you describe the piece you are working on now?*

Yes, right now I am working on a piece for strings and percussion in which I am attempting to simulate speech. This obviously involved the same kind of acoustical thinking which one might use in electronic or computer music, but it fascinates me to do this with traditional instruments. The piece will be called THREE INDIGENOUS SONGS for Chamber Orchestra, and will involve "settings" of a WHITMAN poem, an Amerindian text, and an early Afro-American Blues song. That is what I am working on right now. I don't have any specific plans after that.

TENNEY

*Could you give me some more information about the music scene on the West Coast..... tendencies, clusters of interest and so on?*

Well, it's very extensive and variable. One would have to include ROBERT ASHLEY and CHARLES AMIRKHANIAN in the San Francisco Bay region, LOU HARRISON, GORDON MUMMA and myself here in the Santa Cruz area, DAN LENTZ in Santa Barbara, HAROLD BUDD in Los Angeles, BARNEY CHILDS at Redlands, DANE RUDHYAR in Escondido, PAULINE OLIVEROS, ROGER REYNOLDS, KEN GABURO, ROBERT ERICKSON, and of course, until his death a few years ago, HARRY PARTCH..... all in the San Diego area.

And then quite a number of our former students at Cal Arts have been doing some very interesting work..... though many of them are no longer in California..... like CHARLEMAGNE PALESTINE, INGRAM MARSHALL, DAVID MAHLER, JOHN ADAMS, MICHAEL BYRON, PETER GARLAND and many more. The musical concerns range all the way from theater and live electronics (ASHLEY, MUMMA, LENTZ, REYNOLDS) to the use of new (or very old) instruments and/or tuning systems (PARTCH, HARRISON, myself), new vocal techniques and "text sound" (GABURO, MARSHALL, PALESTINE), "sonic meditation" (OLIVEROS), and "gradual process" (BYRON), to a kind of neo-primitivism arising out of a search for deeper roots in pre-Columbian cultures (GARLAND).

*I see.*

These are some of the more interesting things that are happening now.

*Studying the AZTECS and HOPIS..... Who is very concerned with this at the present time?*

I am thinking of PETER GARLAND, though he is no longer in California.

*Where is he now?*

Right now he is in Guatemala.

*Oh, ha. Did you personally know HARRY PARTCH?*

Yes. I worked with him for a while when I was at the

University of Illinois in 1959 -61.

*Is there someone who is preserving his instruments?*

Yes, a former student of his, who remained with him as an assistant. His name is DANLEE MITCHELL, and he is still in San Diego.

*So there is hope that his music will be performed in the future?*

Yes, it's already happening, in fact.

*It's really a pity that only a few in Europe know about PARTCH, HARRISON, NANCARROW, etc..... Like RICHARD TEITELBAUM, I met him in Toronto, and he told me that you don't push your career and that you should definitely go to Europe and tell all these people about the music of these marvelous composers of the generation of PARTCH. Did you think about this?*

I think I would like that, but I always seem to have too much music to write. If the opportunity arises, however, I'm sure I would enjoy doing it!

Walter - this is a page of manuscript for an early draft  
of a piece I'm working on now - a "simulation"

for chamber orchestra of Walt Whitman's poem, Kosmos,

which will be one movement in a set of pieces called

Three Indigenous Songs for Strings and Percussion.

I thought it might be of use to you,

Jim Tenney

Kosmos (3)

2/2

1/4

Vlns I  
(1st & 2nd soli)

Vlns II

Vlns III

Vlns IV

Vcl

Cb

Trpt

Trmp

Picc.

change  
perc.  
notation  
delete trmp

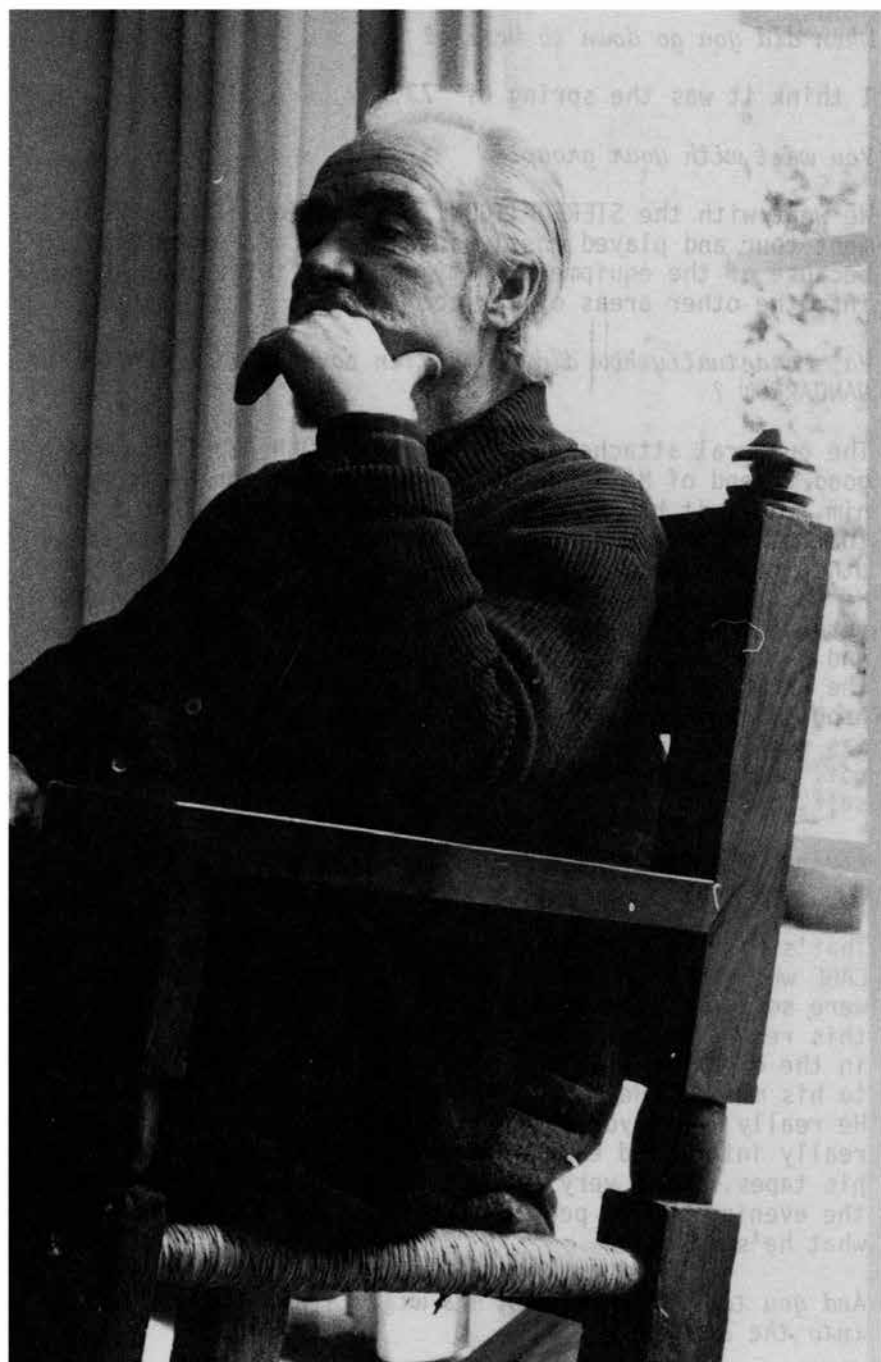
on the Ksh,  
strike the cymbal, instead of bell(s)

B 232



J.B. Floyd about  
Nancarrow





*When did you go down to Mexico?*

I think it was the spring of '73.

*You went with your group?*

We went with the STEREOPTICON. We went on a State Department tour and played mostly in the area of Mexico City, because of the equipment. It just wasn't feasible to go into the other areas of Mexico.

*Ya, so actually how did you get in contact with CONLON NANCARROW ?*

The cultural attaché at the embassy, JOHN ALBRIGHT, was a good friend of NANCARROW, and he arranged for us to meet him, to visit him at his home for an evening. And I guess that that's the only way that anyone ever hears his music other than a recording, because he never gives concerts. He was telling us during the evening that he was finally persuaded at one time to give a concert in Mexico City. And he had his two instruments moved down to a hall, to the BELLS ARTISTS, the big hall there. And he had a program, and very few people attended. It seemed like it was such a disappointment that he just..... he'd rather not. He'd rather make his music and enjoy it there himself, just.....

*living as a composer. Actually, there are too few people who know him.*

That's right. I think it was ah GORDON MUMMA and ah JOHN CAGE who were the people who discovered him in Mexico, and were so fascinated by his music that they arranged to make this recording. So, I think this is a result of his life, in the experience he's had dealing with people in relation to his music. He's become very guarded about his music. He really looks you over and decides whether or not you're really interested enough to go to his studio and listen to his tapes. He's very protective and doesn't want to spend the evening boring people that might not be interested in what he's doing.

*And you told me that even his wife is not allowed to go into the studio?*

That's right, yeah. In fact, DON ALBRIGHT'S wife, DON ALBRIGHT, the cultural attaché who has been there several times, many times probably, taking various guests to the house, his wife wasn't allowed to go into the house to listen, because CONLON felt that she really didn't appreciate his music that much, that it might be that she was just being nice. And he didn't want to give her that opportunity.

*Why is he living in Mexico City actually? He's American.*

Yeah, I'm not sure. I don't really know the background that well.

HORAZAK: He was in the Spanish Civil War, and he defected. He joined the Republicans. And ah he says now that he's free to travel to any country in the world, except the United States.

*What?*

I think they know where he is, but they, I mean the United States, they just won't let him in. As a matter of fact, he was telling of troubles getting paper. I guess there's a paper that he needs that's from the United States. I don't know if it has to do with his status with the United States or what, but they won't ship. They tried to smuggle it in. They tried to get people to mail him paper. He said he got just a few rolls a year.

It's very ironic that he isn't allowed in this country, but one of his closest friends is a member of the embassy, the U.S. embassy.

*So, ah could you describe his environment? He has a player piano there?*

He has two, two uprights that are specially prepared. He has treated the hammers. One he has made very metallic. I think he just pressed the hammers, ironed them very hard. The other has leather covered hammers, and it's a much different timbred instrument. But he's had those, and they're in fantastic adjustment, because the rolls are feiqndishly technical. You know, they're like sixteen pianos playing all at once. And they really respond. The action for an upright piano is amazing.

FLOYD about NANCARROW

*Does he punch the rolls himself?*

He has a machine. It's very archaic.

HORAZAK: It punches one hole at a time!

Yeah, one hole.

He has to move a pointer along some lines. He has to move a pointer towards which of the eighty-eight keys he wants to play. And then he pulls a lever, and it punches a hole, one hole.

*A lot of work for one piece there.*

Well, one of the most fascinating things about his work is it's so infinitely variable in the rhythms, in the durations.

*There's not any limits to ten fingers.*

Or to multiples of rhythms. I mean he can do endless variations. So noone could possibly play his music. It might have sixteen different meters that are fluctuating, varying in a way that noone would ever be able to perform. And when you hear that, it's just amazing.

Or the SOUND when you just go up and down hitting every single note.

It's like sixteen ARTHETUMS going wild. He has one piece that's an "X", that starts at two different tempos. It comes together to arrive in the center at one tempo, and then part, each going its own way to the end. I think his music's unique and he's unique. He's a terrific host. He lives in a very fashionable section, San Angel section of Mexico. He has a beautiful home, Spanish type home, very gracious. And then he has this separate studio. It must have two-foot thick walls, they're really thick, a huge door, and that's strictly his. You walk through a garden, and there is his studio.

*Did you ask him about how he's actually composing these things? He's calling his pieces "studies" for player piano. Did you actually see him composing?*

Yeah, I saw some pieces that were being composed. I think he draws it out, he draws on the paper first. Since he goes through at a constant rate, his tempo is just measured by a ruler.

*As far as I know he's studying polyrhythms, and then super-imposed layers of fast piano playing, and if you can't distinguish the single tone any more, thus getting new qualities of sounds out of that. What else is he studying?*

Well, he's very much influenced by jazz. It seems like that's his background, part of his background. And these gestures of jazz are really evident in his music.

It's really a kind of a ragtime.

*Where is he performed?*

We played last spring in Los Angeles in the Monday Evening Series, which is a Twentieth Century Music series. And we played half the program. The first part of the program was a HARRY PARTCH film. And the next part was three new tapes of NANCARROW. So that he does have performances. All musicians know about him. And he doesn't go to performances. And it's not the same to listen to a tape as it is to sit there and hear his instruments. That would be fantastic, you know, if you could go to concerts of his and watch the instrument. Just to see that activity is amazing.

*Ya, the piano playing by itself.*

It's a great idea.

*Do you think it would be possible that he would give out tapes if I would write a real polite letter?*

I don't know if he has tapes. Maybe he does. You know, he has a strange attitude about his music. He only has one copy of each of the scores, of his rolls. And he's very casual about them. We said, you know, "But don't you have these preserved?! They're just out here on the shelves." "Oh, it doesn't matter." You know, he just dismissed it as not being very important or significant. But it's really amazing. He should have copies. There must be ways to make copies of those rolls.

FLOYD about NANCARROW

Yeah, we talked about that, and ah he got very cynical. Somebody actually brought up what was going to happen to the rolls after he died. And he said, "Why? Do you want one?"



1.  $\text{♩} = 120$

All *se staccato*. All other durations indicated by  $\text{♩}$

Handwritten musical score for the first system. It features a grand staff with three staves. The top two staves are connected by a brace and contain complex rhythmic patterns with many notes, some marked with "staccato" and "8 vs". The bottom staff is a single line with a few notes and rests, including a "pizz" marking. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/2.

Handwritten musical score for the second system. It features a grand staff with three staves. The top two staves are connected by a brace and contain complex rhythmic patterns with many notes, some marked with "staccato" and "8 vs". The bottom staff is a single line with a few notes and rests, including a "loco" marking. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/2.

Handwritten musical score for the first system. It consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a single bass clef staff below. The grand staff contains four measures of music, each featuring dense, slanted note clusters. Handwritten annotations include "8va" above the first and fourth measures, and "p2" above the second measure. The single staff below has a few notes and a dashed line with "8va" written below it.

Handwritten musical score for the second system. It consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a single bass clef staff below. The grand staff contains two measures of music, each featuring dense, slanted note clusters. Handwritten annotations include "8va" above the second measure. The single staff below has a few notes and a dashed line with "1" and "1000" written below it.



3.

Handwritten musical score for the first system. It consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a piano part (bass clef). The treble clef part features three slurs over a series of notes, each labeled "8va". The bass clef part contains a few notes with a "8va" label and a dashed line below it.

Handwritten musical score for the second system. It consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a piano part (bass clef). The treble clef part features two slurs over a series of notes, each labeled "8va", and a third slur in the bass clef. The piano part has a "loco" label and a "8va" label with a dashed line below it.

Handwritten musical notation for the first system. It consists of a grand staff with treble and bass clefs and a piano part with a grand staff. The piano part includes a diagram of a piano keyboard with notes marked with arrows and a small 'L' label.

Two empty musical staves.

Handwritten musical notation for the second system. It consists of a grand staff with treble and bass clefs and a piano part with a grand staff. The piano part includes a diagram of a piano keyboard with notes marked with arrows.

Two empty musical staves.

Two empty musical staves.



5.

The first system of the handwritten musical score consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a vocal line. The grand staff includes two piano parts: the upper part has a complex melodic line with many notes, and the lower part has a simpler accompaniment. The vocal line is written on a single staff with a treble clef and contains several notes with stems. The system is marked with a '5.' at the top left.

The second system of the handwritten musical score consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a vocal line. The grand staff includes two piano parts: the upper part has a complex melodic line with many notes, and the lower part has a simpler accompaniment. The vocal line is written on a single staff with a treble clef and contains several notes with stems. The system is marked with a '5.' at the top left.

Handwritten musical score for the first system, featuring a grand staff with treble and bass clefs and a piano accompaniment below. The notation includes complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings such as "8va" and "8va" with dashed lines indicating octave shifts. The piano part consists of horizontal lines with some vertical strokes and a "v" marking.

Handwritten musical score for the second system, continuing the grand staff and piano accompaniment. It features dense rhythmic notation with many vertical stems, dynamic markings like "8va" and "8va", and a "v" marking. The piano part continues with horizontal lines and vertical strokes.



7.

loco

pp

pp

Copyright © 1975  
 Conlon Nancarrow  
 Apartado 20-550  
 Mexico 20, D.F.  
 Mexico

In 1960 Merce Cunningham choreographed a work for five dancers, titled "Crises", with decor by Robert Rauschenberg. John Cage arranged six of Conlon Nancarrow's Studies for Player Piano, in the order 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, and 6, as the musical accompaniment for "Crises".

"Crises remained in the Cunningham Dance Company repertoire for five years, and was revived briefly in the early 1970s. It was performed widely in the United States and on a six month world tour in 1964. This prolonged exposure, though only to a small part of Nancarrow's music, spawned a considerable, though rather arcane, legion of admirers.

In 1968 the Cunningham Dance Company, with musicians John Cage, Gordon Mumma, and David Tudor, made a Latin American performance tour. During a meeting with Nancarrow in his Mexico City studio, Cage, Mumma and Tudor, who were pioneering in live electronic music, discussed the idea of electronically modifying a group of the Studies for Player Piano in some future live performance situation. Nancarrow was receptive to the idea, and the following year it was realized in a collaborative theatre performance, featuring the dancers Viola Farber and Peter Saul, along with Cage, Mumma, and Tudor. In this special performance, presented at the Billy Rose Theatre in New York City, the musical articulation and rhythmic structure of the Nancarrow Studies retained their original form. Electronic variations were made only to the pitch and timbre characteristics of the music.

The Studies for Player Piano found their way to the Cunningham Dance Company by the efforts of John Edmunds who, in the late 1950s, was with the Americana section of the New York Public Library. Edmunds had requested tape recordings of the then completed Studies from Nancarrow, and brought them to the attention of John Cage.

The first of Nancarrow's Studies for Player Piano was composed in 1948. During the next twenty-seven years Nancarrow composed 41 Studies, two of which, Nos. 38 and 39, are still in progress as of 1974.

Several trends are prominent in the development of the Studies for Player Piano. In the early studies the composer's rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic vocabulary is essentially intuitive, established by the circumstances of each piece. The early studies also have a strong flavor of ragtime or boogie-woogie. Some of the Studies are quite specific: Study 10 is a piano blues, and Study 12 has decidedly Spanish origins. Some of the individual Studies are particularly spectacular in their use of sonority. Study 24 is orchestral in the character of a concerto-grosso, with alternating concertante and ripieno sections. Study 25 is a slightly demonic fantasy with massive blocks of sound.

It is clear, however, that the issue of rhythm is uppermost in Nancarrow's music. It was the composer's desire to make a music of elaborate and precise rhythmic

structure which led him to abandon composition for other instruments and turn his efforts to the player piano.

A second trend, prominent in Studies 15 through 19, 24, and 31 through 41, is that of strictly organized rhythmic canons with fixed proportions. Each voice of a canon has its own tempo, and these tempos have fixed but complex relationships. Study 15, for example, is composed with the tempo relationship of 3 to 4. Study 19 is composed with simultaneous voice tempos of 12 to 15 to 20. Study 33 is extremely complicated, one tempo being related to another by the proportion of 2 to the square root of 2. Two separate voices moving at this proportion approach coincidence but never exactly meet.

A third prominent trend is rhythmic acceleration and deceleration within each voice of a canon. This happens first in Study 8, in which Nancarrow strictly organizes a continually changing tempo by the means of additive acceleration. Study 21 is a tour-de-force of this technique. Subtitled "Canon X", the higher of the two voices begins at great speed and decelerates, while the lower voice begins very slowly and accelerates. The two voices meet in tempo for a brief moment at the center of the piece and continue onward to complete the "X" shape at the conclusion. Two of the Studies are subtitled with the exact percentage-of-change ratios. Study 22 is "Canon 1%,  $1\frac{1}{2}\%$ ,  $2\frac{1}{4}\%$ ", and Study 27 is 5%, 6%, 8%, 11%.



The two most recent studies are for two player pianos operating simultaneously. Furthermore, the rhythmic relationships of these studies are very complex. Study No. 40 is in two parts, the basis of which is the relationship of "e" to pi. Study No. 41 is in three parts. 41a is a canon on the reciprocal of  $\sqrt[3]{\pi}$  to  $\frac{3}{\sqrt{13/16}}$ , 41b is the reciprocal of  $\sqrt{\pi}$  to  $\sqrt{2/3}$ , and 41c is 41a and 41b played simultaneously.

Nancarrow achieves the precise rhythmic control of his Studies for Player Piano by punching the player piano rolls directly. All of the studies were composed with a punching machine which the composer had specially built in 1947. This machine was used for Studies 1 through 21. Nancarrow then made modifications in its design to facilitate the more elaborate requirements of the Studies which followed.

Within specific limits the loudness of a player piano can be controlled by holes punched on the roll which change the striking force of groups of hammers. For example, the treble notes can be loud while the bass notes are quiet. These inherent limitations have been overcome by Nancarrow's unusual doubling of notes and radical use of register to achieve the effect of subtle changes of loudness.

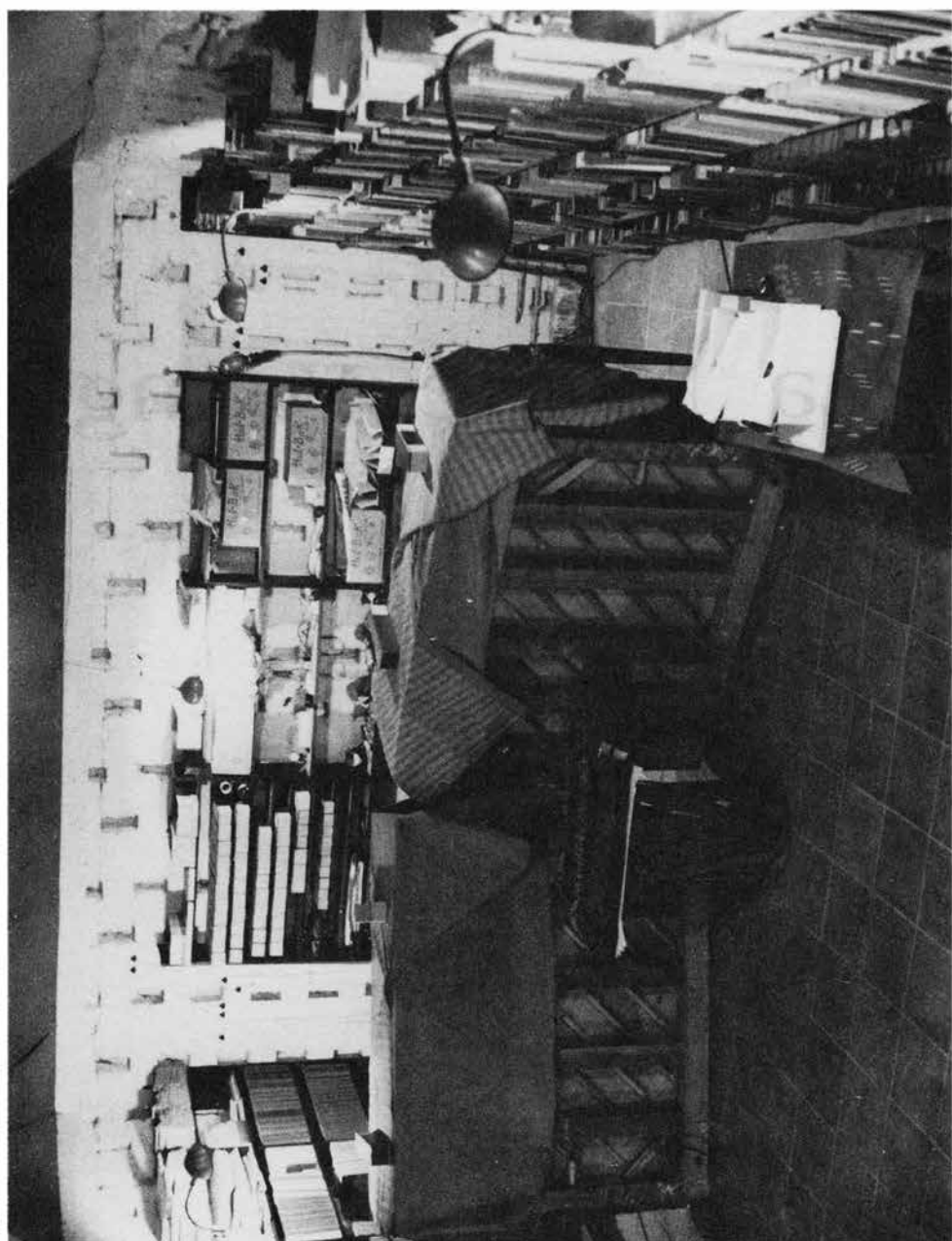
The composer owns two player pianos, both with Ampico mechanisms, which he has modified to achieve the particular timbres which he likes for his Studies. The hammers of one are made of metal, and of the other are a combination of

metal and leather. The Studies are intended to be performed only on one or the other of these special pianos. A now out-of-print recording, Columbia MS 7222, which included a selection of 12 Studies up to No. 33, was made under the composer's supervision on these pianos in his own studio in Mexico City. The composers James Tenney, Gordon Mumma, and Roger Reynolds are now collaborating on a book-length study of Nancarrow's entire player-piano music.

Conlon Nancarrow was born in Texarkana, Arkansas, in 1912, and subsequently lived in Cincinnati and Boston. Following a visit to Spain in the late 1930s he became a resident of Mexico City, and is now a Mexican citizen.

©1975 by Gordon Mumma

PAGE 234:  
CONLON NANCARROW  
PAGE 252: (right side)  
VIEW OF STUDIO OF  
CONLON NANCARROW  
PHOTOS BY GORDON MUMMA  
MEXICO CITY, DEC. 1974



La Monte Young



LA MONTE YOUNG (Phone Call)

Hello.

*Hello, WALTER ZIMMERMANN calling.*

Oh, hi.

