

# Interpretations.

This reader was put together within the framework of the Winter School 2014 organised by Q-Q2 in collaboration with Ictus MaNaMa. It aims at complementing the documentation of the creative contributions of the festival with theoretical background and reflection, to open up the topic into varied points of view on the question of what is interpretation and what can it inspire.

- 10 Dafne Vicente-Sandoval & Ivan Palacký  
repetition/difference & listen listen
- 14 Andrea Neumann, Christian Kesten & Labor Sonor  
The Sound of the Second Hand Clapping
- 28 Christoph Cox Versions, Dubs, and Remixes:  
Realism and Rightness in Aesthetic Interpretation
- 38 Jennifer Walshe The Total Mountain
- 42 Camille Henrot on Editing and Excess
- 48 Franziska Windisch Corrosion
- 50 Manfred Werder time [of] incidence
- 56 Charles Curtis Drawing in the Air:  
Sound and its Representation
- 64 Bartaku, Ruta Vitkauskaitė & Karl Heinz Jeron  
Aronia project
- 68 Compost and Height, Patrick Farmer and Sarah Hughes  
On Water Yam
- 74 Julia Eckhardt Eliane Radigue, OCCAM OCEAN
- 80 Angharad Davies Six Studies
- 84 Frederik Croene The New, Frankensteinian Archetype
- 90 Catherine Lamb on shade
- 94 Guy De Bièvre Interpretations
- 98 David Helbich No Music: earpieces (remix)
- 100 Joanna Bailie Squeezing out the music from real sound
- 108 Peter Ablinger Rauschen
- 110 Peter Ablinger Weiss/Weisslich II
- 112 Okkyung Lee Crystal Memories
- 116 Roland Barthes The Death of the Author
- 124 Giaco Schiesser The paradox of 'Eigensinnigkeit' and  
the Question of Authorship

### Why Interpretation?

According to Aristotle, the world exists as an imprint in our mind. In this sense everything is interpretation.<sup>1</sup>

In the world of music, interpretation is traditionally understood as something which is slightly more limited or specific. It stands for the bringing into sound of what a composer has planned or constructed, and possibly with an element of 'mind-reading' to execute this as closely to the text as possible, presuming the composer has penned down exactly what was meant.

Interpretors in (classical) music, such as instrumentalists and singers, traditionally see themselves as being 'merely' reproductive, thereby both contrary and complementary to being creative. They have been known to humbly exclaim that they are 'simply' players when asked if they were also composing, hinting at an age-old hierarchy between the different roles in the musical creative process.

The self-attributed role of a music interpreter in general is the one of a mediator, which implies a particular way of creativity and curiosity, of trying in a way to get into the mind of the composer, according to the original meaning of the word: to explain, to translate.

However, from the root of the word can be deducted a second basic condition. 'Inter' means between, and so it is that the bringing into life of music can't be accomplished without a communicative exchange, which implies the flux between at least two parties, through listening, speaking, writing, drawing, thinking – and of course playing.

1. Aristotle On Interpretation

### A Hiatus

In other domains – such as mathematics and statistics, science, philosophy and exegesis, law, visual art, literature and theatre – interpretation is a crucial issue in every case, but each time with a slightly different meaning. An attempt to define what they all have ultimately in common could be: filling a hiatus. This could be adding missing or background information, or contextualizing, or perhaps adding a personal level.

Interpretation can be planned, or can happen accidentally, or can also be a habit. It is contingent with what is expected, misunderstood, added, left out or copied and re-formulated. Chance, even if avoided, obviously and inevitably plays a prominent role.

Understanding, benevolent listening, is a creative act. It is the procedure to fill in the blind spots, to smooth out cultural differences and personal references. A meaning has to be forged between what is recognizable, known and comforting, and what is new, surprising and challenging.

Words can be a means for that bridge of communication, but also sound, image, food, place and a million other things and details. Communication levels add an important layer, such as the presence and body language of the performers, the performance context, and the various codes of different communities.