*I'm coming to New York next week again, and I want to ask you if you thought about a possible interview.*

Aha, ah..... did you come up with any money?

*No. You see, I told you I really can't do it. I just had to cancel my flight to California and had to make phone conversations with musicians there.*

I don't have any new ideas and ah..... I really feel that I should have money for whatever contribution I make.

*Even if I just ask you about the present state of your studying the intervals?*

Yes I know, but when I give an interview, I'm very serious about it. It would be long, not short. And I cannot say it in a few words. Whatever would be meaningful to me you know would..... I would have to spend some considerable time and energy on it. And I have many, many projects of my own right now, that I don't even have time to work on, ah..... some of which I also don't get paid for. And it's like I'd just be taking time away from my own projects.

*You see, I don't want to leave you out, 'cause you are an important figure in this whole scene of American music. And to leave you out is like ignoring you.*

You, haha, can always say, put some statements in, that you wanted LaMONTE YOUNG, but it was impossible, he was so mercenary, he wanted money, or something like that. Because the thing is, ah..... it's like I take my work very seriously and I'm really working hard on very many projects at this moment. And I'm sure that your book is very important, but I have always for some number of years required that other people pay me to spend time on their projects. And, I don't know, if people really wanted me, they could find some way to raise some money.

*But I think that you should contribute in what you say, so that people that read it have a chance to think about you.*

Aha. Okay, I'll think about it some more. Maybe I can find something I've already done that I can give you.

*So I'll call you again in New York.*

LISTEN, call me in the afternoon, because this is too late at night to call. It has to be some time between one and six, okay?

*Okay!*

Thankyou. Take it easy.

~~LA MONTE YOUNG~~  
COPYRIGHT © LA MONTE YOUNG 1975

COPYRIGHT © LA MONTE YOUNG 1975

# Charlemagne

## Palestine





## PALESTINE

Have some juice. We'll start with juice. This tape starts with juice. (laughing) It's the most healthy way for a tape to start.

*Okay.*

The healthy sound of juice (orange juice pouring). Good! Okay. (box rattling) Sugar.

*Where did you play in Germany?*

Just this time I did concerts in Cologne at a gallery. Then I did a concert at the Paris Biennale, that was put up together very quickly.

*Are these Balinese cigarettes?*

Javanese cigarettes. You want one?

*You know I have the same ones here. Do you buy them here in New York? That's amazing.*

Oh sure, I buy them by the case. They're very similar. Did you get those in Bali? There are only two people in the world who import them. One is in California, and the other is here. And I go to the one here. They're expensive. I mean, they're eighty cents a pack, where in Bali they're twelve cents a pack, or less, eight cents a pack.

*You were in Bali?*

Oh yeah, a long time ago. I did a recording venture with a guy named BOB BROWN, who's the person who put together the Nonesuch Series of Balinese records. And I was with him and the World Music Society in 1971. We were in Java and Bali the summer of '71.

*Are you actually from California?*

No, I'm actually from New York originally.

*Ah, but then you went to California, to Cal Arts?*

To teach, to teach right. And then I taught there for two years, and then I came back. And it was while I was

teaching there that I went to Bali. (stirring juice)  
Which musicians have you.....

*I spoke to TENNEY, because you see, I couldn't go there. It was a phone conversation, and you know, it's not as easy if you don't know the people. So my questions are more formal. So we really couldn't get so entangled.*

But it's all about music then.

*Va. But could you describe TENNEY as a person ?*

JIM has a great fantasy of wanting to be like one of the old hermetic illusive American composers in the tradition of kind of ah RUGGLES or HARRY PARTCH or someone who's never quite attainable, who lives out in the country somewhere. He likes to you know play with plants and stuff like that, and be always kind of like an intangible. And I think that's when he's most happy.

And his work to me usually takes elements that have already been..... I mean to me he's a great eclectic, a great academic eclectic, in that he takes elements that are in the air. And then he puts them down in a way that's very clear and very direct as almost etudes. So that he works with the past. He's taking many of the directions that American music or European music or new music has gone. And then he took the essence of them and built a work that was essentially like an etude of those elements.

Those were the pieces of his that I've heard, with exceptions. Some of them I'd say are a pure TENNEY. But that's a more vague personality. I think he's like ah a great academjcian in a sense, but you know not in a social sense, in the REAL sense. I mean someone who can really clearly understand and describe a phenomenon, who can then you know show it and deal with it in the best sense of the tradition. I mean, not what we think of the old stuff.

*So he's now important on the West Coast and keeping people together.*

Oh, I think so. You know, I think he's definitely important. I think, yeah, I think that definitely. And I think the problem is that he's always wanted to be.....

I mean he used to be a conductor of Tone Roads, the series here of contemporary music, of contemporary performances back in the sixties. He did a lot of the first performances here of certain IVES and lots of American composers whose works weren't well played at that time.

*He did a lot of digging around.*

He's almost like a MENDELSSOHN, you know what I mean? Like MENDELSSOHN was never really a heavy composer in relation to the others. Yet now his works are very good. At the same time he was like always out there digging up like what had been lost, and having ear sort of to the heartbeat of the past, you know? And I think that JIM is kind of like that in a way.

*Ya. Another person you know is PETER GARLAND. And I wanted to get in contact with him too. But JIM said that he's in Guatemala to do some digging, kind of looking for pre-Columbian culture.*

As a matter of fact, I feel that SOUNDINGS, which was the magazine he came out with, SOUNDINGS was an extension in a way of JIM's approach. And then his STUDENT brought it out into physicality. Do you know what I mean? And the original impetus for SOUNDINGS was really JIM's philosophy. I mean JIM was really into those people like PARTCH and RUGGLES and VARESE and whatever. (Telephone ringing and ringing and ringing and ringing)

And then it was PETER GARLAND, who was at that time still kind of rambling, he didn't know what he wanted to do. He saw what those elements were, and he put it into a magazine. So it helped him to see clear.

*So you were teaching there?*

Everyone else was teaching theory and things like that. And what I was teaching was a sort of an approach to listening and an approach to time. And so my classes didn't have anything to do with the other stuff. Like I did a class called "timbral perception". And that class basically was about dealing with a rich sonority, which I played every week, every class, in a completely black room for the whole year. And then every so often I would play music from other parts of the world. And I never

said anything. And all the musics I played all had to do with certain timelessness. And since you could hardly see, you weren't aware of physicality. You were only aware of sound as an essence in space.

And so I really felt like when I went out to California that there was all this stuff and all this knowledge. I mean Jim was a fantastic teacher. What kind of chord of the seventh permutation of the ninth harmonic of the you know. I mean all those guys know how to do that a million times better than me. But all their classes still felt like, ah German Meister classes. "Und now, zhen there's zhe zhree four chord, and zhen there's zhe four seven of zhe zhr-e of zhe six !" You know, you know what I mean. That's my picture anyway of the German Meister Klasse. But I used to see the guy with the stick standing there, "AND NOW YOU WILL APPLY ONCE AGAIN THE C- MINOR TRIAD IN ALL ITS PERMUTATIONS !" And you know what I mean. But it came from Europe.

*Yes, it's still living around here too, in some of these universities.*

Oh yeah, no. But it CAME from Europe. Like in Julliard it's terrible. I went to Juilliard. But it was exactly coming from Europe. It's a European concept. Well, I would have had..... I mean in my class I didn't even SPEAK. Like you just came in. It was a little bit like a bordelle, you know what I mean. And you heard these sounds, you know. And it was like, so well since you'd have to go out and say, "Well, what was that all about?" And all you had done was sensually deal. I mean it was all about sensuality. And so what you dealt with for eight months was being bombarded with in a sense aural..... There's an odd conjure when they talk about oral intercourse. I mean you make..... Well it was instead of o-r-a-l, it was a-u-r-a-l intercourse. So that was ONE class.

*And that was a unique class.*

And then the other one I gave was called "Music of the Sublime", which was similar in that it was again in a completely black room. And all you could use was your voice. And I was in a corner of this big huge place which was very resonant, like a temple. And I was sitting in a

corner making this kind of a "AHHHGH", a sort of searching inside for my demons in a way. And what the students did, the first day I went to class I just said that everytime you come in here from now on, I will be in this corner. And you're to search out with your body and your voice any way you want to try to articulate deep inside what seems most at the root of your sentiments and externalize them. And I'll be there all the time in that corner. I was sort of like the access. And then everyone else for eight months, I never spoke with them, I never spoke with them after class. I told them I would never speak with them for eight months. And then AFTERWARDS we would speak.

And so for eight months we did the course. And every time we were in this resonant room, and they lived out these rituals of communication and stuff. So noone knew each other. Everything was dark. And so you began to know people only through their sound. So it became almost like an animal has a certain cry that you begin to know. So certain people had a certain timbre of their voice or certain kinds of sounds they tend to go back to. And you tend to tell, "Oh, that's THAT person." You didn't know who that was, because we hadn't met them formally yet. I didn't know until many times later. I began to try in my mind a year later. I began to figure out, although I never asked, ah what I had gotten from the shading of their personality, what kind of person that was. Do you know what I mean?

*I see.*

So that's what my classes were all about. They were all about these sort of illusive properties. And so where the whole school was dealing with consciousness, I was dealing with unconsciousness.

*So how did your practice of playing piano connect with your unconsciousness?*

In California I had found a big Boesendoerfer. And it was in a resonant room. The first rituals that I began to undo would be to take two sets of notes. With this piano you can hear all the overtones. So I started just playing like three notes of something:

(Plays F - G - B-flat sequence faster and faster.)

And I'd let my hands just sort of almost like sleepwalk, just sort of get into like a relaxation playing in a dark room. (The playing continues.) And I would do this for hours, and then I would get into the overtones. (Charlemagne keeps on playing for another minute.)

And the pieces that came out of that time were all much more impressionistic in a way, because even the energy of California I mean was very timeless. So the energy between New York and California, there's a difference. I used to do pieces there like five or six hours, and now the pieces I do here, like I had a piano piece there which went five and a half hours. And now my piano pieces are never more than an hour. And it's all about certain energy. There was that sort of groping, searching out, kind of mild searching out.

*What kind of technique is involved to make these overtone relationships clear?*

Well, on the piano I have a strumming technique, which I've been doing for the last year and a half. It becomes more and more dense. Actually, my music is becoming more dissonant. It was very dissonant around 1968 and 1969. In 1970 it became into pure sonorities, like fifths and fourths and sevenths, but minor sevenths, not major sevenths. It was all about rounded pure sonorities. Then, and now again it's getting into more dissonance. So that I do this strumming technique like:

(Strumming, starting with F - F# - G# - A. And the overtones become very, very clear.)

That's basic sets of properties. NOW the pieces are becoming a lot more about things like that. That's the basic strumming technique, which then goes down into the lower reaches of the piano and digs up the same harmonics which you heard at first. I mean I deal with it on one level fantastically precisely, almost like a chemist. And then in performance I let the elements wheel themselves by the acoustics of the place or something like that. So behind it is an incredible string of formal precision, of how the elements relate to each other. And then I sort of allow those to be reinflated like a balloon at the certain performance. And NOW they're becoming more like this kind of: ( strumming, again. )

## PALESTINE

And then I press down and do all kinds of things. And then there's another kind of strumming technique that I have that then gets faster and faster

( Strumming, the double speed gradually taking over the normal speed. )

But in the context of an instrument like this it brings out, it reinforces like certain tones. And then by pulling back it leaves dimming relief. So, by the time I've set a whole piece up there are maybe six or seven levels of sonority going on just through the piano.

So people always think I'm using electronics. Second of all they think they hear voices and instruments. And what I'm doing is setting simultaneously five or six levels of sound perspectives. There's like the furthest part, which is just a "hum" in a sense. ( demonstrating with the use of exaggerated gestures )

And then there's another part that comes out, it's almost like if you could run fast enough, you could give the illusion by going faster than the eye could pick it up that there was a person here, there, there, there, you know. If you could bounce fast enough, the person would just keep seeing these images and those places. And it would give the illusion that there were six people when in reality there was one. And that's what I do in sonority now.

*And so the process of your pieces are like blending of colours.*

Chemistry. I used to call it alchemy. I mean, in California I came up with the feeling that I was like an alchemist, and I was searching for the golden sound. And like every year it becomes another way of doing it, like with a piano. I have these electronic sonorities. I have pieces with my voice. I have pieces for different instruments.

But the final, the thing that holds them all together in a sense, besides that I often use the same sonorities over and over again from year to year, is that I'm searching for sort of this GOLDEN SONORITY. And since the alchemists were very subjective finally, and they used the same



elements again and again to try to get this gold. And of course they almost never ever did get gold.

*They used it as a technique of self-experience.*

Self-exploration, and articulating. Finally, what the alchemist did do, what we see of all their elaborate diagrams, was to finally articulate in a way the course of human exploration, a process which then articulates the internal and almost spiritual like evolution of the species, which is like me as a species.

*Va. So your work is like an infinite work which you began fifteen years ago. Do you remember the original motivations you had for this music?*

It was that I had been taught to think that sound and music was about scores and notes. And it was like homework, you know, like being good at mathematics and being good at all those things. And then there was a part of me that even as a kid just liked to be in a place and make something that really felt right, you know. And that was in conflict for a long time. Somehow one to me was just fooling around. I just sit and relax and try to get a certain thing. And then there was doing a real work, which was analyzing this score and that score and doing all that stuff, being able to you know, "Ba bee, bo bap a boo boo boo, bo ba jum jala". You know, 1-7-3-4-2 permutation  $1\frac{1}{2}$ - $7\frac{1}{2}$ - $4\frac{1}{2}$ -7-6-3-7-9-6. You know.

And then there was this other part of me that just liked to hear. And once with one of my first girl friends..... and this is almost fifteen years ago..... Like we were living in a little, little space. And there was only room for an upright piano from my childhood there. And then there was a bed. And then there was a little drawing board, because she used to draw. And it was the first woman I had really you know had that spark about. And so she too. And so all that we seemed to do all day was make love, you know. It was such ah, you know, I had made love before, but never with such constancy, you know, constant desire.

And then afterwards, it'd be dark. I'd sort of like in that kind of feeling you feel after you've spent, you know, I'd go over to the piano. And I'd sort of sit at the

bench with sort of like that relaxed feeling. And I'd put my hands on the piano, and I'd put the pedal down. And I'd try to just sort of articulate the feeling that was in the room. And so I tried to aurally just sort of fill the room with sound what seemed was the residue of what was left. And I didn't know what I was doing. I just did it because it felt good. And she you know would draw in the dark. She had a pad nearby. And she would just sort of by lying down like this. And she'd have her hand, and she'd just sort of let it you know. I mean I could say that the first time it actually became an environment was there.

(laughing)

So the original impetus was being able to articulate a certain kind of space like that, a sensual space, to articulate as exactly as possible the multiplicity of sensual space. Something like that.

*Where does this articulation of sensual space lead you in your next pieces ?*

Now in my fantasy I'm actually going to be doing bigger and bigger orchestra pieces and things like that. But what I want to do now is reevaluate, almost like RIMSKY KORSAKOV in a sense reevaluated the orchestra. And STRAVINSKY. I want to reevaluate the colours of the orchestra from the same approach. I want to discover it in its internal properties.

And I want to build a piece which would then become even perhaps a book, which would be a timbral study for orchestra, which will in a way create sonorities, build up sonorities, which are almost like in magic, when the hand is quicker than the eye.

*But did you think about techniques to get the harmonical layout of the sounds?*

I've already been working on it sort of slowly for the last three or four years..... I feel like I'm in no rush. And I don't see the reason like I saw in the sixties like CAGE and STOCKHAUSEN and everything, like trying to so quickly expand the language, even if the sounds themselves weren't that good.

*And do you think that besides finding new good sounds  
you'll find new good feelings with this piece?*

I don't know yet how I'm gonna do it. But I know that what I'm gonna try to bring to music now is a looking inside. Because to me it's for so long now just been looking outside. And that's what I want to bring to every ..... So every concert I do is always more than just a piece. It means that everybody who's in it is going through some kind of reevaluation in some sense. Do you understand what I mean?

Charles Morrow



MORROW

*Fantastic wine!*

It's from Portugal. It's called Dão. I've never had it before, and it's very cheap. (laughing) Yeah, a dollar forty a bottle. A friend of mine bought a case. It was marvelous. After a day like today the thought of sitting down there with a nice glass of wine like this.....

*Ya. Was it a hard day today?*

It was incredibly hard day, yes..... yes.

*What were you doing?*

Well..... I ah..... the reasons for today being a hard day is what I do for a living..... So I had some problems. I had some problems in business.

*You have such huge loudspeakers. I have never seen such huge loudspeakers in my life.*

My friend Jack built them some time ago. In the sixties I was very interested in vibrations..... So I had these loudspeakers built so that I could resonate the room. It's interesting, you were playing Charlemagne's recordings in which he speaks about the sensuous in music. I was interested in the sensuous properties of music then, too..... I still am. I was approaching it at that point with bass vibrations. These bass speakers are HUGE. I spent a thousand dollars on bass speakers.

*So you then had the idea of using your voice in the sixties too?*

I was using my voice..... Ah, at first I was all caught up. I was trying everything, electronic things as well as instruments. EVERYTHING was used. Gradually..... toward the end of the sixties, I became very interested in just chanting the voice. And gradually I moved out of the technological era. While I find it nice to make recordings of the voice, I think of the studio as tools to document my ideas rather than as an instrument.

Most of the recent work is geared towards rituals that involve other people. Although I do perform still and will occasionally write a piece for someone to perform

using notation, more time has been devoted to understanding how relationships get on in music. So I've been concerned with relationships, and chanting is part of that. Ah, at first chanting was a way of exploring myself, be it through meditation or through the sense of travel. Singing is traveling for me..... And ah then, I became interested in it cross-culturally, with many different groups of people, particularly American Indians.

*Oh ya. Did you study actually the styles of some Indian tribes like the Hopis?*

Sure. I worked more with the SENECA, eastern Indians, because they were here. I studied by learning. I studied by ear. Now this was a whole new thing for me. I had studied in academic situations..... ( a telephone call. There are many, many more coming, so I won't mention them any more.)

*So you studied with.....*

I spent some time working with the Seneca Indians. Seneca are members of the Iraquis nation. It's a northeastern tribe. The singer I worked with was an old man, and we had the same problems of any generation difference. Everyone out there listened to American country music. And the Indians only did their own music for themselves. They weren't interested at all in what an artist might be doing, you know? One of the things that happened was that I began to feel less like an artist and more like an explorer in singing. My whole self-concept began to change.

Recently I met some Indians I grooved with in New York City and I began to work with them. And I discovered that amongst these Indians there's not a tribal concept of the music. Certainly the music started with certain styles associated with each tribe, but most young Indians who are good singers now learned the music of each others' tribes. There are increasing connections between various tribes. For example the Seneca fellow that I worked with was a song maker. And there's no difference between singer and song maker. To be a good singer you had to be a song maker. He was trying some things. He had gotten a western drum and brought it East. All his life he had sung with the accompaniment of a little water drum, the traditional Iraquis instrument. But now he was performing with the big drum.

As I spent more time with the Indian people I realized too that their whole purpose in singing was completely different from what I had imagined. There was an energy and intensity, and there was openness. Some of the nicest people that I've ever met, people whom I've enjoyed making music with, people with whom I've felt the most immediate connection with were the American Indians.

There's an attitude in American Indian culture that making mistakes is possible. They have the concept of a vision. What is it when you talk about a vision? I always worked with the concept of visions in my music. I dreamed my pieces. I'm concerned with a sense of vision.... And in most Indian cultures vision is misseeing, mishearing, mistaking, the sense of not-getting-it-right as a source of information. So one of the things that happened while working with the Indians was this gradual shift of beginning to enjoy making certain kinds of mistakes.

I mean one typical thing that JERRY ROTHENBERG wrote and he recites in one of his poems, he says, "I looked, and I saw three buffalo. I looked again, and it was three crows." And it's a sort of thing, I mean, that visions are very tricky and most commonplace. So therefore, since life is filled with perceptions of common things, that's where you get things right or wrong in the commonplace that you can talk about your whole awareness of the world. That's one area where I became deeply interested in what it was that the Indians were talking about. Because they would be willing to say that mistakes could be a source of information too.

And I've been raised in a situation where everything's very perfect, you know, very European. It was like everything had to be absolutely right. And being right was suddenly so ingrained in me that gradually this position was being eroded through connection with the Indians until I had a completely different attitude.

So what happened then was I began to realize what the singing was about. I said you've got to start first with self-exploration, to then singing with other cultures. And the next stage was to realize what they were singing was. Then animal language. I got involved with animal language, fish language, imitation. This was actually in many ways beginning to appear like more of a dialogue.



It wasn't just making animal sounds. It was getting into the animal world.

*Va. The Indians use it very practically, just trying to imitate animals to hunt them.*

And more than that. There's a sense of play, you know, just messing around. And so the whole sense of extending yourself via animal language became important. I realized that a lot of the fooling around that I had done as a child was very important.

So, first I worked with animal sounds essentially, and I continued to work with Indians as I still do. And then began to get more into fish language and farm animals, just to see the whole sense of what my relationship to animals was. All through this I wasn't looking so much to learn to be in another culture. I always believed that if you speak of another culture, it's just like speaking another language. You always do it with an accent. So I wanted to approach basic music and basic language without an accent, just to find a place for myself.

I went beyond the animals. And I realized that with all of this in a way we return to a kind of childhood position. For the last year I've been working with the language and music of children, particularly in a day care center with four year olds, five, six, seven, eight, nine to see what happens between four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. And performing with the children and getting close to them. And seeing what it is that's going on.

I hope soon to travel to Australia to study some of the children there. A man named WATERMAN, an ethnic musicologist studied aboriginal children and discovered that this particular group of children were regarded as a source of important songs. The infant then is coming into the world, and he enters the world with a song. You know?

*Yes, you can find new universal expressions through that. So how are you doing that here in New York?*

Well what I've been doing is singing and playing with children in an informal way, because I've discovered that children can get into anything. I feel like many

different approaches are valid in terms of getting children into music. Some people use music that teaches children discipline. Others use the music to teach them counterpoint. I was interested in seeing what children would do with improvisation of animals, which is how they would play with nonhuman sounds and how they would play with words. So I said I'd get their reaction situations. Particularly I was interested in what would happen if one child would become the leader and everyone else would have to follow.

Because I've discovered that there are a number of fundamental processes that are at the root of all language.... whether it's a musical or spoken language.... BEFORE there are words. One of these things is that there's an absolute ability. Ah, if you take the word tracking from radio for instance, there's an ability. If you concentrate, you can make sounds with each other. So there's an ability to be in unison with each other, even if there's an improvisation going on. It depends on how much the leader wants to try to fool you or keep you with him, and how much the follower wants to stay or how much the follower doesn't concentrate. So there's a lot of human dynamics in the situation of improvising and being in unison, particularly if a large group of people follow the leader.

So I've developed some children's games in which each child would have turns at the leader.... He would make animal sounds, and the group would follow in unison. And I studied what would happen. Children have a spontaneous reflex. So when a child hears a sound, he imitates it. He immediately does it, like a kind of quick spontaneous biological response, almost like, almost like.... falling down and holding out your hands.

This spontaneous response to sound and the ability to make unisons are very, very important. And then within that I've begun to study the nature of intonation. One sort of intonation was dialogue where one would make a sound and the other would answer. I discovered by working with the LAVENDER FROGS that this was a very, very simple binary language in which the frogs would have dialogue with each other. And one frog would lead, and the other would follow.

So, for example you could have two frogs. (Snapping the fingers of his left and right hands, the left hand being dominant.) And this frog here wanted to take over. (The right hand pauses one beat to take over the dominant role.) click click click click He waits for a pause.

*Then he gets the first click!*

Now this is one very basic human dialogue, and this occurs with the children as well.

The other one is where the children are making sound at the same time. Because while things are going on at the same time, the degree of relatedness is determined by both individuals. Recently psychologists have been studying this kind of thing, because these things are the two kinds of things that are going on between infants and mothers. You know, the mother makes a sound. The infant answers. The infant makes a sound, and the mother answers. Or they're both going "Go go go go" or something together.

And somehow these are two very very important forms of dialogue, the simultaneity, where there's an important kind of interaction, and the dialogue response. So I've been studying these as kind of primordial musical hours. I discovered that they have kind of a basis to actualize before there's ever a sound uttered, which is very interesting. It's a cultural breath. Since breath is the universal carrier of information..... ah, if you listen carefully, you will hear my breath and know it's steady. And upon observing you, I'll know whether you're relaxed, whether you're tense. If you're a father, you'll know if your child is sleeping. If you have a dog, you'll know if your dog is well. The dog knows if you're well, mainly through breath information.

And GROTOWSKI has talked about the breath as very important in this way too. So it's interesting to study farm animals. And I went to see how the farm animals and the farmers were getting along. I discovered it wasn't the sound making, but the silence, that conveyed the most information. Most of the time they were just sort of interacting on the level of like breathing, you know?

*So you went out to the farm to take a look at that?*

Yeah, to see the farmers and cows, you know. And it was part of trying to understand what was going on.

*And what did you find out?*

Well, I found out that the breath was the main source of information between the farmers and the animals. And I can't be sure between the animals themselves. But you know, I thought for a while that I was gonna go to the farm, and I was gonna hear them make animal sounds. And they do, but only occasionally. Most of the time it's just kind of a situation where breath information is very critical.

And then for years I was doing a piece called BREATH CHANT, in which I worked with the style of Navaho Indians with just the breath. The Navaho style means the leader makes a song and everybody follows as best they can. Some people know it well. Some people don't. Some are sort of half faking, and so on. So it's really an okay situation, to not know it all. I was doing that kind of situation where this audience has to breathe with me. So I figured the breath sensor was going to convey the state I was in. They could breathe with me. And I could do very dramatic and very meditative things, different things that would enter my space so to speak. I had a kind of sensuous sense of being inside of me, and I'd be inside of them.

I found that people can breath together in unison easier than they can make sounds in unison, because the breath isn't as loud as the voice. So it doesn't get in the way of your reception. If people are making the same breath sounds, then they can be in absolute unison with each other for long periods of time. Then I noticed that breath is a basis for physical E.S.P. Physically you'd become linked with another person through the breath whistling and imitation.

*It's E.S.P. somehow only in that the most people are not aware or conscious about that.*

Right. It was E.S.P. only because it seemed magical, but it was truly physiological because it could be explained. I'm very pragmatic when I deal in matters with a certain mystical component to it. It doesn't lie on the level of

explaining things as magic, but rather as explaining things as being repeatable.

*As being hidden like behind the daily communication forms.*

Exactly. So that my work has been concerned then with the breath. Actually then it became much easier. Then I realized that on the breath there was the voice. The musician of the voice in each breath was an emotional factor. The voice became important. And so it began to stay at the level of the voice, and the concept that the body was available. I knew this from many systems of chanting that were more Oriental. You know, about resonating areas of the body through different kinds of repetitive vowels, and mastering overtones. But that was a relatively simple thing, because that's been around for thousands of years.

*But it's very rarely repeated by western singers, in so far that they are even able to influence parts of the body and relax certain tensions through this kind of music.*

Right. Well I should have pointed out in the first place that I'm not a composer of anything except sacred music. What I do in situations is to follow the ritual of people and consider it all a kind of sacred music. For that reason I consider always the ritual or the context of the music, not just the sound itself. I'm a nonabstract artist, totally nonabstract. I don't believe in abstraction. But I'll have to deal with that a little bit later.

The chanting music for me has opened up what I feel to be the pragmatic basis of music making. Using music is a kind of a way of connecting with people. And it's a kind of a way of vibrating my own body. That's a very, very important basis. Beyond that sound making is location. When I vibrate off the walls of this room, I have a sense of the size of the room. You know, if I was a deaf person, I could tell what the size of this room would be, if it was a conference or social room. So that sound making, the sense of voice, is a kind of a personal radar to measure one's environment. And just simply breathing in space gives you this particular sense.

Another part of it is that voice is characteristic of different stages of your life. There's a voice of a child, a voice growing up, and a voice as you're getting older.

And there's also a voice as you take on the voice of animals, as you take on the voice of regional dialects, as you're taking on the language aspect. But voice becomes very important, because it is a way of being more specific in breath about what it is that's going on. It also defines your regional location. You know, where a person appears through their voice, and you know about them. You know their gender. You know about their stage of life. You know a great deal from the voice that the breath didn't tell you.

After that, then comes words. And then comes music, then location that is very regional. The voice by itself is very interesting, the voice without words. If you consider the voice, you know in this personal sense how to locate yourself and understand others. And also in terms of your real relationship to the environment. Because I truly believe in a communication between all levels of matter, living and nonliving to the extent that my communication with these walls is the way my voice and energies bounce off of them. And their character is revealed by the way their energies and mine interact in that particular sense.

I believe that there's always a ritual going on in sound making..... Let's say if you examine western music making, which I feel is very interesting because it's like a seance. Usually you have a musician in a special place playing music of a dead person. And so the voice of the dead person is represented in the personage of the living musician. The living musician is listened to by people who accept him because he's supposed to be great. Part of that is that the musician has to have a terrific energy and a terrific control over a musical instrument. Part of that is the musician has to have mastered memory and memorized music. Part of that is they have to have a good sense of style, and they have given something to music.

I discovered for example in breathing with people that everybody has the same incredible possibilities as musicians. And having been through the great elaborate process of mastering an instrument and becoming the one person in a billion to be called a super-genius, you know? But everybody has this particular sense of music. And I think that's why we identify with the great artist, because we all have that greatness in us, and that's what's touched.

And our own greatness is touched.

*One definition of genius is a very easy one. A genius is just a person who puts all his energies to life.*

Right. I try to get for example with the breathing, when a person knows that a whole group is breathing, no matter who the person is, they find themselves in the same position as the composer in making this kind of body music. And in that situation there's a sense of the tremendous feeling that normally you get only with a great performer. I mean try to feel, try to give the power back to the observer rather than leave it only in their master musician. Because unfortunately this mass music thing given in an aggressive and capitalistic economy means that there are fewer jobs for musicians than ever before.....

The whole world kind of revolves around a few great ones. And that's bullshit. Because you'd think that in such a huge population that every town would have a great one.

And so I'm trying to start a kind of a counter-philosophy that says in effect that what you could refer to the error of sexism, abstracting the attractive qualities of a woman and converting her into a sex object, so that she's no longer a human being. It's the same thing that happens in "artism". That in art, when creating an aesthetic object you deprive it of its creator in life in the ritual sense, in the ritual context and you make it into a kind of a closed system.

Not that it isn't wonderful in that way, and not that one still doesn't want to make love to a woman and feel a woman is attractive. But if you just think of that woman as a sex object and not as a full human being, you've really missed the full richness of life. If you think of art as only possible in this kind of vacuum where everyone sits quietly and looks, instead of a full range of things everything from a football game to a harvest ritual amongst the Indians, or whatever it is, where there's a full spectrum of possibilities between being quiet and observing something and thinking that only one person in all of history could be so great, to thinking that we're all great people. We are human beings alive and making their own music. You know, that spectrum has to exist.

And so I feel very strongly for example that the great music of western Europe, which now dominates education throughout the world, is being debased by its own cult. You know, the people that worship it are destroying it by making it such a singular thing and by making it such a privilege of the few. One of the problems of that kind of elitism is that I often feel when people get off on the great music of our culture, is that the music that made the powerful classes made them feel good about themselves, in that they were self-selected people. The great musicians of their time, who made them feel good about being powerful, or being sensitive, or in other ways being detached from daily life in the way that most people experience that.

And rather than talk about a working class music, I'd rather talk about the possibility that some of the greatest experiences are not tied up with the high art itself. The high art itself is a form of power consciousness, that in a way one listens to the high art in the same way that one walks around being a flirt. You know, there's something very flirtatious and arrogant about a person who only regards ah the western high art or whatever high art ..... the Chinese high art that Mao got rid of also.

*That's the reason I'm interested in finding out how the very basic tribes integrate their art into a system.*

Let me tell you that you have a very big disappointment coming. Also the people that I've met are anxious to develop money and get rich. And every place you go in the world all of the cultures are disappearing. A friend of mine said, "You can't maintain a culture." He's a director and theatrist. And he travels all over the world too. I have many of his tapes here. He says you don't maintain a cultural civilization. So in Bali if the people want to start the Bali Hilton, and want to drive cars and have suits, if they want to have money, you can't stop them. Their radio station is going to have rock and roll.

So the problem of relationship of modern people who are descendents of modern culture, you know to people like us, who are interested in culture as an aspect body, is a very curious one. Because emerging cultures throughout the world are mainly interested in economic development. It will probably go through stages resembling places like



America went through, where there will be enormous exploitation before there's a kind of reasonable attitude that prevails.

*The Balinese are just getting seduced by the mechanism of commercialism.*

Well, the sense of relationship to tradition is often misplaced. For example, I know people who have grown up in very religious homes, who really feel that their time has not been devoured by their obligations to go to church or go to synagogue. And they had to spend so much time with that. You know, even though it's maybe a wonderful spiritual experience. We're living in an age where people are beginning to value again the spiritual experience. But not everybody values the study and having their whole lifetime with it.

I know a pianist for example who is an orthodox Jew, who between the ages of sixteen, when he was regarded widely as one of the finest American pianists, and the time he was twenty-three years old, couldn't move out of his parents' home, because he was part of a little orthodox Jewish group. And it was necessary to make the prayers. It was necessary to make prayers. And they needed a certain number of men to make the prayers. And he was one of them. I mean, it was a small group of people and a tightly knit community, and he was paralyzed in his professional life for many years. He couldn't do it, because he was essential to the religious life of his family.

*But there are many examples of people whose tribal consciousness gets destroyed by expanding civilization. I mean the Indian tribes are not the only ones.*

Well..... Well, here people are kind of wrapped up in a wet blanket of commercialism, of popular music. Ah, one of the things about popular culture is that people..... your broad masses are suspicious of anything that isn't commercially successful. So that, you know, anything that's strange at all is set aside.

*So what are you doing strange?*

My work is involved with a kind of story telling relationship of the person to the material. Because I don't

## MORROW

believe that music and the performance of music are unrelated to each other in the very highest sense, you know? A person doesn't sing a song except that it's the right ritual. So I like to feel this sense of rightness in the material. And basically you know all music is involved with a kind of sense of burning, of intense music, of intense experiences.

One piece that I do that involves audience participation is called "HO HO", in which there are two musical ideas. One goes (singing on B in the gesture of an Indian song):  
ho HO HO HO ho HO HO ho HO HO HO ho HO HO.

And once an idea begins like that it doesn't have to be in unison with itself. It might be a dialogue too with everybody in the audience. Then I'll take the second part. It would be (singing as before ho HO HO HO in B. Then, one octave higher b and slides to d#):

        hoho        hooh        oh  
hooh        hoch        ho

So you've got those two going together. Once those get rolling, then I use the pitches in a variety of ways. I take the solo part, and let other people do solo parts within this ..... ostinato. But the ostinato and solo part relationship is something like this.

One piece that I do is I put on my father's shirt. You know, in a sense the relationship to my father is that I'm working through with all of these people. Another piece that we do is when we have a sick friend, we take a piece of their clothing, say a scarf for example. And I was saying that they had had a bad fall at dancing. So we all went and did a "HO HO". It was a healing piece in that situation. And I've been very interested in healing in this particular sense. Because I think that it's very, very wholesome. Healing means to make whole in English. I feel that when you have contact and intensity that self-expression arises.

So I deal with two broad categories of chanting music, "HANDS ON" and "HANDS OFF". You see an orchestra, and you don't touch them. You hear a minister, and he talks to you, and in other situations puts hands on your head. Or, in all the rituals that I do I do with people's hands

touching each other. And that contact automatically changes into all the hands on the scarf of the sick person. And it's absolutely amazing what happens when other people feel that contact. Because then, it's no longer showing off. And there's always a tendency to show off, particularly in these kinds of things, particularly if it's in public, you know? And it sort of changes once people's hands are touched. It becomes a very, very powerful thing that people can do for each other.

So, I don't think that this should replace BEETHOVEN or BACH or traditional or Indian music or anything like that. What I'm trying to do is find ways for people to enter into relationships with each other musically that are meaningful.

*There are a lot of realizations of what is meaningful. There are actually people coming from completely different corners who try to reestablish things that are meaningful. If they do self-explorative exercises, like OLIVEROS' meditations or strengthen their understanding of our political situation like RZEWSKI in his songs. I think both is necessary.*

I do too. I do too. And that's why I write two kinds of music. One thing is that I feel that there's no ONE way to make music. And as long as you're prepared to deal with the versatile, and even with the possibility that people may make music that you disagree with, that can be valid music..... then you are in good shape. One of the things that's happened is that there's no longer a sense of essential styles. If you're stylistic or say political positions, you describe two broad basis for working. But they don't have to be style basis. They can be attitude basis, you know? And I think that there's a kind of danger in things falling into similar categories. You know, you should better kind of play ball politically.

Some people are I think more consciously aware of that. TOM JOHNSON, a music critic in New York, a very, very beautiful man..... One of his strong distinctions is between manipulative and non-manipulative music. He says we're all smart enough to know when we've manipulated an audience. We feel a certain way. Manipulated people do certain things. So if we have an awareness or consciousness level where we know when we're manipulating and

when we're not, then there's a real responsibility in order to take that into account, to establish an ethical basis for what you're doing. And part of the manipulation is the political surroundings of the musicians working together, people just wanting to be each others' friends.

*And these surroundings alienate people more and more.*

Hm. What used to go on was that in each community people used to get together. There was the town square where people in the community saw each other. And there was more of an extensive connection. And nowadays people don't see each other much, with automobiles and modern technology in the world there's a great deal of isolation. The town square doesn't exist, and there's nothing to take its place. They go to movies, and everything is passive.

People have come to a particular position where they think they can get everything from books, from master artists, from this pro, from that pro. And it's all based on a kind of hierarchial structure. It's always the best, the best, the BEST..... And you're always tied up with money. And you've gotta buy the book. You've gotta buy the record, and so forth. I think that that's all very destructive. And the way that I've done it is to turn people onto the power of themselves.



# Garrett List



## LIST

Telephone ringing.

KITCHEN! No, we are closed today.....

I was talking about composing yesterday. And the problem with definitions that we have is like JOHN CAGE is a great artist, and STEVIE WONDER is nowhere. And that just doesn't make sense, because STEVIE WONDER happens to be a great song writer. And most of the problems of those definitions come in through economic categorizations.

The idea of the song is the song is one of the only real collective forms that we have in the west. It is the only collective form we have in the west, the song form. I don't know how it exists in Europe especially. I think it's true there, because it's a European form actually. But by the time it got to America with the African influence and the Latin American influence and the Eastern influence, the Oriental influence, that kind of grew to new proportions and it became like what we call jazz or you know this popular music and stuff.

And the forms are going more complex even now you know, like after CHARLIE PARKER and everything like that. And the bee-bop, it expanded the thing tonally. And since then they've been expanding since the free jazz of the sixties. The forms have been even more expanded. And so they began getting quite complex. Like song form can be a quite complex thing. You take like an arranger, somebody like BILLY STRAYHORN, and some of his arrangements get quite complicated. He was a companion of DUKE ELLINGTON's. And DUKE ELLINGTON's arrangement became almost compositions. They're ALMOST getting to be complex compositions. They're beautiful, you know.

*So did you actually learn for your pieces now from this kind of arranging?*

Well, no. Mine tend not to be like arrangements. Mine tend to be like coming more out of the avant-garde. Because I think that the avant-garde of the fifties and the sixties was one of the things that they were really working on, was reorganization of the human beings in the art, who were creating the art. Well like JOHN CAGE, EARLE BROWN, MORTON FELDMAN, CHRISTIAN WOLFF. The things that they did. They didn't like jazz. They were afraid



of pop music, I think. They were afraid of folk music, the forms, because of the big economic conflicts that go on all the time in our culture. So they're always like staying away from it.

*Actually CAGE ah in one interview said that he doesn't like jazz, the continuity. It gives him a feeling of having to do something.*

Well, he doesn't like the rhythm. Well, you see he may even be changing on that score lately. But that's true. He says also that improvisation like jazz is like having a conversation. And if you want to have a conversation, sit down and have it. But on the other hand, I think like if you're interested in unifying and interested in trying to find some kind of unity that's becoming an anarchic unity if you will, like a syndicalist kind of thing.

*You said that the avant-garde composers were afraid to make a generally acceptable music. Why?*

The problem of making a generalist music, making a music that is a general music in this culture what happens is that it SELLS, you know, like you sell it. And you try to make a lot of money off of it. See? But a generalist music, because it's popular, it's not necessarily a bad thing. Like there have been really great examples of a generalist music that was really true music, and high music.

You start all the way back like COLE PORTER, you know. Or GEORGE GERSHWIN. I think that some of his songs were incredible, incredible song writer. And some of his more complex forms were really beginning to be on the verge of being their own kind of music, which in the time that he was doing it was really unusual, was really a more difficult task you know. Because the separation was even greater in those times, in the twenties, although they tried to get it changed in the thirties.

*The thing is you can hardly tell if he was a great composer, because he got messed up by the music industry.*

Yeah, exactly. So and he started out that way. And the same thing happened..... Well, he had died very young, too. He died like before he was forty. And the same

## LIST

thing happened to CHARLIE PARKER, the same thing happened to JOHN COLETRANE. The same thing happened to CLIFFORD BROWN, the greatest trumpet player that ever lived. He was dead before he was thirty. You know, the two guys who created BEE BOP, JIMMY BLANTON and CHARLIE CHRISTIAN, the great bass and guitar player, who played with BENNY GOODMAN and stuff like that. They were dead before they were twenty-two.

And they were dead because the way of life that they had to lead to do that kind of music was so hard that way... I mean, CHARLIE CHRISTIAN died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-two. You see? He came from a poor family. He didn't have any health in his life. There was no real health in his life. And so he came to New York. And he got hooked up with drugs and booze and women and you know, I don't know, whatever, the kind of money life. And he was out, you know, he went.

Well, it's hard, because in this culture it's always associated with big money. It's always associated with lots of money. And I think that art in general is like diversion, not for the artist themselves, because it's a way of life, but for the people who take in the art, whether it's JACKIE KENNEDY ONASSIS looking at ANDY WARHOL's soup cans or it's somebody in a bar listening to STEVIE WONDER's tunes or if it's PEGGY GUGGENHEIM listening to JOHN CAGE or if it's somebody listening to BILL EVANS playing piano. It's all diversion to these people.

*Is the audience at the KITCHEN looking for diversion?*

It's an artists' place. It's mostly artists that come here, artists and some general public. You have to remember New York is probably the largest colony of artists in the world, on the island of Manhattan. And the way I feel about it is, the most people who come here are interested in art or in music in some kind of specialist way, who are themselves specialists. There is a great deal of general public that does come here, what I tend to call G.P., general public, like somebody who just wants to hear it, you know come here. Like if you have a concert that somebody who's well-known, you get like those kind of people. But on the whole it's other artists and people who are interested in the art somehow. Now, that does include all kinds of people. It includes the Peggy Guggenheims on

one hand, and it includes other people. So, you know, I think that it's really an artists' place, if you will. It's a place about specialists. And the only way it could be anything other than that would be if we had more space.

Because how you find out about a concert at the KITCHEN is by knowing about the KITCHEN. You know, we don't take out huge ads in the New York Times or anything like that so everybody can find out about it. We just have little ads. And the people who know about the KITCHEN will look for them. And the artist himself brings in his own kind of following. And it's a way of showcasing in a sense the work, so that the word gets out that it's happening and so on and so forth.

*So if someone like RZEWSKI performs, and he suggests like doing political music, will his approach function here?*

I think that artists are in need of education and enlightenment as much as anybody else is. And that a place like the KITCHEN exists, its importance is probably for that, for the community of artists, at this point. It could at some point become a larger place and become more of a place for regular people. But at this point it's really in service of the artist community. And in this city that's a very necessary thing I think.

*But do apolitical intellectuals get RZEWSKI's point?*

But I think that if they hear a song like that, like one of FREDERIC's, then it's gonna effect them somehow. I mean, they'll have to think about it. They'll have to think about their relationship to the world in that sense. And I think that's good. It certainly isn't a song for the masses, that song. It's the same thing with CORNELIUS. Do you know CORNELIUS?

*CORNELIUS CARDEW, ya ya.*

Well, he's also interested in this problem. He gave a concert here. And he gave it for other specialists, other artists here. And it was quite a nice concert I thought. I enjoyed it. And the people he'd been playing to all through this country when he was on tour here were college students who are you know middle class. That's the way he can do it, because he's what he is. He's like an intellec-

## LIST

tual musician type, right? And the kinds of places he can get a chance to play are in those kinds of situations. And so when you're in that kind of situation, you have to know that and then try to deal with your ideas on that level. And he did that, and I think he was fairly successful. I'm SURE he got people thinking about what he was doing.

*But the students here are not at all ready for revolution. The United States in general is so far away from realizing concepts of communism. It's like the sun on the horizon you can never reach.*

But you see now, the same thing was true with China in 1925, that it was so far away there was the sun on the horizon, and you'll never reach it. Right? And they had to search out their own models. They had to search out their own way of doing things. And it was just a long, hard struggle to gain it. And I think that in America, while in a certain way we're very very far away from it, from a revolutionary process, of a way of life. But, on the other hand, there's a certain strain. I mean, I'm speaking as an American. I'm almost pure American, if there is such a thing.

And I think that there's something very strong in the people. There's also a very great tendency towards communalism in this country, towards communalism and also towards anarchy, which is something that isn't really accepted by a lot of Communists, the idea of anarchy. But anarchy is another mode of organizing people.

The thing is that the whole bourgeois revolution, the whole thing that happened in 1776 was part of a very large pan-European bourgeois revolution that was felt not only in France and America. But it was felt all over Europe and the world. And so we grew from that. That's where our beginning was, in the bourgeois revolution. So we have a lot further to go. It's not like in China or in Russia where the bourgeois revolution just barely touched Russia in a sense. And it was still a futile state in a way by the time the Communist Revolution came. So we grew from the second stage.

*But America is such a diverse society with people coming from all over the world living here, from Africa, from*

*Puerto Rico and so on, in contrast to China. And so you are confronted with completely different problems.*

Well, that's why I think music is very important at this time. Music has always been very important in this country. And if you want to get people to do something in this country, and if you can win them over with music, (laughing) you can get them to do almost anything. You know. And also, just the way things develop. Some of the most profound social ideas that have happened in this country have come from music.

And so I started writing a lot of songs. And also like the way, I think the most important way that it comes in is not, it's even less than FREDERIC's music..... In FREDERIC's music and in CHRISTIAN's music text is very important..... Because that's the way the political ideas, the concrete ideas get put across, you know. And that's a very important part of political music.

In mine I think it's the organization of the music I think that's the most important thing. The way that the musicians relate to one another and the metaphor in a sense of what that means in terms of another way of looking at the possibilities of people working together. Because I find that certain things, for instance rhythm, is one thing that practically everyone can agree upon. I mean, even JOHN CAGE taps his toes to you know. He probably doesn't want to admit it probably, but he does.

In some of CAGE's music of the forties was a very cooking kind of stuff, you know. And rhythm is one of the few things that everybody can agree upon, right? And rhythm is very important for my music also. And the thing about rhythm really allows for each person to do his own thing so to speak, more or less and still be able to be unified with other people.

*How does it work now in one of your pieces? The tea water is cooking. I'll put it off.*

I'll get some cups. Have you got a match by any chance?

No.

GARRET GETS SCORES FROM HIS BRIEFCASE.

## LIST

*How long has it to brew, the mate tea?*

About four minutes.

*How do you realize this playing together then?*

Well, the piece is called THREE PROCESSES. And it's three different ways of playing music together. Anyway, so, this is the first thing. This is an improvisation using basic techniques, about six basic techniques. All these notes line up here in terms of this thirteenth chord, this series of thirteenth chords. And it's broken down into a melodic process, right? And so you could read this thing, and it's in a nine beat cycle. So it's.....

(intonates the structure)

So you can read it like this all the way down. Or you could switch lines. You could play this line and go to this line and then that line. Or you could go from this note to that note to that note to that note if you could do it. So, as long as you play the note in the right place in terms of the time. So that's how you can treat it melodically.

And then you can also not play. You can leave things out. You can change the accents around. You could play this as a three, or you can go, or.....

(intonates the structure)

Or you can sustain notes. You could just play parts of the line. You could go....(intonates again)

Or you could do that by jumping back and forth over the lines also. Everybody makes up the music by doing all those things. So anyway, this goes on. And there's nine transpositions of this, nine sets. And so the music develops through the initiation of the players.

*So there's no conductor necessary. So that's like an easy recipe for writing music where no conductor is necessary.*

Well, I'm gonna do a piano concerto actually now, I hope. Like the piano is the architect of western harmony. It controlled western music for a long time, and I'd like to bring that out..... Actually, how did you get interested in doing these conversations?

*I visited some concerts last year of people that came to Europe, and to Cologne, from America. And I was often astonished about the open-mindedness that people had. And so I just decided one day to just travel around the States and make recordings to get clearer about this. So far I've noticed a kind of social pressure which challenges the people to open up new cultural space. And that's kind of like being in the desert.*

trying to find the oasis.....

*Yes, trying to find the oasis. And even try to survive without one. And that gives you more strength in your work.*

I got a vague feeling though from being in Europe that the American colonialism of art in Europe is changing, and that the Europeans are beginning now to reconfirm some of their own situations. And that Europe will be making its own music in a certain way.

You dig it out from the ground that you're in. I think that's very important. So it's all about locale. What I've found happening is that the more universal, the more global village type of idea became a possibility, the more it was important ..... to deal with the place you were in, the actuality of the ground that you're standing on.

*Do you know JOHN MCGUIRE? He lives in Cologne some time now, an American. And we have some nice talks. He once quoted WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS. He said, "Bad art is national. Good art is international. And ART is local."*

I agree with that. Like WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS is really a New Jersey man. I just agree, you know. And I was hoping that, and I'd been feeling signs that that was happening in Europe, that there's this need.

But you see too, I was talking to another guy named HENRY FLINT, who is like a conceptual artist and is now doing kind of a hillbilly music. He calls it avant-garde country music, but. It sounds funny, but you can't take on a music and wear it like a shirt, you know? Like HENRY says, you have to have a birthright to it. You have to be born into it. And you can't wear a cultural thing like a shirt. It has to be grown from you. It has to be like the hair

## LIST

on your skin rather than the shirt on your back in a sense. And the problem is maintaining those kinds of things and somehow finding your relationship to your group, and actually finding out what your group is, so that you can deal with it.

And like the notation is very important in these things. Like say here, a "song", like that. Instead of "changes" here. We call them "changes" here you know. In America anyway there's a whole style that comes out of reading music like this. It's almost classical in this country by now, the way of dealing with that. And what this notation means and how it relates to each person that takes it up like reading changes. The composer writes the melody and the changes, but how it's realized is very much up to the person who's playing it. And like I say, the song form, is probably the only real collective form there is.

*The only problem then is, when I think about that, is if this music wouldn't be too hermetic, too closed up, OR if it could have the ability to show within the familiar of what I choose, where I am from the "common understanding". So, we have two groups of interest, people that speak about "world music" and put different styles together, on which level ever. Or, other people, they just stay where they are, if it's in Soho, or if it's like in Laramie. On this ground they ..... they show ah the common in the familiar, if that's possible.*

If we talk about world music, you have to understand the relationships, these imperialist-colonialist kinds of things. Because it can't be a lifting of a music. RICHARD TEITELBAUM's thing was one of the healthiest examples of it, where the musicians actually got together and played together, you know. And that's a nice way of going about it I think. But I know some people who go some place to hear music they like, you know, and then come back and write the music in the same style and copy it and stuff like that.

And the only way it can really be..... and that's something the third world understands very well..... is the only way for a one-world kind of feeling is where each nationality, each locality, has its own strength. So that people don't have a need to take from another place, but can have what they need where they are. Then exchange really does become possible, right? You can't exchange things without each place having its own strength.