Each situation contains a large amount of information, of which we are aware of only a small part. The filtering of all this information happens through codes and conventions, which are recognisable to individuals depending on their cultural background. If these conventions are unknown, then the listener supplies them with his/her own imagination and is in the difficult situation to make choices to fill the hiatus.

However, beyond a certain individual threshold, there is only the white noise of the totality of all information.

“...how art of all times appears as a provoking of deliberately incomplete, in unpredictable manner broken expectations and so, through the disappointed expectation, wants to appeal to our natural inclination to completion.”<sup>2</sup>

### Open Form and Indeterminacy

Today practitioners in music are still debating that which was seeded in mid last century by the Fluxus movement, the New York School and other kindred spirits, some 50 years earlier preempted by Dadaism. In particular with the introduction of Indeterminacy and Open Form in the 1960s and 1970s, compositions were often reduced to mere proposal or framing, the instructions inviting the instrumentalists to complete the composition following their own insights and capacities. Indeterminacy and ambiguity were cultivated rather than avoided, in full awareness of the important roles both the performer and listener have in the act of creating art.

Often those scores were also a mere framing of everyday actions, in an invitation to be more observant of the poetry already existing in the world.

To encourage the performer to actively take part in more decision making, they introduced new methods of notation, such as graphic scores or prose scores, thereby extending the invitation to perform these works to those not able to read conventional musical notation.

Since then the situation of the relationship between composer, interpreter and listener has been tested and individualized in multiple ways, abrogating any hierarchy between those parties and revoking the major authority of the author as a ‘genius’ with a unique idea.

These sort of proposals enhance and encourage the difference between different executions, and furthermore the importance of the performers and their interpretations, about which Umberto Eco states that only the totality of all possible interpretations will ultimately accomplish the piece – an impossibility.

“... there is a tendency to see every execution of the work of art as divorced from its ultimate definition. Every performance *explains* the composition, but does not *exhaust* it. Every performance makes the work an actuality, but is itself only complementary to all possible other performances of the work. In short, we can say that every performance offers us a complete and satisfying version of the work, but at the same time makes it incomplete for us, because it cannot simultaneously give all the other artistic solutions which the work may admit.”<sup>3</sup>

### The Author

In the aftermath of these developments, two French philosophers, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, provided a sort of manifesto with ‘Death of the Author’ (1967) and ‘What is an Author?’ (1969). In these texts they essentially detach text and author from each other, claiming that it’s the text which speaks, and not the writer, who by no means can have grip on the message that the text transports to each individual reader.

“We know that a text does not consist of a line of words, releasing a single (...) meaning (...), but is a space of many dimensions, in which are wedded and contested various kinds of writing, no one of which is original: the text is a tissue of citations, resulting from the thousand sources of culture. (...) This is because the true locus of writing is reading. (...) A text consists of multiple writings, issuing from several cultures and entering into dialogue with each other, into parody, into contestation; but there is one place where this multiplicity is collected, united, and this place is not the author, as we have hitherto said it was, but the reader: the reader is the very space in which are inscribed, without any being lost, all the citations a writing consists of; the unity of a text is not in its origin, it is in its destination.”<sup>4</sup>

In the field of music this same point of view can certainly be observed with composers such as John Cage or George Brecht. However, for some

2. Eco, U. (1996), *Das offene Kunstwerk* 3. Eco, U. (2004), *The poetics of the open work in Audio Culture* (ed. by Cox, Ch. and Warner, D.) 4. Barthes, R. (1977), *The Death of the Author* (translation Heath, S.)

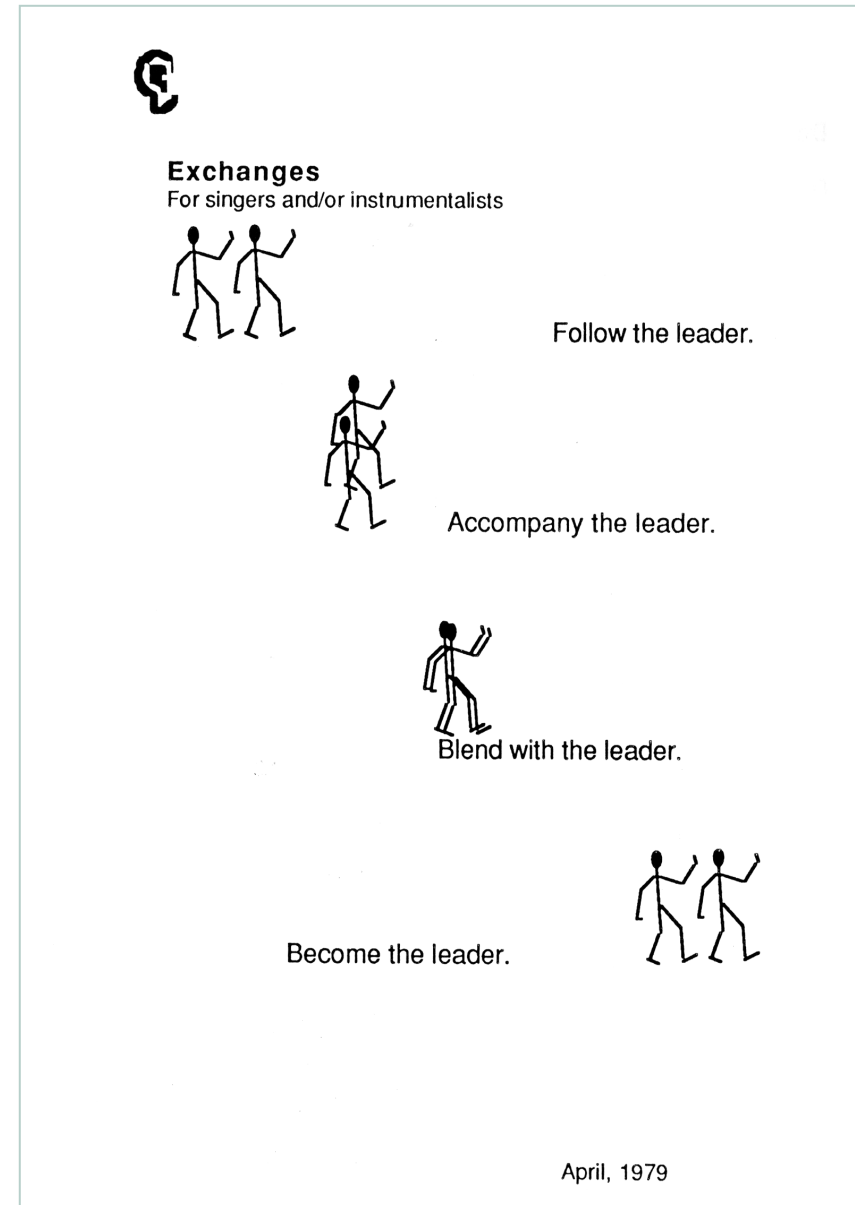
time paper has been and remains the most important means to transport the musical message, and therefore automatically through this resolve also the question of ownership, allowing no doubt yet about the intellectual rights, and thus about who is the author. Nameless and exchangeable remain (to a certain extent) the persons who have helped bring the work into the world: the performer, the listener, not to forget those (such as wives, assistants..) who shared generously in the shaping, notating and carrying out of the ideas.

#### 6 Notation, ways of transmission and different roles in musical creation

Graphic and text scores often resemble riddles more than musical notation. Anybody (literate, in case of text scores) can understand and realize them, whereas the majority of people are not able to read a musical score and are thus dependent on a translator. Rules are defined for each individual piece, if at all, and there can be a thin line between a performance which is considerate and conscientious of the rules, and one which is disrespectful towards them.

In the last decades an important role for musical interpretation has been given to technology, which in turn has made the long term study of musical instruments superfluous for playing this music – good news for untrained music-lovers as well as composers. Composers are no longer dependent on the instrumentalist who can never achieve perfection, and are also free to explore new sorts of transmission such as recording and installation. And if the composer doesn't need the performer anymore, the performer can also be promoted to be a composer, using all these new possibilities and the freedom to do so. Anything could be used as musical score, such as a still or moving image, or a found text, or even their own instrument.