Frederic Rzewski



FREDERIK RZEWSKI:

THE PEOPLE UNITED WILL  
NEVER BE DEFEATED!

36 VARIATIONS ON EL PUEBLO UNIDO  
JAMAS SERA VENCIDO, BY SERGIO  
ORTEGA + QUILAPAYUN.

FOR URSULA OPPENS

$\text{♩} = 106$  With determination

Copyright © 1975  
by FREDERIK RZEWSKI

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It begins with a forte (ff) dynamic and includes the following lyrics: "El Pueblo Unido jamas sera vencido! The people united will never be defeated!". The score is divided into three systems. The first system contains the vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The second system continues the piano accompaniment with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The third system concludes the piece with piano accompaniment, featuring triplets and a final cadence.

*fp softer, legato*

Handwritten musical notation for the first system. The treble staff contains a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. Dynamic markings include *fp* and *softer, legato*. The system concludes with a fermata over a final chord.

*f*

Handwritten musical notation for the second system. The texture becomes more complex with multiple voices in both the treble and bass staves. A dynamic marking of *f* is present. The system ends with a fermata.

Handwritten musical notation for the third system, continuing the complex texture. The system concludes with a fermata.

*f > mp*

Handwritten musical notation for the fourth system. A dynamic shift from *f* to *mp* is indicated. The system concludes with a fermata.

*pp* *crescendo* *f*

Handwritten musical notation for the fifth system, characterized by dense chordal textures. Dynamic markings include *pp*, *crescendo*, and *f*. The system concludes with a fermata.

*una corda* *pp* *ff*

Handwritten musical notation for the sixth system. It includes the instruction *una corda* and dynamic markings *pp* and *ff*. The system concludes with a fermata.

EL PUEBLO UNIDO JAMAS SERA VENCIDO!

The folk united will never be defeated.

(Record of a Chilean revolutionary folk song, which is the theme of the 36 variations..... See preceding two pages.)

You never heard that?

*No. When was it recorded? In Chile?*

No, it was done in Italy, this album. There are several Chilean groups in Europe. This is one of them, the INTI-ILLIMANI. They live in Rome.

*They left Chile before or after?*

They were both touring in Europe during when the coup took place. One is INTI-ILLIMANI. And the other was called QUILA PAWUN. They've just produced a new album too, this one here.

*So they stay in Italy now? I think that's the best place for them.*

Currently yes. Well, that's where the Chilean government in exile is located, a lot of the Unidad Popular. There was a recent assassination attempt about three weeks ago in Rome, apparently organized by the Chilean Secret Police.

*So you've just come from Rome I heard. How did you find the whole scene there?*

In Italy? Well, there are a number of younger people I know who are active. Basically the Italian musical scene is rather conservative. The institutional concert structure is quite conservative and always has been, and probably will continue to be for quite some time. The most that what's happening right now in Italy as far as I can see is in the area of folk music and jazz.

I mean folk music has always been very big in Italy, because it's always been connected with the political left. And now of course there's a very broad based massive cultural campaign underway in Italy, which is mainly being stimulated by the Communist Party, which is part of its electoral strategy, which is to win over as many of the

petty bourgeoisie people as possible through the use of culture.

telephone ringing

Hello. Hello, Steve. How are you? I heard you were in town. Okay, I was surprised to find out that you were here. I didn't get to Venice, but I was in Rome of course. .... Well, I'll be here for the whole month of November. And then I'm gonna try to get over to Italy again in December at some point. I'm going to be like flying back and forth I think..... Do you know something about this artists' travel bureau that MARK HAMMERTON is mixed up with? .... Are you interested in doing COMING TOGETHER at some time? Because we have this group, THE MUSICIANS' ACTION CLUB. And we're supposed to be doing an ATTICA benefit concert, on the 22nd possibly. We have a meeting of MAC tomorrow..... Listen, I have somebody here who's come from Germany who wants to talk to me. So I can't stay on the phone. Bye bye.

A good friend of mine from the LIVING THEATER.

*Are you still doing music with them?*

Well, I worked with them a long time while they were working on their new play. And then they moved to Pittsburgh. And even though I did a lot of work for preparation for what they were doing, working for them is a situation where you really ah have to be with them all the time. Because when they do something, they do it collectively, and it takes a lot of time. And so we just decided that there was really no possibility, I mean I couldn't.

*They changed too in a similar way that you changed. I remember we were just talking about the MEV group, that it was very anarchistic, that you've from what I've seen from your scores changed to a more constructive and concrete kind of music. Which motivations did you have for this change from anarchism to let's say concrete music which is definitely orientated?*

Yeah, well I would call it realism basically.

*Do you remember how this change came about in your writing?*

Well, I suppose it came on many different levels, both a personal level and on a social level. I think that probably if one is going to talk about styles and things like that, then it's best not to talk about individual, personal styles, but rather in terms of larger movements. Especially in the case of a problem like this, you have to see it from a social and political viewpoint rather than from a personal and aesthetic one. So what has been happening really both in Europe and the United States since 1968 has been this gradual process of maturing, especially those groups of people who acquired their political consciousness through the student movement for instance, which is what is in this country loosely described as the "new left", which has by the way a different meaning in the United States than it does in England. It's not really a good term to use.

Anyway, getting back to your question, the LIVING THEATER has very rigidly adhered to an anarchist viewpoint. They're still very much pushing the anarchist-pacifist line, although they have moved in a certain direction toward accommodation to what you might call Marxist currents. They have attempted to find some way of integrating their whole world view of the other groups. But they're still very much with the anarchism.

*Actually this going to a realistic kind of music writing, I know one song you wrote, the APOLITICAL INTELLECTUALS.*

Where do you know THAT from?

*From MICHAEL BYRON's anthology, PIECES. So does realistic writing mean for you personally to support a text to its most powerful understanding?*

Well, let me see. That's a rather difficult question. First of all, let's say that realism in music doesn't necessarily require text. That's one of the first questions that always comes up in discussions of this kind. People always say, "Well, how can music be political if it has no text?" And if it requires a text, why is the music political in that case? Well, the answer is of course that it doesn't require a text. It DOES however require some kind of consciousness of the active relationship between music and the rest of the world. And the use of the text is one method of accomplishing that. But it's



not by any means the only one.

*Yeah, there are of course inner musical decisions you have to make too, to make the music generally more experiential for a broader public. What would you say is required for a kind of realistic writing then?*

That would certainly be one condition for realism in music. A conscious employment of techniques which are designed to establish communication, rather than to alienate an audience. That does not necessarily mean that one must be confined to familiar languages. It doesn't necessarily mean an exclusion of what's called avant-garde style, by any means.

*Is it then necessary to get close to another established style which is acknowledged as a language by the broader public? Or, do you think it is possible to go beyond writing in styles but feeling what's really basic in music?*

Well, let's put it this way. I think that if one were to forbid oneself to use familiar styles in one's music, then one would be imposing a very serious limitation on one's ability to communicate. And so that if one is seriously interested in communication, then I suppose statistically speaking that a rigorous, say formalistic, style such as the style of the serial composers and so on would be at a serious disadvantage.

*But on the other side, especially in America, there is music called "popular". And through the repetition of the media it becomes popular. And so you hardly can distinguish what is basic and what is popular.*

I know. This is a very serious problem. And it's a very tricky problem, too. And it's very important to become clear on it. It's after all a war that we're fighting. And if you put yourself in the position of someone who's fighting a war or helping to fight a war, then you have to be very careful that you're going to win. And so we mustn't make foolish mistakes.

*Va, but I think you should be careful not to deny yourself. Because I see that as a danger in having just a political goal in mind, but forgetting that the music you actually use is established as popular by people that try to make*

*commercial music.*

Yeah, I know. No, we have to find a way of not using that. The important thing is not to speak about people in general, but rather pose the question of who the audience is in particular, what people. Who is your audience. This is the main thing you have to become clear about. See, for a whole generation of music, the generation that I grew up in, we were taught that the most advanced music was abstract, serial formalistic music, which had a kind of universal validity, and that the audience was not important. It was not important to the music what kind of people listened to it.

No I think the new question that we're coming up with, that composers are beginning to ask themselves, is precisely the first question, WHO is the audience, who am I trying to speak to, and what am I trying to say. Who am I working for, really. Am I working for the bourgeois public? Am I working for ROCKEFELLER or the Arts Council or the banks or the students. Or am I working for, trying to work for an entirely different group of people, you see.

And when you pose a question in those terms, then you stop thinking about music as something universal, in the sense of like BEETHOVEN's NINTH SYMPHONY is supposed to be "universal". It's supposed to say something to everybody. Well, if you're working in a political direction, you give up that idea. You don't want to talk to everybody. You don't want to talk to the capitalists and the bourgeoisie.

*That's what I mean. If you wrote the song APOLITICAL INTELLECTUALS, you wrote for a certain kind of people. And possibly exactly the people you wrote it for listened to it. The people of the KITCHEN. Did you perform it there?*

No, I haven't done it there. But I've done it in a number of different places.

*For apolitical intellectuals?*

Well, we'll see. I'm doing the concert at the end of the month there. I don't know WHO the audience will be.

*I talked to CHRISTIAN WOLFF two weeks ago. And he said*

*that to be "apolitical" for Americans means protest.*

I know what he was talking about, sure.

*Isn't it very hard here in America to have so many people that still believe in like if they get independent of what the government is doing to believe that they can do it for themselves, to build up something new?*

Yes, I think it is very hard, at least among the sort of broad masses of the small bourgeoisie which constitute such a large element of this country. And yet on the other hand, precisely this class of people is extremely crucial, because the future of the world politics may in many ways depend on which direction this class of people decides to take in the next ten years or so. It may go in a progressively left direction, which is a strong possibility. But it may also go in a right direction, which would be an extremely serious development.

*You don't see any way besides these categorizations of left and right?*

In this country? No, personally I think that the country is going to be more and more polarized toward the left and right. Just like almost every other industrialized country for that matter. I don't think the United States is an exception. But I wouldn't be overly optimistic about any very major changes taking place here. I think that whatever is happening here is bound to be a very progressive kind of happening.

*You see I came here like four weeks ago without any fixed conceptions about Americans. I was just really curious about them. The U.S.A. seems to me famous because of its failures somehow, not only because of its failures, but because of the enlightenments happening during the crucial points. Isn't this like a growing toward the right understanding through failures?*

Well, I would HOPE so. Whether that's actually true is a big question. I mean, that would be a very optimistic way of regarding America. I think one should be very careful here about being too optimistic about the ability of the American people to take control over the present chaos in the country. I think the proper attitude here must be

rather one of constructive pessimism. Working for change but at the same time being very realistic about the enormous problems. And one of the major problems here as you must have observed traveling through the country as you have, if you've been reading the newspapers in any of the large cities, you'll see that the newspapers contain almost NO information. And if you watch the television in America, you'll agree that the television is a form of keeping the people in a state of ignorance.

*And as soon as people stand up against it, they get wiped out. Because the power of the police is so strong that the people fear trying it. Like you wrote this COMING TOGETHER piece for Attica. And Attica is a classical example for what happens.*

Yes it is. That's why it's a very important milestone in American history. As you know, the issue is still very much alive. The inmates who were indicted at that time have still not come to trial. And it looks now as though many of these inmates may be pardoned by the government, because the government is not able to carry on these trials without revealing itself as the guilty party. So I think Attica is still very much a live issue. I'm sorry that in Europe people don't know about it that much. I've traveled around in Europe. And Europeans do not seem to be terribly informed about this...although Europeans tend to be more informed about American conditions than the Americans themselves.

*We have to.*

Of course. Well, also your media of information are much better.

*Ya, okay. But we still don't feel very good having all this American commercialism in our countries.*

Of course. Seventy percent of your industry is owned by the United States.

*But here it could possibly change if the gap between what the government is doing and what the people are actually trying to do gets so huge that just the government has to adapt.*

Well, I certainly hope so. But again, I think you're very optimistic.

*Like in the Attica piece you wrote, IT'S COMING TOGETHER. You had a voice which stated.....*

The voice was the guy who just called me on the phone, STEVE BEN ISRAEL. He's a long-time actor with the LIVING THEATER.

*Why did you write the ATTICA piece?*

I felt at the time when the event took place that this was an autrosity that demanded of every responsible person that had any power to cry out, that he cry out. And as it happened, I discovered a text which was published shortly thereafter in RAMPARTS Magazine which seemed to fulfill the conditions. Yet the text itself cried out for some further elaboration. It was simply a piece that had to be written. It was necessary at the time. I don't know how effective it was. Looking back on it I can see that it was, it already belongs to a stage of work that I no longer would do anything like that. It's not really a very clear political statement except in its sort of extramusical connections with the historical event.

*So but in the pieces that followed you just try and deepen the connection of music and what you wanted to say.*

Yes, I think that I've learned some more about.....

*What did you write after that?*

Well, I did a long Cantata called STRUGGLE, which was based on a text by FREDERIC DOUGLAS, one of the great black leaders of the nineteenth century, which was about how there can be no progress without struggle and this process of liberation may require the sacrifice of life and so on and so forth.

I also did a number of songs and some instrumental music, some smaller instrumental music. And just now I've finished working on a lot of piano music. So I've just finished a long series of variations for piano on the theme that I've just played for you, the PUEBLO UNIDO. This piece is going to be done in February at the Kennedy

Center. It was written for another pianist friend of mine, URSULA OPPENS. But I think that's, you see, one way of relating your work to the struggles ah that are going on.

*Ya, I just remembered this one sentence from your article. "Musicians and artists must listen to the sound of struggle if they are to contribute anything in the way of harmony."*

Yeah, I think that this is very important. And the new thing about this development in music is again not confined to a few individuals, not just CORNELIUS CARDEW and CHRISTIAN WOLFF and a few other people. But it's by this time you can see that it's a part of a general cultural movement which is going on all over the world. The important thing about this is it's not just an aesthetic phenomenon.

*I heard you're doing benefit concerts for the UNITED FARMWORKERS and so on.*

Yes, we have a group of musicians here in New York called the MUSICIANS ACTIVE COLLECTIVE. And this is a group of about forty New York musicians who are ah, perhaps not revolutionary musicians, but they are musicians who are eager to find a political connection between their work and what's going on in the world. It's a very broad kind of group there, people from all kinds of different directions who are working in it. One of the things we're trying to do is we're trying to create a kind of solid base of very high quality professional musicians who are eager to change things. And one of the ways that we do this is to put on benefit concerts in support of various causes that we want to support.

The first one that we did was in support of the CHILE SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE, which was a part of the demonstrations on Chile which took place here. It was of course extremely important here, because every little demonstration ..... We don't have huge demonstrations here like you have in Europe..... But even if you can get three or four hundred people together in a hall for a concert in support of the CHILEAN PEOPLES' STRUGGLE, this is extremely important in this country, even if it's a small thing. Because there's almost nothing else that's going on here.

The second one we did was in support of the UNITED FARM WORKERS. And now we're doing one this month in support of the ATTICA DEFENSE COMMITTEE. This last, this final project that we have now with the Musicians' Action Collective is to create an Oratorio which tells the story of May Day, which is of course something that most Americans don't know anything about. They don't realize that it started in Chicago in 1886. The first May Day celebration was a demonstration to commemorate the martyrs of Haymarket who were executed as part of the struggle for the eight-hour working day. But now in America nobody knows about May Day any more. It just disappeared, even though it's a holiday that's celebrated all over the world.

This is particularly important this year, because this is the year of the 200th anniversary of the American Revolution. So of course there's a lot of cultural crap going on, a lot of shit which is being handed down by the ROCKEFELLERS and the FORDS and what have you. And although people like us are very few of us in culture who are trying to do something opposed to this, our existence I think is rather important.

So this kind of attitude is reflected in our concerts. And one of the effects that it has is to combine the kinds of music of many different directions, so that a concert of the collective consists not only of new music but also of jazz, Puerto Rican music, and so on and so forth.

*What do you think about your personal writing now in forming the necessary evocative power in order to awaken people to an understanding? What musical techniques do you use to achieve this?*

Well, there are all kinds of different musical techniques which you can employ for different kinds of situations. Personally, I don't think that I've ever developed what you might call a "style". At least I can't see any style in my music. Every music that I do seems to be very different than the thing that came before. So there's always a new technique available for every specific situation. It depends on your audience again, on who you're writing for and playing for.

I think perhaps that one development that one must be conscious of is the fact that you cannot rely on any one

historical tradition anymore. If your background is classical European for instance, as most of us composers have come out of this tradition, we have to become aware of the fact that the future of our music does not lie merely in a continuation of the classical European mode of thinking, that we have to become aware of the cultural influences which have become very strong, which come from other parts of the world, such as Africa, and Latin America, and Asia. We have to begin to think in terms of a "world music", kind of global music. And I don't mean by that in the way STOCKHAUSEN talked about a "global" music as a sort of a kind of imperialist concept, but rather a music which integrates, tries to harmonize with some of the most revolutionary developments which have come out of the third world, such as of course in North America the whole idea of jazz improvisation.

*But if you take South American music. It has its evocative power just from the folkloristic background it comes from. And it speaks to people from this geographical area, because it's the folkloristic style which developed through generations there.*

It's different. It's different from the basic South American music. Of course there are lots of different kinds of South American music. For instance this song that I just played you, the INTI-ILLIMANI song, is known by everybody in Italy. EVERYBODY knows this song. It's become an Italian song practically.

*Ya, because it's a revolutionary song which fits into the political situation.*

Precisely. But not only for that reason. Also for musical reasons. One of the peculiarities about that song is that it's not folklore song. It's not just a folk song. It's a very subtle kind of mixture of different cultural influences.

*But it gives at least the recognition for some people that it's THEIR music. These are the people that the musicians want to talk to in this moment. So what I mean is it's possibly necessary to find out what the local necessity for that where you live here in New York. And your personal background of being a pianist and all this technology of playing new music available for yourself. And*



*from this personal background and from this locality trying to find out what could be revolutionary.*

Yeah, that's an interesting problem. And it's very important. Of course a place like New York is a very peculiar place. There's no other place like it on earth. It's not even like the rest of the United States. It's a very unique place. Probably culturally I mean the thing that distinguishes New York from every other place is the vast quantity of different kinds of information that reach you here every day. When you walk the streets, I mean, you are confronted by cultural influences from the entire planet practically. So, if one lives here and listens to the sounds, it's almost inevitable that you develop a kind of a global consciousness. Although I'm not even sure that that's true, what I'm saying. I mean it's also true here that people live very much in boxes.

*There seem to be a lot of Puerto Ricans living around here.*

Not Puerto Ricans so much as Dominican Republic, Cuba, Haiti, the Caribbeans.

*The Taxi driver himself was one of these. You know, he had this music on. They have special radio stations for their music. They don't want to be mixed up so much with the downtown culture. And do you see that this situation could influence the kind of music here?*

Oh, it definitely does. I mean, unless one is completely deaf, of course many of our composers are completely deaf, especially the ones who teach in schools, but the ones that are not deaf, obviously you can't live here without being influenced by the cultural forces at work here. I mean, how can you be a composer in the United States and not be influenced by jazz for instance? Jazz is perhaps the most powerful music that this country has produced, even though it's not regarded as such by the official culture. It's certainly the only kind of music that's universally respected in the rest of the world as a genuinely American music which is worthy of recognition.

*But as a music which gets much more and more response in the rest of the world because of the condition of the....*

Yes, it's become an international platform.

*But I ask again if it's because of its genuine power or because of the mechanism of media.*

I think it's because one of the basic ideas of jazz is the combination of the African rhythm based conception with the melodic conception which partly comes from say Scottish balads of the highlands, which were a part of the American folk tradition. And also the very important contribution that was made by say Russian and eastern European countries who came to this country after the First World War, who wrote many of the popular songs on which jazz compositions then were based. So that the idea of a combination of many different cultures, popular cultures, is really at the heart of jazz, even though the main vanguard of jazz has always been the black people. So in that sense you can say that it's black music. The fact is that the black people of America are not the black people of Africa. They are a people who have been in intimate contact with other cultures on this continent for many generations. And this is what gives to jazz its international character.

*It's also the simplicity of jazz, in so far that it's easy to communicate certain kinds of agreements.*

Well of course. I think most good jazz is entirely based on communication, yes.

*And this fact makes it open to communicate with other people. That's what makes it so necessary to tune into it. But then again I ask if it's really necessary. Is it necessary for instance that people like from Germany, where I come from..... You can say Hawaii if you want..... But is it really necessary to tune in on jazz?*

Well, of course it's not necessary for me to say what is necessary for Germany. You have to find the answer to that. I have my own OPINIONS about the German musical situation.

*Well, we can certainly talk about that too. But what I mean is, we're just talking now about the world-side availability of this music. Is it necessary? The more I talk to people, the more I'm coming to the point where I see the necessity now to again find out more about the music where you yourself geographically come from.*

*And here we can learn from the Third World. They can be proud of their music. They wouldn't give up their music for any price. You know? But now countries under strong United States influence did. It might sound ridiculous. But in this sense I feel pretty close to people from Hawaii. So I'm coming more and more to the conclusion that we shouldn't forget the music we come from.*

I think if you did something like that, you would probably find that this music that you're talking about is not dead at all. It may not be on the radio in Germany, and there may not be many records of it, but I bet you'd find it if you went to Bavaria, especially to small villages and so on. I bet you would find a lot of music there.

*I really ask myself why so many German musicians, if they want to be like spontaneous acting and communicating musicians, why they get addicted to jazz music.*

To jazz or to rock music?

*To kind of a melange of both.*

It's obvious why. Because that's what's offered for sale. If all you were offered for sale in the stores is shit, you get addicted to shit. It's very simple. But among the younger composers in West Germany there is now for instance in the last few years a very strong renewed interest in the work of HANNS EISLER.

*I have to say something about that too. It's becoming more and more an "Entschuldigung".....*

excuse.

*.....excuse for thinking about music. It's rubbish to give up the whole experience of the last twenty years and make tabula rasa with defining music now.*

Of course there are fanatics in this movement as there are in any other movement.

*Like CHRISTIAN WOLFF is very careful about it in integrating the experiences of the last twenty years into his politically conscious writing. He doesn't just turn 180° now because he's seen that there was something wrong. I*

*think CHRISTIAN WOLFF weighs his musical decisions very carefully.*

CHRISTIAN is an extremely careful worker. And his work is one of the most exciting works done in this area. Although it certainly is, none of CHRISTIAN's music is ever easy to listen to. It always demands some kind of active participation, both on the part of the performer and on the part of the listener. That is part of its strength and it's also part of its weakness.

*Because it's part of CHRISTIAN WOLFF. Like CARDEW is an example for a musician who went through being an assistant of STOCKHAUSEN, went through making very exciting things with his SCRATCH Orchestra in London, and now....*

I know what you are going to say. You are sceptical.

*He made a lot of tabula rasa with his music.*

Well, I would say in this connection, that CORNELIUS is a composer who is not afraid to make a mistake..... You're turning off the machine?

*No, no. I just look if there is still enough tape.*

He is not afraid to make a big mistake and fall flat on his face, as an experiment. He is a real experimental composer. And part of being an experimenter is to create conditions where you can make mistakes. And he certainly made plenty of them. The thing is, he is not afraid to do that. Like for instance, when he started first this new direction years back, making pieces based on Chinese songs and stuff like that. It's not just a musical trick he is doing. He is really profoundly convinced by his whole thinking along these lines. And he is quite a powerful mind.

In my opinion, the latest things that he has been doing in this direction are very successful indeed. The first piece I think was a really good one was the ERNST THAELMANN VARIATIONS, which he wrote a year ago. And this year he has written several new pieces, including by the way versions of some of CHRISTIAN WOLFF's music. Maybe CHRISTIAN doesn't even know about that. CHRISTIAN wrote a number of songs, based on texts like ROSA LUXEMBURG and

MAO TSE TUNG and stuff like that, which are one line, very angular, abstract songs, very difficult to sing. CORNELIUS took these songs and added harmonic components to them, arranged them so they became extremely singable, very melodious. I think they are really fine.

*See! Learning from mistakes. We can get back to what I said about failures people go through.*

Well, what you say is partly true. I think I agree with you in part. But for instance the Viet Nam War was one of the biggest mistakes this country has made in a long time. It's true that probably it has resulted in some positive developments in this society as a result of the mistakes they have made. However, again I would prefer to err on the side of pessimism than on the side of optimism. It's still true that most Americans care more about the price of meat than they do about the exploitation of Bolivian minors.

*Do you think this crisis can be finished by the people?*

I certainly hope so. We'll see. I think we're going though the next ten or twenty years in this country to have an extremely crucial period in this country and also for the rest of the world. There is a very great danger here, which is something like perhaps the situation which you had in Germany in the early 1930's. One must be extremely concerned about the directions the things are going to take here. Because most people believe in this country that democracy is very strong. There is a faith in democracy here, which is one of the strongest things that there is in America. This is the basic belief in democracy. However, it's also a weakness because this faith may not be founded on solid grounds. You know, people all say, "Well, fascism couldn't possibly happen here!" That may possibly be true.

*It IS fascist in a certain way.*

Well, not YET.

*But it is the kind of silent fascism you don't take note of.*

Well, certainly there are very strong fascist elements in this country, but I wouldn't say that the country is...

*No, not fascistic in that it declares to be. But it has some elements of it. Like if you drive through certain suburban areas, you feel fantastically.....*

You can get a good idea of what American Fascism would be like.

*Va, that you don't have the slightest idea of what's on the back side of the coin. But you drive through it, and you have a feeling of security. And that is a similar feeling that people had in Germany before the war. The German media of that time were "calming" the people down, and giving them good feelings, thinking positively. This mechanism is working here.*

Yes, it's very strong here. But fortunately this is a very large country, and we have other things, too. The main problem is that the other thing, whatever it is, is not organized, it has no structure. So it's an extremely precarious dangerous situation. Nobody knows.

*I just heard on the phone you're returning to Rome.*

I'm trying to organize it. At this moment it's hard for me to think ahead more than one month. My life is very improvisational. My family is European basically. My wife is Belgian. And my children grew up in Italy. So we are straddling both sides of the Atlantic ocean right now without being very clear about where we are.

*And do you feel responsible to stay here because you've grown up here?*

WELL, that's not the reason. I try not to think in terms of "either-or", EITHER the United States OR Europe, because I've lived so long in both places that I try to think in terms of being in both places. And after all, that is possible today, even though it's not easy. I think it's very important.

# Apolitical Intellectuals

Words: Otto René Castillo  
Music: Frederic Rzewski  
10/12/74

$\text{♩} = 96$

Handwritten musical score for the instrumental introduction. It consists of four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The time signature is 3/4. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some chords and rests. There are several slurs and accents throughout the piece.

Handwritten musical score for the first two lines of lyrics. It consists of two vocal staves and two piano accompaniment staves. The lyrics are: "1. One day the a-political in-tel-lect-u-als of my country" and "2. They will be asked what they did when their nation died out". The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand. Dynamics include *f* (forte).

Handwritten musical score for the final two lines of lyrics. It consists of two vocal staves and two piano accompaniment staves. The lyrics are: "will be interrogated by the sim-plest of our peo-ple." and "slowt ly, like a sweet fire, small and a-lone.". The music continues in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat. The piano accompaniment maintains the eighth-note bass line. Dynamics include *f* (forte).

*mf*

1. No one will ask them about their clothes, their long si-es-tas af-ter lunch,

2. won't be questioned on Greek mytho-logy or their feelings of self-dis-gust when

or the philo-so-phy of no-thing-ness, or the on-to-lo-gy of money. They

one among them be-gins to die the cow-ard's death.

*p*

They'll be asked no-thing on their ab-surd jus-ti-fi-ca-tions,



Born in the shadow of the total \* (whispered)  
lie.

*mp*

On that day the simple people will come, will come, who

*mp*

had no place in the books and poems of the a-political intellectuals, but

daily delivered their bread and milk, who mended their clothes, and drove their cars, and

*mf*

cleaned their houses, and kept their gardens, and worked for them, and they'll ask:

What did you do, What did you do, when the poor suf- fered, when

WHAT DID YOU DO? WHAT DID YOU DO? WHAT DID YOU DO? WHAT DID YOU DO? / /

ten- der-ness and life burned out in them?

/ / / /

Handwritten musical score for the first system, featuring complex chordal textures in both treble and bass staves. The notation includes various accidentals and rhythmic markings.

Handwritten musical score for the second system, including vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "A-pol-i-ti-cal in-tel-lectuals of my sweet coun-try,". The word "crescendo" is written above the vocal line and below the piano accompaniment.

Handwritten musical score for the third system, including vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "you will not be a-ble to an-swer.".

Handwritten musical score for the fourth system, primarily piano accompaniment. The word "diminuendo" is written above the piano accompaniment. The system concludes with a circled number 70.

60

*mp* *p* *pp*

(Spoken)

*Slow*

A vulture of si-lence will eat your gut. Your

*p.* *p.* *p.* *p.*

(Steadily slower to the end)

own mi-se-ry will pick at your soul, and you will be mute in your shame.



John Mc Guire

Dear Walter,

Thank you very much for your 2 letters. It sounds as though you had interviewed the entire American avant-garde, and I'm flattered that you would wish to include me in a book with so many reputable people. ("Desert Plants" is a beautiful and appropriate title, by the way). I'll try to send you a couple of pages of Erises.

Life in Cologne has become very sad for me lately, and your questions about America were especially hard for me to answer. But I hope the answers aren't too dumb. I wrote them out very quickly as if in an interview and hope it's OK.

I'm eagerly awaiting your return to Cologne as I'm sure you'll have a lot to tell, and we can exchange impressions of our visits to America.

*John, you're living now for five years in Cologne, carefully composing. The last piece you wrote was FRIEZE for four pianos, and you worked four years on it. As far as I know, you are American with your full heart. How did you work on FRIEZE?*

The original idea for the piece was quite simple: the material was to consist exclusively of repeating figures covering a large part of the available piano range. I thought of the figures as very slow wave forms at 1/2, 1/3 cycles per second, etc. That notion came out of a number of improvising sessions that I had participated in with my friend ALDEN JENKS in 1969 - 70, on some voltage-controlled equipment which he had built himself and was showing me how to use.

It became more problematic when I decided to use a great many different patterns, and to differentiate them by means of contrasting tempi and speeds. One thing lead to another, and before I was finished the piece came to consist of seventy-two different patterns in thirty-six different tempi, most of them composite figures to which all four pianos contribute, something like Kotekan figuration in Balinese music. Almost all of the work, however, went not into thinking of patterns..... that's relatively easy..... but into finding a common ground on which a number of different patterns could coexist. I wanted all those patterns to somehow grow into a single pattern, and it took me a long time before I felt that that had happened.

*What keeps you in Cologne?*

Right now I am working in the electronic studio at the Cologne Hochschule and have a fair amount of time there. It's an opportunity I wouldn't want to pass up, since I have never done any electronic music.

*You visited the States this summer. What was your impression generally and of the music scene in particular?*

My general impression of the United States? It's big. It's an entirely different feeling living in Germany, which is a walled fortress, spiritually and physically, and always will be. All the musical ideas I've ever had which seemed to me any good have had to do with a notion of



sounds spinning across some kind of huge earthly amphitheater, and I had to come to Europe before I understood that this would not necessarily be an interesting point of departure for composers of all countries. For example a German composer might tend to think in more introverted terms, or in terms of some kind of other-worldly paradise. The resultant music need not be any less valid, obviously; it's just a completely different starting point. I wasn't really conscious of the role that the sheer physical environment plays in one's imaginative make up until I left America, and then came back again and saw how big it was.

I didn't spend much time checking out the musical scene. There were very few concerts, since it was summer. I did happen across no less than four new publications of writings about new music: SOUNDINGS, ASTERISK, NUMUS WEST and EAR. All of these publications seemed to me very interesting and attested to a liveliness of interest and discussion which has been pretty much dead in Europe since the fifties.

There also seemed to be a new attitude developing toward the tradition of experimental music in America: All throughout my academic training, in the early sixties, the everpresent implication was that the only decent composers were Europeans, and that composers like CAGE, PARTCH, even IVES and RUGGLES, were somehow either crazy or not quite worth a student's trouble. I have the impression that the youngest composers are simply not going to listen to that kind of thing any more, and that, along with all the communication which seems to be going on, is surely a good sign.

*Do you want to come back?*

Well, as I said, all the musical ideas I've ever had which seemed to me to be any good also seem to have been involved with experiences I've had while living in America. Under those circumstances, a desire to return is inevitable. At the moment there are various kinds of practical and personal considerations keeping me here, but sooner or later I'm sure I'll return to America.

## FRIEZE FOR FOUR PIANOS

The first sketches for FRIEZE for four pianos were made in 1969 while I was living in Berkeley, being introduced to the numerous mysteries of voltage-controlled electronic devices by Allen Zinks. The characteristic periodically repeating rhythmic-melodic patterns which are automatically generated by some of these devices (voltage-controlled oscillators, sequencers) were new to me and the phenomenon was interesting enough that it seemed a whole piece could be based exclusively on the use of such repeating patterns.

Although the idea for the piece originally came from the encounter with voltage-controlled electronic devices, there were several reasons why an ensemble of pianos (originally two, later multiplied to four) seemed more suitable for the realization of the idea. One reason was that from the start the piece was intended to incorporate a great many patterns in different tempi, with different speeds, durations, etc., and I suspected that the solution of the formal problems involved might require several years' work. There was no possibility of getting access to an electronic studio for a period of years. Use of voltage-controlled instruments in a live performance seemed out of the question since I knew of no electronic devices capable of producing with any precision the numerous instantaneous changes of tempo and texture which I had in mind. The most important reason was that I kept hearing the patterns on pianos. This can't be explained, of course, but it may have something to do with the fact that the simple wave forms and elemental attacks produced by the electronic devices reminded me somewhat of the timbre of the piano, though they could not approach the flexibility and complexity obtainable on the piano. To generate, by automatic means easily identifiable as such, a music whose character was in any case to be essentially automatic seemed redundant. On the other hand the generation of these patterns by human performers suggested interesting choreographic possibilities, such as rhythmic figures being tossed back and forth between two pianos, movements of the hands, etc.

## I. TIME STRUCTURE

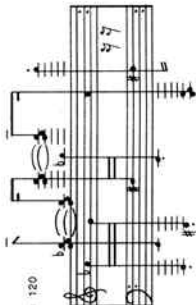
In order to compose a piece consisting of a large number of periodically repeating patterns the obvious first necessity was to find a way of relating the various patterns to one another. In order to form such relationships it was necessary to isolate the elements of which any periodically repeating pattern is comprised, and then to compose relationships between these elements.

After a good deal of experiment it was decided that the essential elements in any repeating pattern - at least in any repeating pattern playable on a piano keyboard - are those elements having to do with time structure only, and of which there are three: speed, period and duration.

The speed was defined as the frequency of the shortest note value in the pattern. The period was defined as the length of the pattern.

The duration was defined as the length of a given set of repetitions of a pattern.

These three elements, together with a pair of numbers which describes their relationship in any given pattern, provided the basic structural model for all of the patterns in the piece. For example the following pattern



Ex. 1

has a speed, or shortest note value, of  $N = 1/6$  seconds, or 6 Hz (where  $d = 60/120$ ). It has a period, i.e. the length of the figure, of  $d = 2$  seconds. If it occurs four times, the duration would be that of four dotted half-notes, or 8 seconds. The relationships between these values can be expressed by the fraction  $12/4$ , meaning that the duration is 4x the period ( $2^* \times 4 = 8^*$ ) while the speed is  $1/2$  of the period ( $2^* \div 12 = 1/6^*$  or 6 Hz).

Ex. 2



Having arrived at this basic structural model for all patterns in the piece, consisting of a pair of numbers governing the relationship of the elements speed, period and duration, it was decided that none of these elements should be constant for all patterns, that in each successive pattern one or more of the elements should change.

One needs only consider how many different patterns can be produced in which, say, the speed is constant but the period and duration are varied (the number is of course limitless) to see how wide a spectrum of possibilities becomes available when all three of these elements are varied. It soon became clear that the removal of any kind of constant in these three essential elements, that is, the removal of any kind of obvious time constant, would create a number of new problems in the forming of the piece: the presence of a great deal of periodic repetition implies a high degree of formal order, while the removal of large-scale time constants works against this implied order, which must then be brought about in some other way.

For this reason the composition of the relationships between the patterns became by far the most important single factor determining the final form of the patterns. A three-way system was worked out by means of which each pattern enters simultaneously into three different types of formal relationship, to

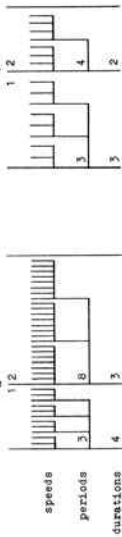
- 1) the pattern immediately preceding it and the pattern immediately succeeding it (ADJACENT relationships)
- 2) its own preceding and succeeding appearances in the several sections of the piece (CYCLICAL relationships)
- 3) its mirror counterpart on the opposite side of, and equidistant from, an axis which runs vertically through the center of the piece (REFLECTED relationships).

Though each pattern enters into all three relationships it will be necessary to describe the three types of relationship one at a time.

## ADJACENT RELATIONSHIPS

The relationship between the time structures of any two patterns adjacent to one another is determined by the preservation of time values from one pattern to the next: SINCE the period is constant the speed is constant.

Ex. 3



In example 3a the speed is constant in patterns 1 and 2; the move to a new pattern is indicated by the preservation of time values from one pattern to the next: SINCE the period is constant the speed is constant. In example 3b the speed is constant in patterns 1 and 2; the move to a new pattern is indicated by an increase in speed (the same period is divided by 3, then 4).

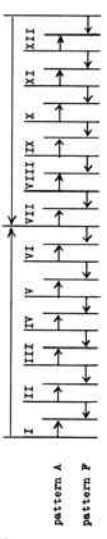


The technique of progressive alteration of the time structure of each pattern, when applied as in examples 6-8 to the twelve appearances of each pattern, introduces a third cyclical aspect of the piece: the progressions themselves are also cyclic. The progressions in examples 6-8 are indefinitely repeatable; no matter where one begins in the series, it always leads back to the starting point. It follows of course that the entire piece is repeatable; it has no particular "beginning" or "end".

Reciprocal Relationships

The progression structure of pattern A has already been illustrated in example 6. The progression structure of pattern P is identical to that of pattern A, but in reverse:

Ex. 10



The resultant crossing of trajectories is a mirror form in which the first half of the combined patterns A-P is the reverse of the second half. Therefore the structure of pattern A is identical to the structure of its counterpart XII. Similarly XII is identical to XI, XI to X, etc. The same reciprocal relationships apply to patterns B-E and to patterns C-D (see examples 11, 13).

.....

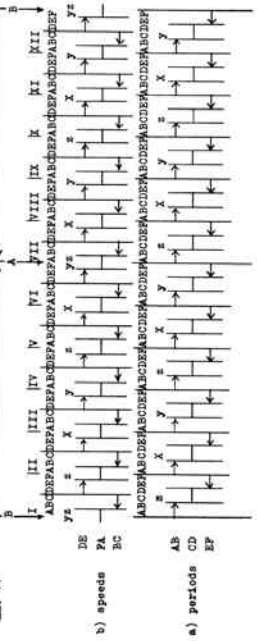
After the three-way system of adjacent, cyclical and reciprocal relationships between the speeds, periods and durations had been established as the basis for the form of the piece it was possible to begin the step-by-step construction of a time plan.

Before going on to detail this process it will be useful to summarize what was known so far. It was known that each 12-step progression (by means of which the cyclical relationships were established) would provide the structure for either the speeds of 2 adjacent patterns or for the periods of 2 adjacent patterns.

3 speed progressions  $\overline{A|B|C} \overline{D|E|F}$   
 3 period progressions  $\overline{A|B|C} \overline{D|E|F}$

Furthermore it was known that 1) the period progressions AB and EF would be the reverse of the speed progressions CD and BA, 2) the speed progressions DE and CB would be the reverse of the period progressions BA and CD, 3) the period progressions BC and FE would be the reverse of the speed progressions FE and BC, while AB would necessarily be its own reverse (thus providing the stationary central axis AP) and 4) there would be 6 duration progressions of which A would be the reverse of F, B of E, C of D, D of C, E of B, and F of A. It remains to summarize the cyclical relationships of speeds and periods schematically (the durations A-P, B-E and C-D are related as in example 10):

Ex. 11



Finally, the general shapes of the progressions were known (in examples 6-8 it was necessary to jump ahead a little and show the quantities assigned to these shapes in order to illustrate the cyclical relationships. But these quantities could not here be shown, since they would have to be drawn in a way which would obscure the way in which the progressions were interlocked; almost all of the progressions would be in four steps, i.e.  $\overline{X|Y|Z|W}$  or  $\overline{X|Y|Z|W}$ , with overlaps at the extremes.

Ex. 12



X = extremes (longest/shortest or highest/lowest); Y = transitions

However, because of the requirement that speeds and periods share the same axis (otherwise reciprocally related patterns would have very different structures, even patterns that were themselves reciprocally related), it was necessary to omit a step in this step at axis B. Thus there are two different symmetries, which will henceforth be referred to as A and B, and the symmetry (the symmetry of the periods), in which the step is omitted at axis A. The two symmetries are referred to as A and B, and the symmetry of the speeds in which there are 3-step progressions at axis A (X-Y-A) and 5-step progressions at axis B (X-Y-A-B).

With the above information it was possible to provide the scheme of example 11 with specific quantities. This was done in the seven-step process described below.

STEP 1 choice of a stationary axis speed for AP of 2/3 seconds per pulse or 4.5 Hz.

STEP 2 multiplication of this speed by the following series produces the periods AB, and in reverse, EF:

speed AP  $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   
 (in seconds)  
 multiplied by 12 24 12 6 3 6 12 24 12 6 3 6

" periods AB:  $\frac{8}{3}$   $\frac{16}{3}$   $\frac{8}{3}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{8}{3}$   $\frac{16}{3}$   $\frac{8}{3}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   
 (in seconds)  
 speed AP:  $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$

multiplied by 6 3 6 12 24 12 6 3 6 12 24 12  
 " periods EF:  $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{8}{3}$   $\frac{16}{3}$   $\frac{8}{3}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{8}{3}$   $\frac{16}{3}$   $\frac{8}{3}$   
 (in seconds)

STEP 3 division of the resulting periods AB and EF by the following series produces the speeds for BC, and in reverse, FE:

periods AB:  $\frac{8}{3}$   $\frac{16}{3}$   $\frac{8}{3}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{8}{3}$   $\frac{16}{3}$   $\frac{8}{3}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   
 (in seconds)  
 divided by 12 32 32 8 2 2 12 64 16 4 1 4

= speeds BC: 4.5 6 12 6 3 1.5 4.5 12 6 3 1.5 3  
 (in Hz)  
 periods EF:  $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{8}{3}$   $\frac{16}{3}$   $\frac{8}{3}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{8}{3}$   $\frac{16}{3}$   $\frac{8}{3}$   
 (in seconds)  
 divided by 4 1 4 16 64 12 2 2 8 32 32 12

= speeds DE: 3 1.5 3 6 12 4.5 1.5 3 6 12 6 4.5  
 (in Hz)

STEP 4 multiplication of the resulting speeds BC and EF by the following series produces the stationary axis periods C, and in reverse, D:

speeds BC: 4.5 6 12 6 3 1.5 4.5 12 6 3 1.5 3  
 multiplied by 9 12 24 12 6 3 9 24 12 6 3 6

" periods C: 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2  
 (in seconds)  
 speeds EF: 3 1.5 3 6 12 4.5 1.5 3 6 12 6 4.5  
 (in Hz)  
 multiplied by 6 3 6 12 24 9 3 6 12 24 12 9

" periods D: 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2  
 (in seconds)

STEP 5 given periods CD, multiplication by the following series produces the durations C, and in reverse, D:

periods CD: 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2  
 (in seconds)  
 multiplied by 8 16 8 4 2 6 18 54 18 6 2 4  
 = durations C: 16 32 16 8 4 12 36 108 36 12 4 8  
 periods CD: 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2  
 multiplied by 4 2 6 18 54 18 6 2 4 8 16 8  
 = durations D: 8 4 12 36 108 36 12 4 8 16 32 16

STEP 6 given periods AB and EF, multiplication by the following series produces the stationary axis durations B<sub>1</sub> and in reverse, B<sub>2</sub>:

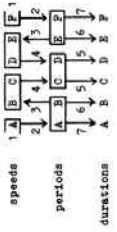
periods AB: 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2  
 (in seconds)  
 multiplied by 4 2 4 8 16 8 4 2 4 8 16 8  
 = durations B<sub>1</sub>: 10 20 10 20 10 20 10 20 10 20 10 20 10 20 10 20  
 periods EF: 1 2 3 1 2 3 5 1 2 3 5 1 2 3 5 1 2 3  
 multiplied by 8 16 8 4 2 4 8 16 8 4 2 4  
 = durations B<sub>2</sub>: 10 20 10 20 10 20 10 20 10 20 10 20 10 20 10 20

STEP 7 given periods AB and EF, multiplication by the following series produces the durations A<sub>1</sub> and in reverse, A<sub>2</sub>:

periods AB: 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2  
 multiplied by 15 11 15 20 27 9 3 1 3 9 27 20  
 = durations A<sub>1</sub>: 40 60 40 27\* 18 12 8 5 8 12 18 27  
 periods EF: 1 2 3 1 2 3 5 1 2 3 5 1 2 3 5 1 2 3  
 multiplied by 20 27 9 3 1 3 9 27 20 15 11 15  
 = durations A<sub>2</sub>: 27 18 12 8 5 8 12 18 27 40 60 40

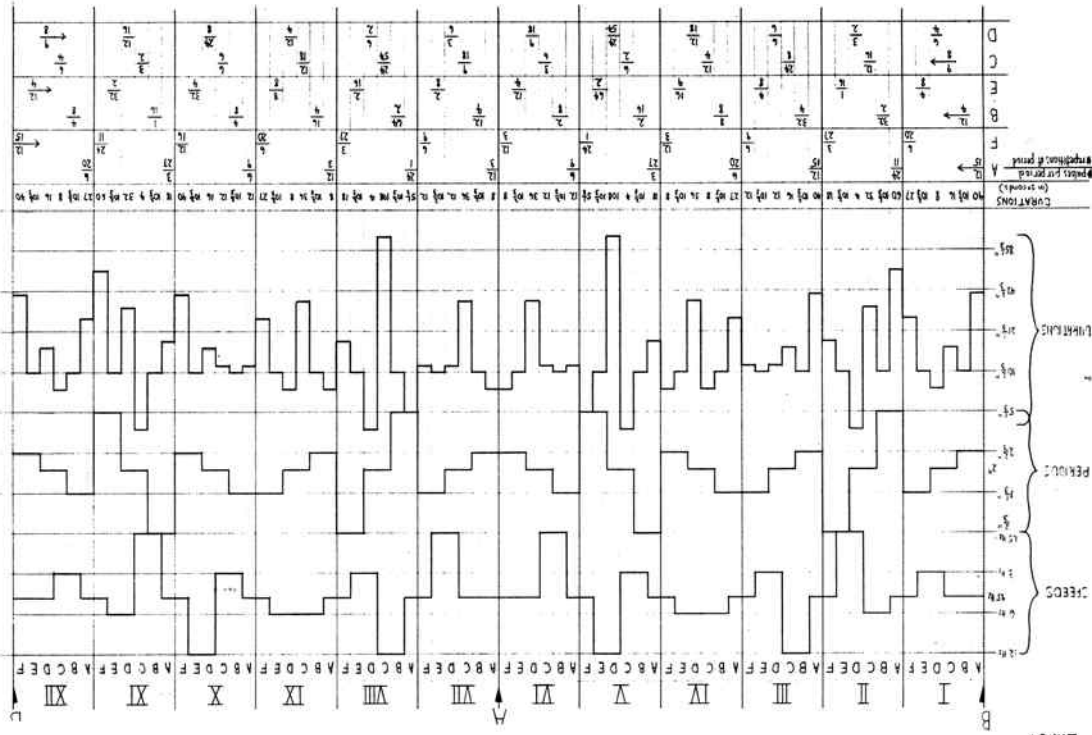
At times it was difficult to keep track of these steps, so a plan was made to map out the process of construction (1-7 = the seven steps).

EX. 13



The combined results of this process are illustrated in the large diagram example 13.

EX. 14



## II. HARMONY

After the time structure just described had been completed, the next step was to superimpose an harmonic structure upon it. It was clear from the beginning that such a superposition would require that the harmonic structure be exactly congruent with the time structure, and that the harmonic structure would therefore have to be based on an analogous system of adjacent, cyclical, and reciprocal relationships.

The working out of the harmony took place in three stages. In the first stage, a basic harmonic grid was constructed which had the same three-way structure of adjacent, cyclical, and reciprocal relationships as the time structure and which consisted of two interlocked sets of pitches which performed a formal function identical to that of the speeds and periods of the time structure. In the second stage these two sets of pitches were multiplied together and the result rotated. In the third stage the resulting harmonic constellations were further interlocked by an exchange of pitches between the most important harmonic centers, producing parallel "fauxbourdon" mixtures.

FIRST STAGE - construction of the harmonic grid

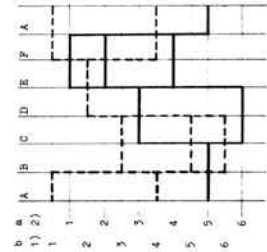
### adjacent relationships

Analogous to the time structure, each of the patterns ABCDEF was related harmonically to the pattern immediately preceding and succeeding it by means of common pitches. To provide a source of pitches for this procedure, a fixed harmonic field, consisting of a verticalized circle of fifths, was separated into two halves, producing two circles of major ninths (1) and 2).



Ex. 15

Pitches were then selected from one of the hexachords to connect the pairs AB/CD/EF and from the other hexachord to connect the pairs DE/FA/BC. (From now on the pitches of hexachords 1) 1-6 and 2) 1-6 will be drawn as in example 16; all the original sketches for the piece were drawn in this way.)



Ex. 16

In example 16 the three pairs AB/CD/EF (frequencies a, or periods, in the time structure; pitches a in the harmonic structure) are connected by the six pitches of hexachord 2, while the three pairs DE/FA/BC (frequencies b, or speeds, in the time structure; pitches b in the harmonic structure) are connected by the six pitches of hexachord 1. This derivation of pitches a from hexachord 2 and of pitches b from hexachord 1 is not present throughout; for half the piece the relationship is reversed (see below, step 5).

In both the a half (hexachord 2) and the b half (hexachord 1) of example 16 all six pitches of the hexachords are used. This is in each case the maximum number; any duplication of pitches within such a three-part group would cause a horizontal duplication as well, with the result that a pitch would be held for four consecutive patterns, thus blurring the structure of alternating pairs. For example, if any other connecting pitches were added to the single pitch of hexachord 1 connecting DE (f''') a duplication would result; the g''''' would connect DE to FA; the d#, would connect DE to BC, etc. Therefore for any three-part group of pairs AB/CD/EF or DE/FA/BC a maximum of six pitches was allowed, in the distribution 2-2 or 1-2-3. Thus no pattern has less than one or more than three pitches from hexachord 1 or 2. This allows the following combinations of pitch densities:

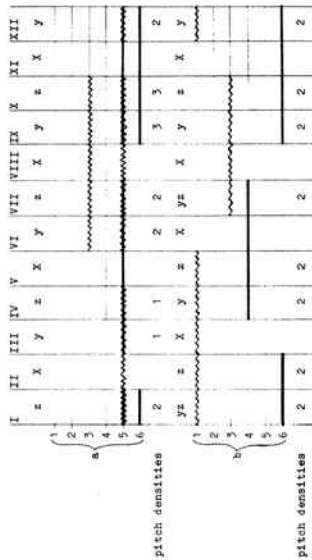
Ex. 17

1)	1	1	1	2	2	3	3
2)	1	2	2	1	2	1	2
total	2	3	4	3	4	5	6

### cyclical relationships

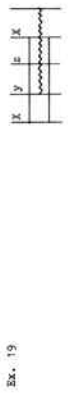
The cyclical relationships (the relationship of a pattern to its preceding and succeeding appearances) in the time structure were brought about by progressions of speed, period and duration. The key to establishing a cyclical system of harmonic relationships based on the pitch structure of example 15 and analogous to the cyclical relationships in the time structure lies in the four-step structure of these progressions, with the resulting division of all patterns into two basic types, extreme-stage patterns (X) and transitional-stage patterns (yz) (see examples 11 and 12). In the harmonic structure the pitches  $x_1$  and  $y_2$  from the extremes and  $z_1$  from the transitions; a collection of pitches X, represents a first extreme stage; a collection of pitches  $x_2$  represents a second extreme stage, and pitches  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  represent the two transitional stages y and z. To illustrate the relationship of extreme to transitional patterns for the two sets of pitches a and b it will be useful to isolate the twelve appearances of pattern A from the context (pitches belonging to alternating extremes are characterized by straight and wavy lines).

Ex. 18 Harmonic structure, pattern A



In example 18 the hexachords of a (1-6) and b (1-6) are drawn separately on two different levels so that their individual structures can be more easily read; it should be remembered that it is necessary to place the pitch of the first pitch of the second hexachord on the same level as the second pitch of the first hexachord. The two hexachords are connected by the fact that the two adjacent pitches a and b already connect adjacent pitches BC/DE/FA. Accordingly, the a half of example 18 is identical to the a half of pattern B, while the b half of the example is identical to the b half of pattern F.

The transition in example 18a II X - Y X takes place on a single pitch which radiates from both extremes and which performs, as will be seen, two separate formal functions, the one function associated with II X (wey line) and the other with Y X (straight line). This result occurs in some cases to a single pitch, which must then have two functions, is the result of varying the pitch density of AB and EF (pitches a) and of DE and BC (pitches b) between one and three pitches. Since the maximum pitch density always occurs in transitional patterns (y, z), where pitches radiated from the extremes combine, all changes in pitch density were organized first with reference to the transitional stages. If, for example, three pitches were placed in the transitional stages yz, two pitches would go to one extreme stage and one pitch to the other.



Ex. 19

In order to vary the number of pitches present, it was therefore necessary to plan a set of pitch densities for the transitional patterns, and then to divide these pitches among the extreme patterns. This procedure for a single pattern (A) is illustrated in example 18; 18a (xy) has a progression of pitch densities 2-1-2-2, while 18b (xy) is constant at two pitches.

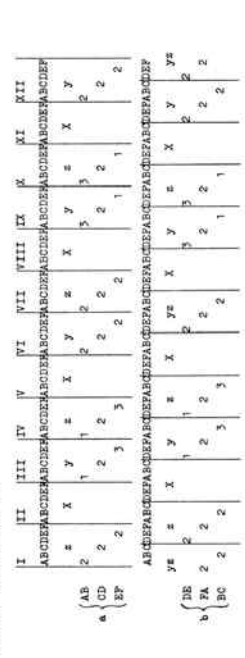
Reciprocal relationships

The reciprocal relationships in the tize structure were such that pattern A was the reverse of pattern B, B was the reverse of E, and C was the reverse of D. If the harmonic structure is to be analogous, then the pitches of pattern A must be the reverse of the pitches of pattern F, etc.

Given the structural relationship of adjacency, this means that of the a pitches (connecting pair AB/CD/EF) pitches AB are the reverse of EF while pitches CD are their own reverse; of the b pitches (connecting pairs DE/FA/BC) pitches DE are the reverse of BC while pitches FA are their own reverse. This is identical to the scheme on which the tize structure was based; example 11 is equally applicable to the tize and to the harmonic structures.

This correspondence should be obvious enough in the case of the design for changing pitch densities for all 5x12 patterns. The pitch densities of pair AB are determined by the progression 2-1-2-2-3-2 while EF is the reverse; the axial pair CD is constant at two pitches. The same applies to the pairs DE-BC and AF (compare example 11).

Ex. 20 Pitch densities



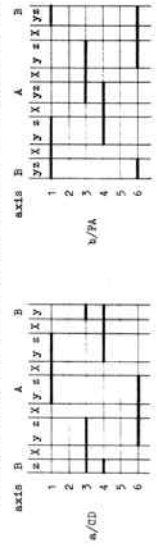
.....

With the above information it was possible to construct the harmonic grid. Just as in the tize structure this construction was done in a series of steps beginning with the axial structures CD and FA (and as was the case with the tize structure it was necessary to jump ahead a little in example 18 to show the cyclical structure of pattern A; the cyclical relationships were constructed simultaneously with the adjacent and reciprocal ones in the stepwise process described below). For the same reason that the axial speeds and periods were stationary the axial harmonic structures had to be internally reversible, that is each had to form its own complement on either side of the axis. Accordingly they had to be completely asymmetrical, which meant a constant number of pitches as well as a rotatability around horizontal and vertical axes.

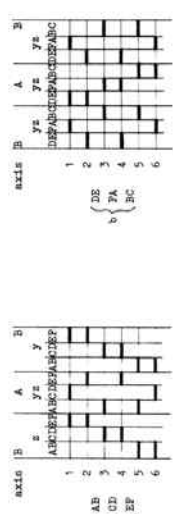
step 1 The asymmetrical pitch formations at the two vertical axes A and B were so placed that pitches a would be farthest apart when pitches b were closest together, and vice-versa



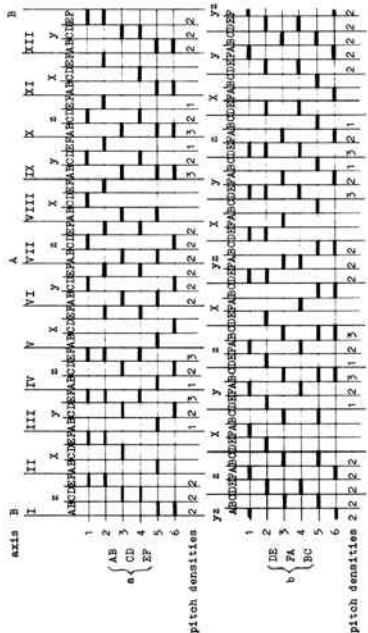
step 2 By then extending these pitches into the intermediate stages of each of the cycles a/CD and b/FA, the entire pitch structures of both cycles were established:



step 3 Given these axial structures a/CD and b/FA, the complementary structures a/AB-DE/EF and b/DE-BC could be begun. Using a procedure similar to that of step 1, the axial structures a/AB and b/DE, and the axial formations were constructed first, from the remaining pitches:



**STEP 4** Following the plan for changing pitch densities (example 20) these pitches are placed on the stages of each cycle, producing the complete pitch structures a and b.



**STEP 5** Finally a and b were combined as two interlocking circles of major thirds. In order that the entire pitch grid, combining a and b, be internally reversible (so that patterns at points on opposite sides of and equidistant from the central axis would correspond exactly in their harmonic as well as in their melodic structures) there had to be an exchange of pitches at each axis A and B:

- at axis A a moves from hexachord 2 to hexachord 1
- b moves from hexachord 1 to hexachord 2
- at axis B a moves from hexachord 1 to hexachord 2
- b moves from hexachord 2 to hexachord 1

The upper half of example 21 shows the completed a and b, including the distinction between pitches radiating from alternating extremes (— and ~~~~~). The lower half of example 21 show the two structures a and b as they interlock, including the exchange of hexachords at axes A and B (step 5).

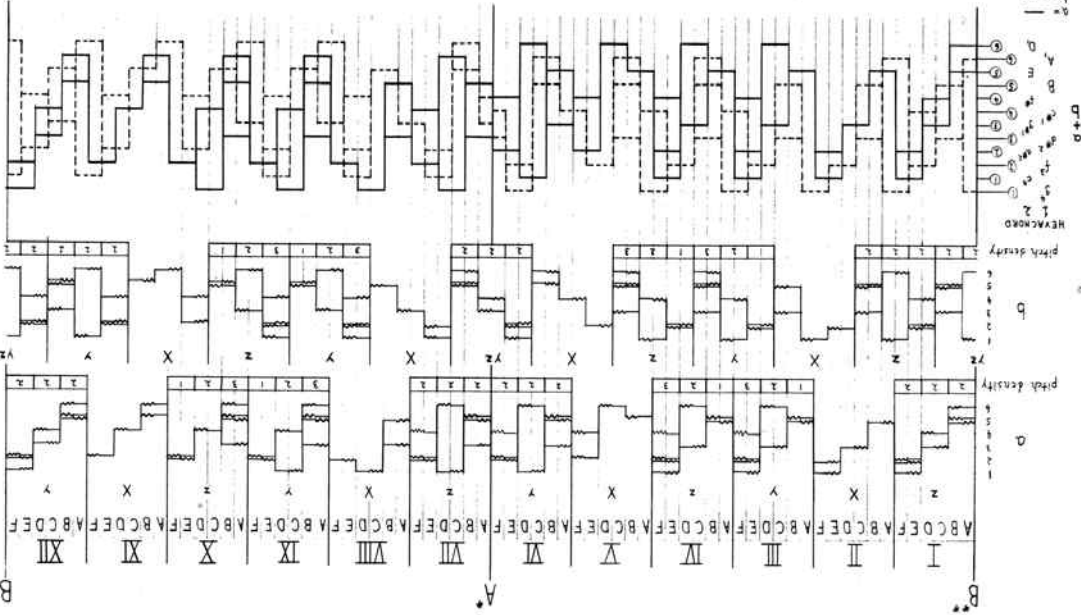
**SECOND STAGE - multiplication/rotation**

The harmonic structure just described makes available definite pitch structures for all patterns, specifying their relationship to the time structure and the registers in which they occur. As yet, however, all of the 6x12 pitch structures are completely static; no basis exists for the melodic movement which was part of the original impetus for the composition.

In order to generate such movement, a variation was used of the technique first developed by Pierre Boulez—of harmonic multiplication.\*

In the form used here, harmonic multiplication means that a group of pitches a is placed onto positions of a second group of pitches b, with reference to a single

\* My knowledge of Boulez' method of harmonic multiplication was gathered several years prior to the composition of *Prisms*, mainly from the article by Josef Hauser, "Klangfelder und Formstrukturen: Kompositionstechnische Grundprinzipien im II Band der Strukturen von Pierre Boulez," *Vergo-Schallplattenverlag GMBH, Baden-Baden*.





pitch in *a*, and vice-versa. In both cases, a reference pitch (○) must first be specified. This is not necessarily a sounding pitch, but merely a point of reference for the ensuing transpositions. The reference pitch of *a* is then placed on each pitch of *b*, while the other pitches of *a* remain in the same positions with respect to the reference pitch. The reference pitch of *b* is then placed on each pitch of *a*, while the other pitches of *b* remain in the same position with respect to the reference pitch. This results in two new constellations of six pitches each, "*a* on *b*" and "*b* on *a*".

Ex. 22

hexachords      pitches      multiplied      rotated

*a* *x* *b* = *a* on *b*      *b* on *a*      1 2 3      1 2

(b) (a)

This procedure will in many cases cause a pitch to go too high or too low for the available range. This happens in both multiplications in the above example; the logical next pitch in the first chord of "*a* on *b*" would be the *a*'''', a major ninth above the *g*'''', which does not exist on the piano. Since, however, all the pitches on *a* and *b* come from the two circles of major ninths, the first pitch in the lowest register (*A*) completes the chord; the pitch "goes over the top" and comes back in the bottom. This break in register is a characteristic of almost all of the patterns; it causes the constant "croaking" between extreme high and low registers which is one of the most easily noticed aspects of the piece.

In order to carry out the harmonic multiplications it was necessary to differentiate the pitches of *a* and *b* according to the extremes from which they radiate. This differentiation according to extremes was graphically notated with straight and wavy lines (examples 18, 21).

For example the *a* half of pattern C:

Ex. 23

In the *a* half of the adjacent pattern D, which has the same pitches, the two types are reversed:

Ex. 24

Therefore when *a*/*c* and *D* (and any of the other pairs *a*3/*e*4 or *b* DE/*f*4/*g*5) are placed next to each other, the following result is obtained.

Ex. 25

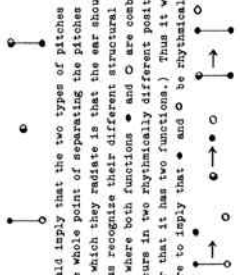
In cases where the same pitch radiates from two consecutive extremes, the straight and wavy line are combined on the single pitch (example 18a).

Once the pitches of the harmonic grid had been differentiated in this way it was possible to produce all the multiplications for the six12 patterns. The first eighteen multiplications (patterns 1A - 11P) are shown in example 26. In the upper two systems the pitches of the harmonic grid are drawn in normal musical notation. The differentiation of these pitches according to extremes is notated thus: — = *a*, ~ = *b*.

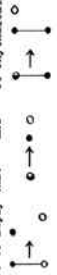
Systems 3 and 4 of example 26 show the results of the multiplications ("*a* on *b*" and "*b* on *a*"). The reference pitches (○) are always *f*''' (in *a*) and *E* (in *b*).

These results are not yet mutually useful, for at least four reasons.

1) The multiplications produce in each case a set of chords in which *a* and *b* occur simultaneously.



This simultaneity would imply that the two types of pitches *a* and *b* be rhythmically synchronous. But the whole point of separating the pitches into *a* and *b* according to the extremes from which they radiate is that the ear should be enabled to distinguish the two types and thus recognise their different structural functions. (This is especially important where both functions *a* and *b* are combined on one pitch *a*.) Unless this pitch occurs in two rhythmically different positions it will obviously be impossible to hear that it has two functions.) Thus it would be preferable if the multiplied result were to imply that *a* and *b* be rhythmically non-synchronous:



Ex. 26

I  
A  
B  
C  
D  
E  
F

II  
A  
B  
C  
D  
E  
F

III  
A  
B  
C  
D  
E  
F

MULTIPLIED

ROTATED

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

51

52

53

54

55

56

57

58

59

60

61

62

63

64

65

66

67

68

69

70

71

72

73

74

75

76

77

78

79

80

81

82

83

84

85

86

87

88

89

90

91

92

93

94

95

96

97

98

99

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

126

127

128

129

130

131

132

133

134

135

136

137

138

139

140

141

142

143

144

145

146

147

148

149

150

151

152

153

154

155

156

157

158

159

160

161

162

163

164

165

166

167

168

169

170

171

172

173

174

175

176

177

178

179

180

181

182

183

184

185

186

187

188

189

190

191

192

193

194

195

196

197

198

199

200

201

202

203

204

205

206

207

208

209

210

211

212

213

214

215

216

217

218

219

220

221

222

223

224

225

226

227

228

229

230

231

232

233

234

235

236

237

238

239

240

241

242

243

244

245

246

247

248

249

250

251

252

253

254

255

256

257

258

259

260

261

262

263

264

265

266

267

268

269

270

271

272

273

274

275

276

277

278

279

280

281

282

283

284

285

286

287

288

289

290

291

292

293

294

295

296

297

298

299

300

301

302

303

304

305

306

307

308

309

310

311

312

313

314

315

316

317

318

319

320

321

322

323

324

325

326

327

328

329

330

331

332

333

334

335

336

337

338

339

340

341

342

343

344

345

346

347

348

349

350

351

352

353

354

355

356

357

358

359

360

361

362

363

364

365

366

367

368

369

370

371

372

373

374

375

376

377

378

379

380

381

382

383

384

385

386

387

388

389

390

391

392

393

394

395

396

397

398

399

400

401

402

403

404

405

406

407

408

409

410

411

412

413

414

415

416

417

418

419

420

421

422

423

424

425

426

427

428

429

430

431

432

433

434

435

436

437

438

439

440

441

442

443

444

445

446

447

448

449

450

451

452

453

454

455

456

457

458

459

460

461

462

463

464

465

466

467

468

469

470

471

472

473

474

475

476

477

478

479

480

481

482

483

484

485

486

487

488

489

490

491

492

493

494

495

496

497

498

499

500

501

502

503

504

505

506

507

508

509

510

511

512

513

514

515

516

517

518

519

520

521

522

523

524

525

526

527

528

529

530

531

532

533

534

535

536

537

538

539

540

541

542

543

544

545

546

547

548

549

550

551

552

553

554

555

556

557

558

559

560

561

562

563

564

565

566

567

568

569

570

571

572

573

574

575

576

577

578

579

580

581

582

583

584

585

586

587

588

589

590

591

592

593

594

595

596

597

598

599

600

601

602

603

604

605

606

607

608

609

610

611

612

613

614

615

616

617

618

619

620

621

622

623

624

625

626

627

628

629

630

631

632

633

634

635

636

637

638

639

640

641

642

643

644

645

646

647

648

649

650

651

652

653

654

655

656

657

658

659

660

661

662

663

664

665

666

667

668

669

670

671

672

673

674

675

676

677

678

679

680

681

682

683

684

685

686

687

688

689

690

691

692

693

694

695

696

697

698

699

700

701

702

703

704

705

706

707

708

709

710

711

712

713

714

715

716

717

718

719

720

721

722

723

724

725

726

727

728

729

730

731

732

733

734

735

736

737

738

739

740

741

742

743

744

745

746

747

748

749

750

751

752

753

754

755

756

757

758

759

760

761

762

763

764

765

766

767

768

769

770

771

772

773

774

775

776

777

778

779

780

781

782

783

784

785

786

787

788

789

790

791

792

793

794

795

796

797

798

799

800

801

802

803

804

805

806

807

808

809

810

811

812

813

814

815

816

817

818

819

820

821

822

823

824

825

826

827

828

829

830

831

832

833

834

835

836

837

838

839

840

841

842

843

844

845

846

847

848

849

850

851

852

853

854

855

856

857

858

859

860

861

862

863

864

865

866

867

868

869

870

871

872

873

874

875

876

877

878

879

880

881

882

883

884

885

886

887

888

889

890

891

892

893

894

895

896

897

898

899

900

901

902

903

904

905

906

907

908

909

910

911

912

913

914

915

916

917

918

919

920

921

922

923

924

925

926

927

928

929

930

931

932

933

934

935

936

937

938

939

940

941

942

943

944

945

946

947

948

949

950

951

952

953

954

955

956

957

958

959

960

961

962

963

964

965

966

967

968

969

970

971

972

973

974

975

976

977

978

979

980

981

982

983

984

985

986

987

988

989

990

991

992

993

994

995

996

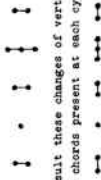
997

998

999

1000

- 2) Through the process of placing "a on b" and "b on a" the adjacent relationships of a (AB/CD/EF) and b (DE/FA/BC) are obscured; a and b are intermingled in such a way that it is no longer possible to apprehend the alternating adjacent relationships.
- 3) The original harmonic grid structure is based on the pitch density progression 2-1-2-2. This progression applies to vertical density, i.e.

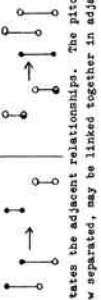


However, in the multiplied result these changes of vertical density are often translated into changes in the number of chords present at each cyclical return of a pattern.

- In a progression of vertical density the rhythmic-motivic structure (the most important factor in the recognition of a returning pattern) can be preserved. But if the number of pitches or chords to be rhythmically articulated changes at each return, then the entire motivic structure changes and the cyclical return is rendered unrecognizable.
- 4) The multiplied result does not make clear how any melodic movement is to be realized.

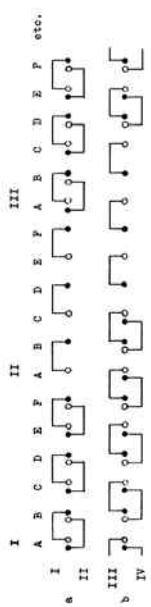
These problems all disappear when the multiplied result is rotated 180 degrees (example 26 systems 5 and 6, and example 27).

- 1) The rotated result now implies the rhythmic separation of a and c, so that pitches radiating from different extremes can be rhythmically differentiated.



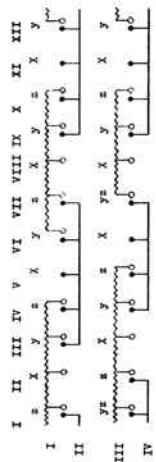
- 2) The rotation reinstates the adjacent relationships. The pitch constellations, in which a and c are now separated, may be linked together in adjacent patterns.

Ex. 27



- 3) Pitches radiating from one extreme or the other now occur synchronously, as chords containing 1, 2 or 3 pitches. Changes in the number of pitches present at the cyclical return of a pattern are translated into changes in the number of parts present, so that the cyclical structure of the original harmonic grid is reinstated (compare example 16).

Ex. 28 Part structure, pattern A



- 4) The patterns can now be set in motion melodically, i.e. and e are regarded, respectively, as dynamic and static, i.e. moving from one pitch to another, or stationary, in adjacent patterns (example 29). The structure in example 28 would then represent a series of transitions from dynamic to static and vice-versa:

a: D D D D D D D D  
 b: S S S S S S S S

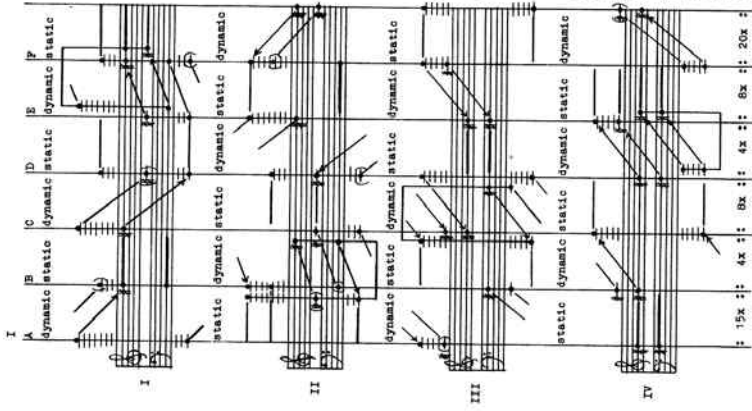
Thus each of the six patterns ABCDEF consists, in its transitional (yz) stages, of a mixture of static and dynamic elements (as in ex. 29), while in its extreme stages (X) it is "pure": either static or dynamic.

The choice of which direction the lines should move is simply a matter of finding a consistent reading of the rotation. For example, in patterns AB the g''' to d''' appears in all five occurrences of the top part (example 28, sections XII - IV). None of the other possible moves (A. to B, etc.) is present in all five sections. g''' and d''' therefore become the points of departure and arrival for pattern A; this pattern's top part in sections XII-IV will always descend a major seventh.

To realize the textures resulting from this process of multiplication and rotation the choice of four pianos was inevitable; only with this ensemble is it possible to articulate with any precision the widely spaced parallels in four parts.

THIRD STAGE - faubourdon

Although the harmonic multiplication and rotation just described produced a structure which has the same adjacent, cyclical and reciprocal relationships as the original harmonic grid, the basis of the relationship is no longer identity or similarity of pitches but identity or similarity of contour of pitches. These contour relationships are far more complex than the original pitch relationships. In the 2-, 3- or 4-part textures the contours cross over one another constantly; they are not simply glissandi but are to be filled out by discontinuous melodic lines; in most cases the melodic lines were not formed from sequences of individual pitches but from sequences of widely spaced parallel chords, from which, with each move from one pattern to the next, some pitches drop out while others remain.

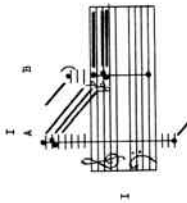


Ex. 29 Patterns I ABCDEF

For these reasons the contour relationships are much less easily grasped by the ear than were the original pitch relationships, unless a method of underscoring these relationships can be found.

The audibility of common contours linking adjacent patterns may be underscored by clustering additional pitches immediately above or below one of the carriers of the contour, whereby the adjacent patterns are linked both by their common contours and by a common fauxbourdon color. At the same time this increases the audibility of the original relationships. In patterns AB the note  $g^{1111} - g^{1111}$  remains in the top part through its five appearances in sections XII - IV. This main pitch line is therefore the one chosen to be underscored; the same fauxbourdon color is added to this level in all five sections.

Ex. 30

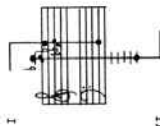


Finally, the same fauxbourdon color is added to corresponding pitch levels of retrogradely related patterns.

The source of these additional pitches was as follows: after multiplication and rotation, each pattern still consists of two halves "a on b" (still designated "a") and "b on a" (still designated "b"), whereby the pitches of a come from one hexachord and the pitches of b come from the other hexachord. If, say, the pitches of the a half of a pattern come from hexachord 1 (g f d' g' b a), then the pitches added to this half of the pattern would come from hexachord 2 (c a' g' e' d'). The b half of the pattern would come from hexachord 2; the pitches added to the b half of the pattern would come from hexachord 1.

For example, if the main pitches of the two halves a and b of a pattern were  $g^{1111}$  (belonging to hexachord 1) and  $b^{1111}$  (belonging to hexachord 2) then any combination of pitches from hexachord 2 could be clustered above or below the  $g^{1111}$ ; conversely any combination of pitches from hexachord 1 could be clustered above or below the  $b^{1111}$ .

Ex. 31



III

### III. RHYTHM and METER

To convert the 6x12 sections of the harmonic and time structures into definite rhythmic-melodic patterns, a rhythmic technique had to be developed by means of which the patterns could be articulated.

The point of departure for the development of such a technique was the repetition of the patterns; any rhythms used would have to be naturally repetitive or cyclic.

Moreover the division of the harmonic structure into two halves a and b required that the rhythms be in two parts for the independent articulation of each of these halves.

Finally the various rhythms would have to be related to one another; the basis for this procedure would be the same set of adjacent, cyclical and reciprocal relationships that determined the form of the harmonic and time structures.

A possible starting point for the construction of a two-part cyclically repeating rhythm would be to take a fairly typical example of a period with 12 pulses and divide the 12 pulses into 4 groups of 3 (12/8 meter):



and to place asynchronous attacks every fourth pulse.



By then placing individual attacks on the other pulses such that attacks a are the retrograde of attacks b, a two-part rhythm is produced in which rhythm a may be used to articulate harmonies a and rhythm b may be used to articulate harmonies b.

Ex. 32



In order to produce this retrograde form it was necessary to include the first pulse of the next period, as though a new period were starting. Use of the retrograde does not just mean that the rhythm is the same whether read backward or forward; in this case the more important meaning is that the last pulse of the rhythm is equal to the first, so that the two-part rhythm forms a naturally repetitive closed cycle.

A pattern starting off the beat is produced by rotating the above rhythm half-way around.

Ex. 33



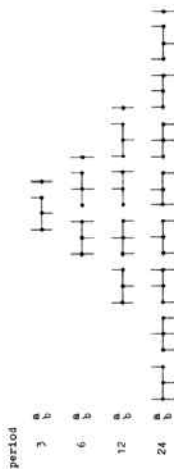
Using the above rhythmic models it was possible to determine adjacent, cyclical and reciprocal rhythmic relationships. The cyclical relationships will be described first because in the compositional procedure they were arrived at first.

#### Cyclical Relationships

The cyclical relationships in the time structure were determined by numerical progressions. For example the progression determining the relationship of speed and period in the twelve appearances of pattern A was

12 24 12 6 3 6 12 24 12 6 3 6

which means that the periods of pattern A contain 3, 6, 12 and 24 pulses. The rhythmic model described above was applied to this numerical progression to produce a rhythmic progression.



Thus all of the recurrences of pattern A and its reverse pattern F could be based on a single two-part rhythmic model, expanded or contracted according to the number of pulses in the period. Similar models were worked out for the other patterns B  $\rightarrow$  E and C  $\rightarrow$  D. However, the two-part models could not yet be adequate for all the patterns because the harmonic plan produced two types of pattern, "extreme" and "transitional", and the transitional patterns call for four (sometimes three) parts (example 28).

All patterns radiate from alternating "y" extremes, where they occur in their purest form. The rise-progressions are so constructed that their maxima and minima occur on alternating extremes (example 12). In order to render each pattern unrecognizable as possible on each of its cyclic recurrences, it seemed logical to make the stipulation that material radiating from the minima (in this case 3 pulses) should retain that minimum number of pulses throughout all recurrences. Material radiating from the maxima (in this case 24 pulses) would necessarily be progressively reduced.

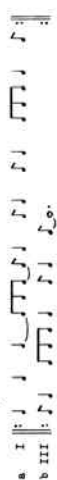
Ex. 35 Pulse distribution, pattern A (■ = pulse, □ = pause)

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
period	12	24	12	6	3	6	12	24	12	6	3	6
I (H)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
II (H)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
III (H)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
IV (H)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
repetitions	15	11	15	20	27	9	3	1	3	9	27	20

Due to the three-pattern shift on each side of axis A, a  $\overline{\text{ABCDEF}}$  X  $\overline{\text{ABCDEF}}$  X  $\overline{\text{ABCDEF}}$  X  $\overline{\text{ABCDEF}}$

pattern A/X and B/X are out of phase in sections II and III while pattern F/A/X and B/X are out of phase in the corresponding sections X and XI (see example 11). In pattern A/X and B/X the two-part rhythmic model is expanded or contracted so that the harmonic extreme occurs in section III. In pattern F/A/X and B/X the two-part rhythmic model is contracted so that the harmonic extreme occurs in section III. The maximum number of pulses in the 24-pulse period is the maximum number of pulses in this half of the pattern occurs in a period of 12, rather than 24, pulses. The structure of pattern F is the reciprocal of pattern A. In these cases the two-part rhythm of A is continued as though B were still present.

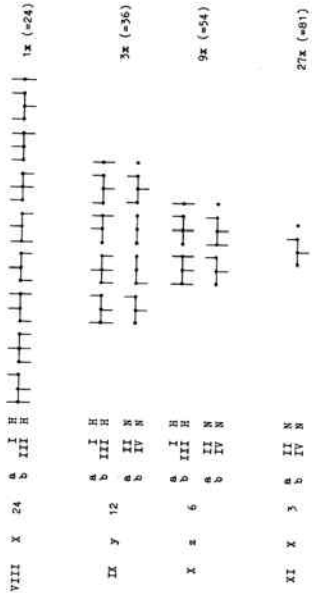
Ex. 36 Pattern A, section II



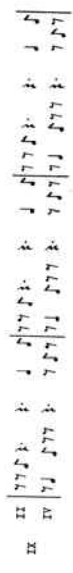
Plans for the distribution of pulses were made for the six patterns ABCDEF in which A (example 35) is the reverse of F, B the reverse of E and D the reverse of C. It was then possible to provide the transitional stages of each pattern with four-part rhythmic models, based on the division of both a and b into principal parts, i.e. parts with relatively many pulses, radiating from maximum subordinate parts, i.e. parts with relatively few pulses, radiating from minimum extremes (designated N for Subordinate N and N for Subordinate N).

A progression including the four parts of the xy transitions would be as follows:

Ex. 37 Pattern A, sections VIII - XI

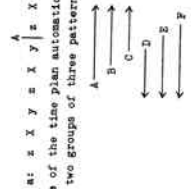


Although the pulse distribution plan in example 35 places the subordinate parts at the left of the period in IX and X, it was decided that these subordinate parts should be placed on the right of the period. These pulses were distributed equally on either side of the beginning (ending) of the period.



adjacent relationships

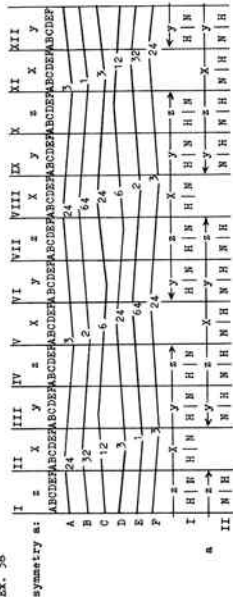
The numerical progressions determining the number of pulses in the periods (3, 6, 12, 24 etc.) belong to the a symmetry (the symmetry of the periods), which has the structure



The reciprocal structure of the time plan automatically splits each of the twelve six-pattern groups into two groups of three patterns each

with the result that each extreme (X) group is split into two halves with the maximum number of pulses per period in one half and the minimum number in the other half. Since principal parts radiate from maxima and subordinate parts from minima, this means that there is a reversal of principal and subordinate in each half-group.

Ex. 36



This structure, derived from the a symmetry, was then projected onto the b symmetry to determine the relationships of principal and subordinate parts in all four parts. (Example 39). Given this scheme for the principal-subordinate relationships of the parts it was possible to determine their rhythmic relationships:

If the principal parts begin on the upbeat, the subordinate parts begin on the upbeat. If the principal parts begin on the downbeat, the subordinate parts begin on the downbeat.

The following rule was then formulated for the rhythmic relationships of adjacent patterns: The principal parts of adjacent patterns alternate downbeat (+) / upbeat (-)

The subordinate parts of adjacent patterns alternate upbeat / downbeat

H: A B C D E F  
N: + - + - + -

The combination of principal / subordinate (H,N), upbeat / downbeat (-,+) and static / dynamic (D,S) pairings completed the formal planning of the piece.

Ex. 39

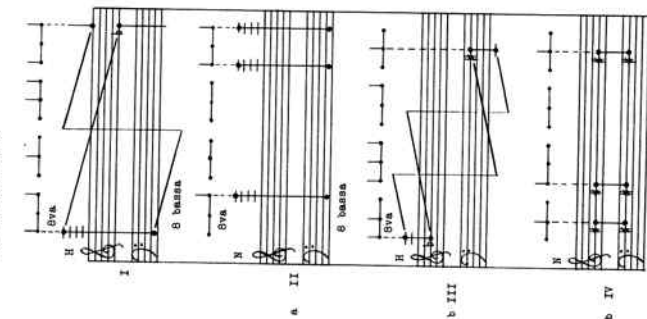


Reciprocal Relationships

Reciprocal relationships result automatically from the foregoing. Part I is the retrograde of part II, with a reversal of upbeat and downbeat in the two parts; likewise parts III and IV. The reversal of upbeat and downbeat means that if a given part in any pattern begins on the downbeat, its counterpart on the opposite side of and equidistant from the central axis begins on the upbeat, and vice-versa. The rhythms of reciprocally related patterns are therefore identical except for the 1/2 rotation illustrated in example 35.

IV. PATTERN

Ex. 40 Pattern IA



So far the following aspects of the 6x12 patterns had been determined: time values of speed, period and duration; harmonic structures consisting of dynamic and static parts, and rhythmic structures consisting of principal and subordinate parts.

The number of parts present in any given pattern is determined by 1) whether the pattern is an extreme (X) form (either dynamic or static) or a transitional (Y,S) form (dynamic and static combined), and 2) the difference of one six-pattern group in the asymmetrical structures of a and b.

Of the 72 patterns there are thus 36 in 4 parts (2 principal and 2 subordinate parts) 24 in 3 parts (either 2 principal and 1 subordinate part or 1 principal and 2 subordinate parts) 12 in 2 parts (either 2 principal parts or 2 subordinate parts).

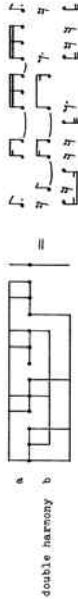
The next step was to construct outline versions of all 72 patterns.

Taking the example of pattern IA: the structural plans call for a 12-pulse period in which there are 4 layers of harmony (example 29) distributed among 2 dynamic principal parts and 2 static subordinate parts, with the rhythms of the principal parts on the downbeat and the rhythms of the subordinate parts on the upbeat (example 40). The pattern is then completed in four steps.

STEP 1

The rotation process produces double harmonies in a number of patterns (see examples 26 and 29). These double harmonies were handled differently in principal and subordinate parts. In principal parts the two harmonies were combined in a single period, the pulses in the part being divided between the two. The double rhythm of example 41b is taken from example 1 (pattern IVc, 3rd piano).

Ex. 41



In subordinate parts, as in pattern Ia, part II, there are not enough pulses to divide between two harmonies, so the two harmonies alternate from period to period.  
 period 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 etc.  
 harmony 1 2 1 2 1 2 etc.

Therefore, in the first period of Ia, part II, only the first of the two chords from example 29 is present.

Ex. 45 Pattern Ia

$\lambda = 90$   
 Sva →

STEP 2 Parallel harmonies

Parallel mixtures were added to parts I and IV only, as it was considered undesirable to add extra groups of pitches to all four parts of any pattern.

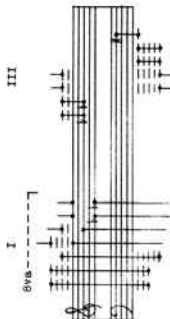
Part I comes from hexachord 1 (g f d' c' b a); therefore the additions to it come from hexachord 2, and were placed below the main pitch. Part IV comes from hexachord 2 (c d' e' f' g a); therefore the additions to it come from hexachord 1, and were placed above the main pitch.

The main pitch line of part I is g'''' → d'''; c'''' and d'''' are added to the g'''' (ex. 30). The main pitch in part IV is g''; b' and a'' are added to it. The main pitch line of part III is emphasized by articulation only (main pitches sustained, secondary pitches staccato).

STEP 3 Pitch lines

Parts I and III each have seven pulses in which to travel the prescribed distances. The pitches chosen as carriers of these lines were the pitches of the circle of fifths or of the circle of minims to which the pattern belongs.

Ex. 42



STEP 4 Space

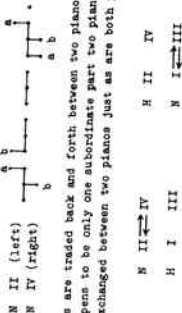
In order to further differentiate principal and subordinate parts, the pulses of the subordinate parts are exchanged between pianos while the principal parts remain stationary. Pianos I-II are on the left; III-IV are on the right. Left and right are separated as far as rhythmic coordination allows.

Ex. 43



If the pulses connected by the solid line come from piano II and the pulses connected by the broken line from piano IV, the subordinate part a will appear left-right-left while subordinate part b appears right-left-right.

Ex. 44 Pattern Ia, pianos II, IV



The subordinate parts are traded back and forth between two pianos throughout the piece. If there happens to be only one subordinate part two pianos are still necessary; the single part is exchanged between two pianos just as are both parts in the above example.

V. VARIATION

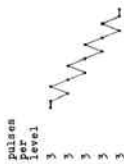
The dynamic parts in all the patterns were formed by leaping from one level of the harmonic grid to the next, sometimes repeating pitches or chords (example 42) and sometimes rearranging the linear movement.

A rearrangement presupposes more pulses than are available in pattern Ia (example 45). Pattern Ia rearranged in section II with 24 pulses. The syntactic division into a and b leaves part I with 15 pulses (example 36). The more g'''' → e'' in 15 pulses might take the following form:



Ex. 46

The figure becomes more interesting if the chords are rearranged as in example 47 (Each of the pitches in these examples represents one of the four-note chords of example 45 piano I; all linear movements were worked out first in the graphic notation shown here).

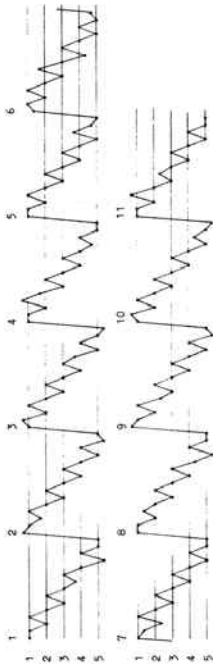


Variations of this figure (pattern IIIA, piano I) were produced by moving certain of the chords a semitone up or down from one repetition to the next (hence the chromatic "neighboring notes" in examples 1 and 45). The form of the variations for the seven periods of this pattern was worked out with the help of the shorthand notation of example 48. Since the five levels were structured independently of one another rhythmic positioning could be omitted.  $\sim$ : The list of the 3 pitches on a level is raised a semitone;  $\wedge$ : the 2nd of the 3 pitches is raised a semitone;  $\curvearrowright$ : the 3rd pitch is raised a semitone. Inversion of the symbols means that the pitches were lowered.

Ex. 48 Variation scheme, pattern IIIA, piano I



Example 49 shows the eleven variations which result from the application of this scheme to the figure of example 47 (the unvaried form of the figure never occurs).

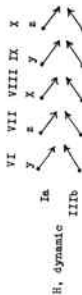


I referred to this type of melodic structuring—in which a melodic figure consisting of several levels is varied with each repetition by chromatic alterations taking place independently on each level—as "two-dimensional melody". The first dimension consists of the diagonal movement of the isolate figure itself; the second dimension consists of the horizontally organized variations that take place in the figure as it is repeated, and which form a counterpoint of secondary two- and three-note chromatic motifs between the several levels. When both dynamic halves of a pattern are combined (example 49 shows only the  $\frac{1}{2}$  half of the pattern), with three or four chromatically varied levels apiece, the result is a seven or eight-level counterpoint or mosaic of these motifs (example 52).

It would remain to coordinate the variations for the twelve cyclic recurrences of each pattern. This was done first by differentiating melodic levels. Patterns A-P are all rising or falling figures such as example 47, with the levels of the figures equally weighted. In patterns B-E the subordinate parts are dynamic (example 50); since subordinate parts have too few pulses to form melodic figures they leap directly from the first to the last chord of the prescribed melodic span,  $\sim$  or  $\curvearrowright$ . In patterns C-P the levels of the figures are weighted differently, with the most pulses at the first level and one pulse at the last level (example 50). Of course the melodic figures and the more these characteristic differences disappear. They are therefore most noticeable in extreme (X) groups, least noticeable in transitional (Y) groups, whereby they contribute to the slow oscillation between extreme groups (fastest or slowest speeds, longest or shortest periods and durations, 2 or 3 parts, very characteristic figures) and transitional groups (medium speeds, periods and durations, 3 or 4 parts, less characteristic figures) which continue throughout the piece.

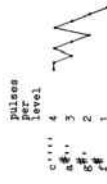
Secondly a vertical axis was run through the center of the entire duration of each occurrence of each pattern; the levels of the figures were then varied symmetrically about the axis (example 48, 6th period). The cyclic recurrences of each pattern were then related by means of stillarities between their asymmetrical variation structures with respect to the axis.

Example 52 is a complete variation plan for the dynamic parts a and b of pattern C, sections VI through X, which form one complete cycle of transitional patterns plus extreme pattern.



In pattern VIIIc the rhythmic division of the 24-pulse period leaves part I with 10 pulses (a denser rhythm was avoided because of the very high speed of 12 pulses per second), which were distributed as 4-3-2-1 pitches on the four levels. (Again the individual pitches here are representative of parallel chords.)

Ex. 50 Pattern VIIIc, piano I

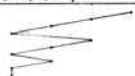


A complete variation cycle for the 1st level (4 pulses) requires five statements of the figure; the altered pitch comes at intervals of five pulses, so five statements are necessary for one complete rotation of the altered pitch:



Similarly level 2 (3 pulses) requires four statements of the figure  $\sim$  and level 3 (2 pulses) requires three statements of the figure  $\sim$ . If this principal of variation were used exclusively the figure would therefore have to be repeated sixty times before it would return to the same form it had at the beginning.





Elaborations of this structure are easily imagined. For example if two pitches per level are altered,



the possibilities for variation already extend far enough that, in a music based on repetition, exact repetition need never take place.

The above article originally appeared in the Feedback Papers, issue Nr. 11. Feedback papers are published by the Feedback Stud o, 5 Köln 1, Genterstrasse 23, West Germany.

Ben Johnston

about **PARTCH**

Good luck on your new work.

Nov. 2, 1962.

Dear Ben and Betty:

You didn't owe me a letter. I owed you one. I found my bag; it was in the back of the car so encrusted with Arizona dust that I missed it.

Thanks to my old Gate 5 landlord, who was so good to me ten years ago, I have a studio--the office of a chick hatchery now out of business (they found it less expensive to raise chickens in Mississippi and send them frozen to California). 1100 square feet of floor space in one big room, and three other rooms, for workshop, bedroom, and guestroom. Also two restrooms--men and women, I guess. However, there is no shower or bath. And until Jim helped me get them installed, no cookstove, sink, hot water, or refrigerator. Slowly, we are getting the thing organized.

Petaluma, in case you've forgotten, is about 40 miles north of S.F. It is off the beaten track, even though close, and I don't like that. But rents around S.F., Sausalito particularly, are hysterical. Petaluma is now only 11 miles from the northern limits of S.F. area subdividing, but I feel safe. I pay only \$45 a month, plus utilities.

I have sent for my things (after I pay the \$900 they say I owe them you'll be able to drive a truck through the hole in my bank account), but I am not worried. I am doing nothing, in a state of nothingness. O yes, I wash socks, iron a shirt, pick roses, shell walnuts (there's a tree at one window), bake pears (a pear tree of neighbors). And when I meet old associates or acquaintances (rarely) they say:

How good you're back!

We need you!

Welcome home!

I feel good for you!

As I say, emptiness.

Sometimes I don't like it, but I realize most of the time that it is exactly what I need. And--strangely--I feel little or no desire to drown myself in alcohol. That last year in Champaign my liquor bill must have been staggering. I felt like a man, last fall, beginning with casting frustrations and the emergence of intellectual jazz, on the end of a gangplank. What was there to do, except jump off?

It all seems far away. Indeed, I miss many people, including John Garvey, whom I haven't written to. What I think about anything, or what anybody else thinks about anything, including me, seems strangely irrelevant. Irrelevant to what? Nothing or everything.

I just got a letter from U. of Wis., suggesting that I come up to give a lecture. Ha! They're six years too late. (And I laugh uproariously.)

I hope you are all well. Love,

Harry

P.O. Box 491 - Petaluma



*So, you were one of HARRY PARTCH's best friends during his time here in Illinois. What do you know about him before he was a hobo in the thirties?*

Actually I'm not sure WHERE he was born really. He may have been born in China. I think he was, because his parents were missionaries in China. And they left on account of the BOXER Rebellion. They more or less had to. They barely escaped with their lives. And he was either conceived or born or both in China. And he was brought up therefore in a household..... By the way they left the Protestant Church, and the father became a real militant atheist, and the mother became a suffragette, a real women's lib. She became a politician, and her interests religiously were still there, but they were very radical. So he was brought up in that kind of atmosphere and with Mandarin Chinese one of the languages that was spoken around him.

There were numerous Chinese people dropping in and out. He was brought up in Arizona in the middle of Indian country. And he has said many times how deep an effect that had on him, how much he felt the presence of those incredible ragged, tattered people in the middle of something that they seemed to have no place in and no part of, and which seemed not even to tolerate them, hardly even to notice them.

And he had ah I guess a typical small town American South-western upbringing, but it wasn't typical in the sense that he didn't fit. He really was a dropout almost from the time he was a small child. And he did alternately drop out of school. He didn't finish high school. He worked at all types of odd jobs, everything from waiting on tables to bellhopping, you know, to elevator boy. All that sort of thing. And he really never got out of that category as far as earning a living. He never wanted to. He never would take on "the responsibility", as most people put it, of making a living for himself in the usual way.

And he educated himself as a musician at the public library, which meant that he at the very best could get hold of the most LIMITED kinds of books, limited and limiting kinds of books. And his idea of it must have been ah late nineteenth century American reflections of

British academic music training. Of course, he felt that it was stupid, and it is. But, he did train himself on these things. And he was originally writing things like a piano concerto and string quartet and so forth. He'd even written a string quartet supposedly in just intonation.

He was not interested in the usual musical things. But he terribly badly wanted to be a composer, and I think he understood in a certain way what a terrific fight it was going to be. And I think he was prepared for that, even from a very early age. He didn't really believe that it was going to work, or that it was going to be particularly successful.

The first time he really came to terms with his musical aims according to him..... and you can find all this in various writings about him and by him..... was in New Orleans. He had travelled across the country, very possibly just riding the rails and hitch-hiking. And he was in New Orleans living very meagerly. And he had all his manuscripts with him. And he got disgusted with them. And he burned them all up in a potbelly stove.

*That was his lucky day.*

LITERALLY. Then he started to make a move in the direction that he felt he had to go, which was to first of all I think abandon the tuning system of western music and abandon its concert usages and abandon its instruments to some extent. Because obviously how do you make a sweeping revolution in the pitch realm without changing instruments? So, he started by adapting the viola. And the way he did it was to lengthen the neck of the viola, and it's then tuned an octave below the violin, so that it has an even hoarser tone than it usually has. He played it gamba style between the knees. And it therefore with a longer neck has bigger distances for the fingers, enabling him to get very tiny microtones.

The way he wanted to tune everything was according to just intonation, eliminating beats, trying to get the purest consonants possible. And I think from a very early age he had quite an understanding not only of the acoustics of this but also the history of it. I could see that very clearly in his books.

Well, MY impression of those years is in a way that he was struggling to find, partly in Los Angeles..... And I suppose then he went to San Francisco; I never pinned him down to exactly what all of his wanderings were..... But he did travel around in the West.

Among the impressions that remained most deeply in him were those of Oriental musicians, the Chinese people. They had their own version of the Peking Opera. And he heard Indian music, American Indian music. And he heard the usual concert music. About the only credit he paid to European music was WAGNER, about his ideas of "Gesamtkunstwerk"; and MOUSSORGSKY about his BORIS GODUNOFF and for his PROSODY. And that's about it.

It wasn't until the forties that he started to build an ensemble. The first thing he had was only the viola, which meant himself playing it and singing.. Then he started to form a wider ensemble. The first instrument he took in was a harmonium.

*After the viola.*

And he retuned all the reeds making them accord with the kind of scale he had already discovered.

*By this time he had his forty-three tone scale?*

Mrs. JOHNSTON: Here, have some tuna fish on rye. Eat! Eat!

*That can't be all for me!*

Well, yes. That is the way he tuned the chromelodeon, as he called it. But he often got angry when people tried to pin his music down to a forty-three tones per octave because he was thoroughly aware that just intonation involves an infinite choice of pitches, that it's arbitrary to restrict it. A temperate system, of any sort, no matter what number of notes you use, is a finite set. You can have an infinite number of sets, but every one of them is finite.

Now a just intonation system, no matter what limits you put on it..... And you certainly can place limits on it... .. is infinite. Each set is infinite. You can use a

subset, any subset you like, and that's what you have to do if you're going to make music..... because obviously you can't deal with an infinite set. But you do have as a total an infinite set each time you have a just intonation system.

*So he limited himself to the number eleven.*

All right, now, the particular just intonation system that he used used prime numbers of 2, 3, 5, 7, and 11, whereas TRIADIC music uses only 3 and 5. And that's two steps beyond. Now, there are a multiplicity of other possible systems. And of course within his work one of the natures of any just intonation system is that it's contained within other just intonation systems. The whole thing works just like Chinese boxes, each one contained within another. So that the 3-5-7 set is contained within the 3-5-7-11 set. And it was easy enough for him to use that. He did at times limit himself to segments of that sort, and also to the triadic set.

*Especially when he involved voice.*

Well not so much. With voice he usually tried to follow the melodic inflections of spoken English. And the only piece he ever admired by SCHOENBERG was PIERROT LUNAIRE, and that's why. He had very, almost too complementary, things to say about that, and then nothing but scorn for the rest. And the reason of course was nothing could have been farther from his aims as a composer than an idea like the twelve-tone row.

*Because that's the ideology of being stuck.*

It's almost the epitome of it..... And this is my remark, not his..... But it's one that he'd like..... that these people including SCHOENBERG and also HINDEMITH and numerous people whose theories don't resemble SCHOENBERG's at all were busy exhausting the final permutations in a closed system. And exhausting is almost the only word that's appropriate. This kind of thing, he fully believed, could lead anywhere. And the only way you could get beyond it was to go very, very far back in the sense of going way behind temperament. But more than that. In going back to Greek sources, in going back to pre-medieval, pre-European sources. And in a modern sense this of



course means going outside the context of western culture. And he did that.

*In turning away from the "fatal day in Halberstadt" as he calls it in his GENESIS OF A MUSIC. It's the day where the seven white and five black were invented. He really had idiosyncrasies against the keyboard. In one of his articles, "SHOWHORSES IN THE CONCERT RING", he wrote, "A period of comparative anarchy with each composer employing his own instruments, his own scale, and his own forms is very necessary for the way out of this malaise."*

And that's exactly the advice I took in my own work. And it's in that sense that my work stems from his..... I think ONLY in that sense. And in another sense not at all, because one of the most basic things about his point of view was that he didn't consider abstract music had any future whatsoever. And that the only future for music was to return to the other arts and to reinvolve itself totally with speech, movement, dance, with all these other things.

*The whole gestural moments of making music.*

The really fascinating thing to me is that PARTCH could have taken such an extraordinary diversity of materials, of influences, of ideas, and made anything out of them except the WILDEST kind of eclecticism. But, in fact eclectic is the last thing I would call his work.

*He is called eclectic by the people who want to defend their own music.*

Well, they're wrong. I don't think that hits it at all. It certainly doesn't hit what's significant about it. I don't even think it hits what the impact of it is to people who understand it. And that isn't some elite in-group either. What is startling about PARTCH's work, or what was startling about PARTCH's work, is that it had a terrific appeal to the most ordinary people, in the same sense that KABUKI apparently had in Japan.

*I can understand that, because the staging of his music, the whole function of movement and music together, this relatedness, I think that makes the evocative character.*

He was very strong about never wanting this sort of adulation or respect or as he would have said, "phony success", that seems to be the model for an artist in twentieth century America. Now, we're talking about a generation at least ago. But it's still true in many ways. In other words, that was that kind of rejection of the tradition. At the same time there were all these other things. And I think in a way that was almost the most important, to undo all of that. Yet towards the end of his life he began to be really accepted, first by jazz musicians, and finally by rock musicians.

*What? How's that?*

Well, for example he wrote pieces for CHET BAKER, for I think JERRY MULLIGAN. There were jazz musicians in his ensemble at the time he did the GATE FIVE recordings. He worked primarily with those people. This was in the middle of the beat generation in New York. They felt that he was in a way almost more a part of what they were doing than the majority of white jazz musicians.

He was deeply involved in a type not of improvisation, but of what you could call "group egos" in music. It's not group composition, but he had more of an ensemble. He HAD to. The only way he could survive was to have a group of people that were practically a cult in that they practically had to swear allegiance to him over a long period of time in order to get one of these things done. And this at that time in music was practically the only place outside jazz that that kind of a group cohesion was really taking place.

*Ya, because it was the only existing form where the playing together defined the structure. That was very important for him. And he actually sees in his pieces this "corporealism", as he always called it.*

You could compare him to NAM JUN PAIK, but in a very strange way. While NAM JUN PAIK is talking about sex and the absence of it in music, and it's making a very sarcastic point, there's nothing sarcastic about HARRY PARTCH's attitude. There was something defiant in it. He felt that the whole idea of formal dress in the concert and the whole idea of distance between the stage and the audience, the formality of the whole thing, the artificiality of the

whole thing was not only not successful, which he felt it wasn't. But also it was destructive to the very essence of music. And he fought it as hard as possible. He was after the sought out charisma that one normally associates with figures in the pop theater.

And this is why his REVELATION IN THE COURTHOUSE PARK, which is based on EURIPIDES' BACCHAE. That is to say half of it is. It's a double story, half modern and half ancient Greek. The BACCHAE is the story of King Pantheus and the God Dionysos and the Bacchantes. The way he approached that story was to find a contemporary equivalent of Dionysos. And he found it in the figure of a rock idol. Now what he did I think was to invent something that in effect didn't take place until later. He invented ELVIS PRESLEY before ELVIS I think, although ELVIS MIGHT have played a part in that.

All right. He was involved in an analysis of what was going on in the fifties and what he saw happening, which was a whole lot more perceptive than any of the sociologists who were commenting on it at that point. And he used EURIPIDES as the commentator. And what he said in effect was that something phonic, something underworld, something subterranean was surfacing. And that was going to undermine the authority of the very structure of the society. And that was more powerful than it was being given credit for being, that it seemed to be simply banal and trite and bad taste.... but that it had an enormous and subterranean energy, silly as it seemed.

He always had a tremendous involvement with Greek art. And part of the reason was he felt that the Greek tradition had placed a proper predominance on the body and the bodily. And that all this predominance on abstraction, which more northern European traditions had contributed, had poisoned the whole society in the long run, and should then be objured and resented and be gotten rid of.

An "A-Number One" on the list of his enemies was Christianity, the whole thing. And partly I think this stems from his childhood aversions in reflection to his parents' apostasy. I think no doubt that's true.

I think that among other things he didn't fail to look very closely at the world he was living in as he lived in

it. So that during the years of the thirties and the early forties you have all these "AMERICANA WORKS", as some people like to call them. That makes them sound much more trivial than they are. They are chronicles, as I said earlier, of that depression. And I think they are remarkably sharp insights into what it felt like to go through it.

When we came to the fifties, and he was here in the Midwest, and he was observing what was happening, he almost predicted the sixties. There isn't any question that what he was talking about symbolically in REVELATION OF THE COURTHOUSE PARK actually happened all over the country, especially on campuses, but not only on campuses. The whole business blew up, and it came partly out of that salted spirit of independence that was typified by the young people's declaration of independence in the pop world. And this whole perception he made the subject of one of his major works.

The BEWITCHED could also be sighted with this, because in that one he's talking about the entrapments that everybody is bewitched by. And he wanted to say that certain people are locked into certain behaviors. WHAT IF they could be magically released from this? What would they do?

*He was concerned with liberation.*

All right. The witch liberates people in effect, because she is representative of something that goes behind even patriarchal traditions. And one in other words doesn't even have the authority figure symbolized in the same way. One doesn't have the idea of male supremacy, for example. And the ramifications of this weren't lost on him. It's quite a subtle work. At the same time it gets its subtlety across by being blatantly obvious, and to the point that it's distasteful to a great many people. And I really think that's what gets a lot of Americans who have bought hook, line and sinker the image of European tradition, without any criticism of it or with very little criticism of it. And therefore too most or many Europeans who identify with that tradition will walk out on what he's doing.

*Because it's too far out.*

IT'S BAD TASTE! They don't even THINK it's far out. "No, it's not far out. THAT'S JUST BAD TASTE." But that's just stupid.

*He breaks through a lot of traditional rigidities, because he touches very basic things.*

Well, he breaks through. And all of a sudden he has a WIDE audience. Not that he did anything that could possibly be called commercial, in fact so far from it nothing could be clearer.

*Because he kept himself out of this standardized music making.*

Of course toward the end of his life people like FRANK ZAPPA especially, and lots of other rock musicians were just tremendously turned on by HARRY PARTCH. And they sought him out during that period when he was living in Southern California, in Venice, California, later in Ensinadas, and finally in San Diego. And they put on a production of DELUSION OF THE FURY in L.A. And they had a lot of publicity and so forth. Among his staunchest supporters was the rock crowd. And, in a way he was very fascinated. But he felt quite aloof. And he felt quite on the way out of it. Well, a man that age, nearly seventy, would be sure to feel that way in a way. But more I think. He just never wanted to be part of any MOVEMENT in that sense. He couldn't have done it. And it wasn't that he couldn't join anything. It was he saw the whole joining of a movement and feeling of something like that as another kind of bewitchment, another kind of entrapment.

*The entrapment of getting commercialized.*

No, not at all. In fact, exploitation is perhaps the key note of it. And that I think he understood even from the beginning. The comments that he made..... I saw him a year before he died in San Diego, and he talked maybe for the better part of the day..... He talked among other things about some of the young people he knew and what their attitudes were, and what he felt about it. He certainly wasn't a person who at that age was physically able to go out and mingle with people. But he was intensely aware, almost as though he were out among people. Of a lot of the things that were going on, I think he had a

better grasp of where things were for most people than the majority of artists do.

I think that the extreme independence of his thought on an intellectual level is something that he almost felt defiant and belligerent of, because his whole stance as an artist was surely accused of anti-intellectualism. And I think in a way his book gives the light of that forever, because it's quite admirable simply as musicology. And it really is excellent research. You can use it as a source book, almost. And it is quite accurate in what it says about other people's research. Aside from that, the points of view that he talks about are extremely well thought out. There is no lack of overview in the integration that he tries to make. So a lot of people have called him eclectic.

*Ya, he was very aware, first of being independent of European history, but then being at the same time aware about the history itself to avoid this narrow-mindedness, just to see the European development of the well-tempered scale. He saw that it had to go steps beyond that.*

I think that if you could parallel his special hates, one of which I said was Christianity, another would be Europe. I suppose he had it in for Europeans as heavily as any American artist ever has, if not, maybe more so. And yes, this is chauvinistic in a way. But it didn't have anything to do with patriotism, and even less to do with nationalism. It had to do rather that if there was a feeling of any sort of incubus sucking the life out of art in the twentieth century, it was the European art image.

*PARTCH says, "Perhaps no element of modern life is so stifling, so destroys a human being, as this idol of digital and laryngeal proficiency. I know; I experienced it, and had to die and find still another womb to emerge from."*

Okay, right. And he loved to criticise singing, and he called all of it belcanto, as though there wasn't anything else. Because what he was trying to lump together was a whole set of attitudes that are rather ludicrously typified by the idea that some singing teachers have, that there's only one way you can possibly

use your larynx, and every other way will destroy the organ.

*He's seen the whole development as a history of alienation. And so he probably could stimulate, or SHOULD stimulate people now to reduce alienation, the narrow-mindedness of keyboard dependence for example.*

Yeah, well above everything that. There ONCE was an idea of a consort of instruments, a consort of voices, as the norm of conceiving what a sound object would be. Then later it got to be a gamut of pitches on a keyboard. He took it out of that, and I think he anticipated not as a forerunner, but as striking the key note instead of the keynote that is said to have been struck, the attitude that one associates with electronic music. Electronic music tends to do that. It tends to free one from that.

*But at the same time it takes away the whole corporeality.*

That's right. Yes, it takes away the corporeality.

*And that's the crucial point.*

And there's a parallel in what JOHN CAGE said in the middle fifties, way before electronic music had become the cliché which it became, that the whole idea of this was defective, that it was "anti-theater", and that it was necessary to find some way to present this kind of thing, if you're going to present it at all, that did not deny the fact that you were sitting there in a theater experience.

And this I think lead directly into that period when JOHN was working with theater pieces, and the only kind of electronic pieces that were made were like FONTANA MIX, which are in a way a put down of the very idea of MAKING an electronic piece. And the fact that the most famous presentation of FONTANA MIX is with CATHY BERBERIAN is that amazing mixture with ARIA . That is as corporeal as you can get. Played off against this incredible tape is almost a reductio ad absurdum of the idea that music was going to be some sort of bristling sine wave perfect thing, that a lot of the people influenced by STOCKHAUSEN's early fifty type thinking were talking about. Or ideas that were being promogated by the French in terms of the MUSIQUE CONCRETE thing, which was so doctrinaire in its

own way. This kind of thing was bypassed entirely. And I see in the independence of those two people, who are so unlike in most ways, CAGE and PARTCH, a very great similarity. They both recognized that if you didn't have that aspect in your music, you might as well give up. You might as well stop doing it.

Well, I think what HARRY PARTCH is doing, that I don't see in JOHN CAGE, is getting to a certain kind of directness. JOHN said once that he felt maybe there were two kinds of composers. And he might say that one kind was "folk", and he was being very sarcastic about "folk" and also very sarcastic about the other word, "noble". And he said that if he had to choose, he supposed, bitter as the pill was, he had to say that he was a noble composer. He felt PARTCH was a folk composer.

*That's the first time I've heard that.*

Well, he said that they fought each other, that CAGE himself felt very sympathetic toward HARRY PARTCH. However, he felt poles apart. But PARTCH felt very belligerent and very hostile. And he never allowed CAGE to make friends with him. He always played like the fencer. He was always battling. And therefore they had very little contact except a relatively hostile one. PARTCH in that sense pitied himself as the outsider, and played the role of the martyr to some extent. CAGE, I won't say never fell into that trap, but ultimately he didn't. And he was willing to accept the dangers of success which eventually came to him, whereas PARTCH in a way guaranteed that it wouldn't.

*And that makes him into a real desert plant.*

Yes. He was really into a sort of directness that I associate with the American Indians. And I suppose I'm influenced by all of the talk and all of the problems that come about because of the present effort of the Indians to do finally something about their state. But the fact that he was so interested in their culture and in their music at such an early age, and this really never left his music. That's the real reason why I focused on CLOUD CHAMBER music, where he uses Indian music as a basic component, as a piece to study. Not so much that it's the most interesting piece of his, but because his fascination with that



says something about his attitude to music in general.

I think it says something very profound about it. He was really willing to be as direct and as simple and as "corny" if you like, as people are when they aren't trying to be concert artists. But they're making something for their house, or they're doing something for their friends, or something of that sort. He understood that attitude and that point of view. And there was almost nothing in his attitude of the concert artist.

And then his work is very rich. It contains a number of threads that lead in various directions, not just one. It's as though he provides more than one route through the maze, which is doing ARIADNE one better. One of those is the complete revolution that he makes possible in the reorganization, reorientation of thinking as people who listen to music, to the basic parameters of the musical art, the art of TONE, in other words, the most traditional of all things within the simple tradition of western music. Now, if those things are to be revived, what is necessary? And how do you spring those free of the conventional associations? How do you get them out of the cul-de-sac into which they appear to have gone?

*The question is though, do you have to build the instruments and do you have to invent new scales for it?*

I think that my conclusion, and where I take my point of departure from is I think what you have to do basically is stop lying. You have to stop claiming you're doing something which in fact you're not doing. In a sense SCHOENBERG did that. He stopped lying. He took the twelve tones to be exactly what they were, and not what they were purported to be. What PARTCH did was to say, "Well, if we take these things, consonants and dissonants for example. Instead, if you say, Here are the differences. Let's get all the dissonances out of the consonants. And let's extend the field of dissonance to the point where its boundaries are almost infinite!" Now, if you do that, you can't stop with the limited horizons of music where it stands.

And furthermore it implies that you've got one continuum for all the types of order that you're trying to use, and not a series of different interlocking continuums. It seemed to me that there also in taking some of his ideas,

not his music but his ideas, directly into the enemy's camp, into the concert world itself and into the European tradition itself and changing the nature of it in such way that one has a Trojan horse, out of which soldiers can spring, would be the right way to handle the situation. But it is a question of one tiny aspect of a manifold of things that he did. But, what he was doing involves all those other aspects - the total theater, the sculpture, the whole vision. And also, too, the dirty feet, the bare feet.

*Ya, and that's the amazing thing, that he on the one side could develop a system of forty-three tone scale and all the structural implementation, and at the same time kept his feet really on the ground, not getting caught up in a cloud of pure theory. So we could learn to apply his approach to reduce our alienated music culture, without getting at the same time alienated socially.*

Well, I'm a different kind of fighter from him, but I understand what it is to fight. And I think that in a way he was self-defeating. He had this bitter attitude and to some extent he had a certain self-pity, which in fact is very familiar in anyone who had very much to do with him. It had very much to do with his constant conviction that he was on the verge of dying and things of that kind. All right, so everybody has their neurotic tendencies of one kind or another. These were his. But one has at the same time to realize that what he was doing in this incredibly independent way was all the more brave, because he was doing it against that kind of personal limitation. And he did do that. But at the same time it hampered him.

For example, he continually made people enemies. He continually alienated people from himself, because he was very hostile to them. And very often the main reason they were alienated from him was because of personal hostilities. Now that's certainly nothing new. You find it in BEETHOVEN. And you find it in a lot of people. With him it was to such an extent, that he would almost bite any hand that tried to feed him. And it was very hard to get along with him. In that way it was a tragic life. But in a way he asked for it. Now, I don't say that in any sense he deserved what he got. Not at all. Not even a regret, rather with a sense of realism about the fact that he tried to do what he did and paid for it. And paid for it

very heavily, largely in his way.

*He was just consequent.*

Yes, you know, this whole alienation business. He understood it for the best of reasons. He was alienated if anybody ever was. Because the basic message that he had was: You ought to make your own things with your own hands, and with people that you know, and in the most direct way. That was the nature of art, and if you got too far away from it, you were wrong. He really was involved in a very direct way.

The fact that this involvement did not catapult him into the kind of success that it did ELVIS PRESLEY or something of this sort is only thinkable as an objection if you are missing the basic point. The basic point is the essence of art is never a question of that kind of mass success. And that isn't to stay on an elitist point of view either. It's simply to say that the problem of art is wherever you are at any given moment what needs to be done. And can you do it? And it has to do with the view of things, which is as great as you can make it. So there is no such thing in that sense as being out of touch, or being isolated unless of course you really just are not trying.

I feel that he was aware of some of the important problems. And he was very much ahead of his time, especially in setting a sort of keynote to a world attitude towards music. This is something that people are beginning to recognize.

*So his whole attitude of doing everything with your own hands could be very useful in keeping you away from the seduction of commercialism.*

Or the seduction of the proper IN GROUP type of thing, whether it's traditional or fashion. To be a part of the latest avant-gardism, or to be able to establish the next trend. Or on the other hand to be the successful or unsuccessful defender of some very important tradition that you think is in danger of being lost or something. And instead of that all to be independent of any of these attitudes. And that is what I think he not only tried to do, he DID it.

JOHNSTON about PARTCII

*I think he was fantastic in both the advantages and disadvantages of being a sort of "DESERT PLANT", living under hardest conditions but having fantastic blossoms and spines.*

Oh, good Lord, he had spines.

*But isn't he in the essence what an American artist is somehow?*

Well, I don't know.

# The Letter

## A Depression Message from a Hobo Friend

Score for -

Voice

Kithara II

(Played from opposite side)

Follux (Harmonic Canon)

Surrogate Kithara

Diamond Marimba

Bass Marimba

Tune strings 29-24 of Follux as follows:

- 29 - 7/4
- 26 - 12/7
- 28 - 3/5
- 23 - 10/7
- 27 - 7/6
- 24 - 8/7

Voice Notation

♩ About a natural speech tempo

Voice: Cincinnati, Ohio, October second, nineteen thirty-five.

Kith: *pp* throughout

Pal: *pp* throughout

B Mar: *pp* throughout

♩ Somewhat faster

♩ Previous time

Voice: Hello-Pal-

Kith: *f* *8/5 red* *p* *7/9*

Pal: *pp* *24*

S Kith: *pp* *change*

D Mar: *2 smaller* *each* *hand* *f* *4* *5* *12* *11* *p* *2*

B Mar: *pp*



*Slower* *Previous time (24)*

Voice: *Soat.* So back on the bus a-gain.

Kith:  $\frac{1}{15}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{10}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{5}$ ,  $\frac{9}{8}$ ,  $\frac{3}{2}$ ,  $\frac{8}{5}$

Pal: 29, 24, 24

Skith:  $\frac{4}{3}$  green,  $\frac{8}{5}$  orange,  $\frac{4}{3}$  down,  $\frac{1}{2}$  green

DMar: *f*, *pp*, *f*, *pp*, *f*, *pp*

BMar: *f*

Voice: Well, Pal, I had a swell time in Cincy till my wife's father found out I was back, and

Kith:  $\frac{1}{15}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{10}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{5}$ ,  $\frac{9}{8}$ ,  $\frac{3}{2}$ ,  $\frac{8}{5}$

Pal: 27, 24, 26, 29, 28, 27, 24, 26, 26

Skith:  $\frac{4}{3}$  orange

BMar: *f*

*Slower*

Voice: then the little lamb was led up to the al-tar.

Kith:  $\frac{4}{5}$ ,  $\frac{9}{8}$ ,  $\frac{10}{4}$ ,  $\frac{10}{15}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$

Pal: 29, 24

Skith:  $\frac{4}{3}$  orange, *up*,  $\frac{4}{3}$  green,  $\frac{4}{3}$  green,  $\frac{8}{5}$  orange,  $\frac{4}{3}$  green

DMar: *f*, *pp*, *f*, *pp*, *f*, *pp*

BMar: *f*

26. Previous time

Voice: So now I'm just out of jail and feeling fine and I think I have a job starting the

Kith: [Handwritten musical notation]

Pal: [Handwritten musical notation]

SKith: [Handwritten musical notation]

BMar: [Handwritten musical notation]

4 Somewhat Faster

Voice: twelfth of Oc-tober and I truly hope my dear little wife is dead by then.

Kith: [Handwritten musical notation]

Pal: [Handwritten musical notation]

SKith: [Handwritten musical notation]

BMar: [Handwritten musical notation]

8 Previous time

Voice: Give Kain-tucky my best re-

Kith: [Handwritten musical notation]

Pal: [Handwritten musical notation]

SKith: [Handwritten musical notation]

BMar: [Handwritten musical notation]

BMar: [Handwritten musical notation]





28.

6/8 Previous time

10/8

6/8

Voice: So I'll say goodnight and good luck, hoping to hear from you

Kith:  $\frac{6}{8}$

Pap:  $\frac{6}{8}$

Skith:  $\frac{6}{8}$   $\frac{10}{8}$   $\frac{6}{8}$

DMar: pp

BMar: pp

Voice: at once and tell me all the news. Your pal, Pablo

Kith:  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{3}$

Pap:  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{3}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{3}$

Skith:  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$

DMar: pp

BMar: pp

Ithaca - July 2, 1943

Gate 5 - July 13, 1955

Copyright © 1975  
 Danlee Mitchell  
 4809 Felton Street  
 San Diego, Ca. 92116



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I THANK: First of all CAROL BYL for doing the transcriptions and the final typesetting of the conversations. Without her help the book wouldn't exist.

Mr. and Mrs. BYL whose house we turned into an office for two months.

All the 23 musicians I met for spending time on the project, for doing the conversations, for correcting the transcripts and for sending materials of their recent works.

CORNELIUS CARDEW who sent me the song AFTER A FEW YEARS, in context with CHRISTIAN WOLFF'S conversation.

JAMES TENNEY, GREGORY REEVE, BETH ANDERSON, and RICHARD HAYMAN for all the addresses and phone numbers.

GORDON MUMMA who let me print material from his upcoming book about CONLON NANCARROW.

DANLEE MITCHELL for the permission to print a score of HARRY PARTCH and the quotation from the article A SOMEWHAT SPOOF.

BEN JOHNSTON to print a letter HARRY PARTCH wrote him.

GERTRUDE MATHYS of C. F. PETERS, N.Y. for her permission to print some pages of pieces by JOHN CAGE and CHRISTIAN WOLFF.

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND LETTERS for permission to print one page of the sketches of CHARLES IVES' UNIVERSE SYMPHONY and THE YALE MUSIC LIBRARY for submission of the copy thereof.

ALSO: MIMI JOHNSON, ARTSERVICES Inc., N.Y. for submission of photographs of JOHN CAGE (pg. 48) made by RHODA NATHANS, PHIL GLASS (pg. 104) made by BABBETTE MANGOLTE and PHIL GLASS' GROUP (pg. 116) made by CAROL MERSEREAU.

J. B. FLOYD for taking and submitting the picture of myself (see below).

HARCOURT BRACE JOVANOVICH, Inc. to print a quotation from THE MAKING OF AMERICANS by GERTRUDE STEIN.

THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS for permission to print drawings from the book DESERT WILD FLOWERS by EDMUND C. JAEGER for the title page design. Page one shows AGAVE DESERTI in various cuts, #25.

AND MICHAEL VON BIEL for his beautiful front cover drawing.

"Cover Design Drawing, 50 × 65 cm  
Michael von Biel"  
(Zeichnungsstudie Collage)





ONE DOES NOT FIND  
FREE VIBRATING AIR  
JUST ANYPLACE

HARRY  
PARTCH

MORTON FELDMAN: Something that is beautiful is made in isolation.

CHRISTIAN WOLFE: I try wherever possible to discourage competitive sort of careerism.

JOHN CAGE: So that it takes an old fogey like myself to suggest again as Thoreau did all of his life, revolution.

PHILIP CORNER: A lot of people hang up to restrictions which are not only in the external institutions. They are in your own mind.

PHIL GLASS: The quintessence of harmonic music is in cadence for me.

STEVE REICH: You must love music or be a duck.

ROBERT ASHLEY: If you record a conversation with fifty people in the United States about their ideas, and if you get into each conversation really deeply, that when you get to the end, you will have one of me, one of Steve Reich, but you will have fifty of yourself.

ALVIN LUCIER: But when you stutter, you scan the language. You are scanning your past.

JOAN LA BARBARA: You know, instead of trying to direct the voice, I try to let the voice direct me.

PAULINE OLIVEROS: I'm aware of my own physiology. And then I'm hearing it as a whole, and I'm aware of the various rates that are going on, the kinds of breaks in concentration that occur and how they are corrected.

DAVID ROSENBOOM: What I'm looking at really is the existence of regularly pulsing energy.

RICHARD TEITELBAUM: I played the same synthesizer for ten years. Me and it are very close to each other.

LARRY AUSTIN: I've's main thing, I feel, was the concept of layering and getting us out of the idea that the sounds always had to come from the same place; that is, right in front of you.

JAMES TENNEY: I realized in writing these pieces that this was one way to avoid drama, which I'm still trying to find ways to avoid.

J. B. FLOYD about NANCARROW: Somebody actually brought up what was going to happen to the piano roles after he died; and he said, "Why? Do you want one?"

LA MONTE YOUNG: You can always say that you wanted La Monte Young, but it was impossible. He was so mercenary, he wanted money.

CHARLEMAGNE PALESTINE: I'm searching for sort of this golden sonority.

CHARLES MORROW: The high art itself is a form of power consciousness, that in a way one listens to the high art in the same way that one walks around being a flirt.

GARRETT LIST: The only way for a one-world kind of feeling is where each nationality, each locality, has its own strength; so that people don't need to have to take from another place.

FREDERIK RZEWSKI: It's still true that most Americans care more about the price of meat than they do about the exploitation of Bolivian miners.

JOHN MC GUIRE: But sooner or later I am sure that I will return to America.

BEN JOHNSTON about HARRY PARTCH: He was really willing to be as direct and as simple and as corny as you like, as people are when they aren't trying to be concert artists.

DESERT PLANTS: published by Walter Zimmermann and A.R.C. Publ., P.O.B. 3044, Vancouver B.C., Canada V6B-3X5