Half a century after the experiments of the first pioneers, many more ways of transmission and thus collaboration are currently being pursued. Creators in all artistic domains play around with their roles in the process of creation, switching between being author, performer, interpreter, composer, creator, listener, curator and programmer. Some very old strategies of transmission such as the oral tradition are being used again. A composer could propose a mental image as scaffolding to base



Pauline Oliveros Deep Listening Pieces © Deep Listening Publications

the exchange upon, or else the found sentences in a score can serve alike. The musical piece is made together, in exchange, as a two-way communication.

With the multiplication of the methods of transmission, the traditional hierarchy has dissolved and the issue of copyright seems to blur. Does the importance of each individual in a work depend on intention, on initiative, on amount of work, or on contingency? To the actors in the field (except maybe the copyright organisations) this seems not to matter much, since for them there are many more ways of being present than merely having their name on a piece of paper.

### Laws of Material and Technology

Finally, if everything can be a 'score', then there are also no limits to what can be material for its realisation; although each material has decisive qualities. Be it a violin, a video or a paintbrush, each has a very specific potential inherent to the laws of its physical functioning. In league with these, the material can be the guide, can lead to improvisation, and from there to (instant) composition. On the other hand the limitations can be equally as decisive, and can certainly facilitate the difficult process of making choices, part of this difficult responsibility which the composer now shares with the performer, since the creation of open form.

Now technology as 'instrument' can be considered as a one means among many others to realize art. As material it also allows a new way of reading the world, in the form of editing or remixing. It may be said to be recycling, using images and sounds from the enormous resource which is at hand on the internet and elsewhere, quite similar to the older technique of collage.

### Hermes

The topic of this reader, and the Winter School 2014 which accompanies it, is extremely wide, returning to Aristotle's statement that in reality for humans everything is interpretation. Nonetheless it is interesting to explore how it functions and experiments with thoughts and view-

### Stones

Make sounds with stones, draw sounds out of stones, using a number of sizes and kinds (and colors); for the most part discretely; sometimes in rapid sequences. For the most part striking stones with stones, but also stones on other surfaces (inside the open head of a drum, for instance) or other than struck (bowed, for instance, or amplified). Do not break anything.

Christian Wolff Prose Collection © Frog Peak Music

points, which means an assimilation to our own context, baggage, references, cultural standards. We can ask: what remains as the imprint in the mind, what appears and what disappears, and why, and how?

Obviously this reader can't be complete, but rather tends to name facets and strategies which can be observed in the interpretation and realisation of art works. There is always the wish to understand a little better what's in the other's head, nevertheless allowing to let question marks exist and not searching for too easy answers to contradictions for which there is no solution.

Or: nothing is what it seems – as Umberto Eco finds it represented in the many guises of the antique figure of Hermes:

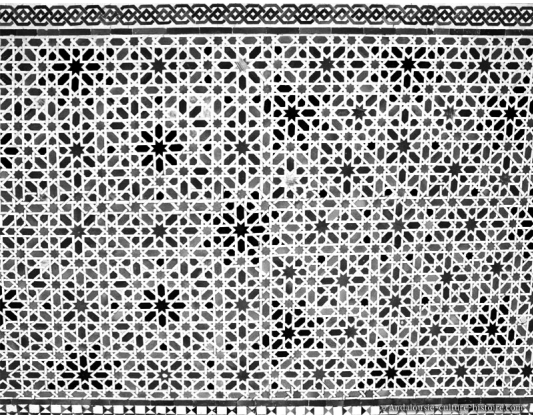
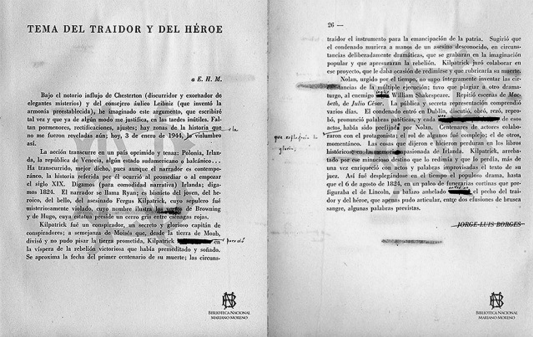
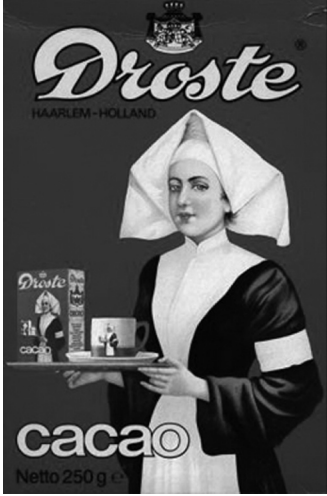
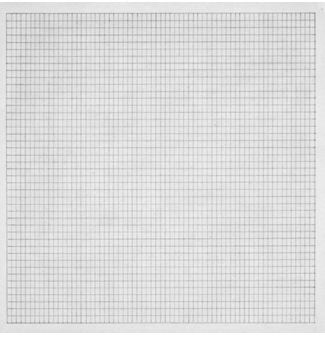
"Beguiled by the infinite, the Greek culture develops (..) the idea of continuous metamorphosis, with Hermes as its symbol. Hermes is volatile, ambiguous, father of all arts, but also god of the thieves, *iuvenis et senex* at the same time. In the myth of Hermes the principles of identity, of non-contradiction, of the excluded third, are abnegated. The causal chains writhe helically around themselves, the after precedes the before, the god knows no spacial limits and can, in different shapes, be at several places at once."<sup>5</sup>

5. Eco, E. (2004), *Die Grenzen der Interpretation*

# Dafne Vicente-Sandoval

repetition/difference.

10

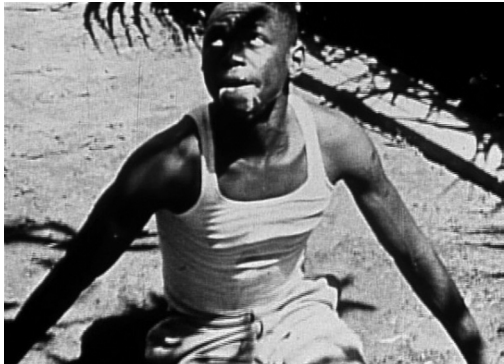


1. **Wood #4**, Agnes Martin, 1964 2. **Ex-voto Syriac** population of Alep, Syria/Shiite population of Khadimain, Irak/Armenian population of Alep, Syria (in Musée du Quai de Branly, Paris) 3. **Italian square** with Ariadne (after de Chirico), Andy Warhol, 1982 4. **Basilica of Our Lady of Peace** Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, architect Pierre Fakhoury, 1986–1989

5. **Droste packaging illustration** Jan (Johannes) Musset, 1904 6. **Theme of the Traitor and the Hero** Jorge Luis Borges, copy of Sur magazine, number 112, with corrections made by the author (in Biblioteca Nacional, Buenos Aires) 7. **Detail of an alicatado** Alhambra, Granada, Andalusia

repetition/difference

Dafne Vicente-Sandoval



8



9



10a

10b

8. Ritual of the Haouka sect Accra, Ghana, screenshot of Les Maîtres-fous, Jean Rouch, 1955. 9. Melancholia Giorgio de Chirico, 1916 10a. Folk song from Osmaniye province Turkey, collected by Béla Bartók 10b. Folk song from Hontfüzesgyarmat Slovakia (former Hungary), collected by Zoltán Kodály

## listen listen with Ivan Palacký

**Reduplication** in linguistics is the morphological process in which the root or stem of a word, or even the whole word, is repeated exactly or with a slight change.

**Reduplication** is used in inflections to convey a grammatical function, such as plurality or intensification.

In the South African language, *Khoekhoe* – also known as the *Nàamá* language – *nâu* means to listen and *nâu nâu* to listen very carefully.

What would happen if we apply this iconic use of words to sound? What if we try to repeat an improvisation as identically as possible, with no other marker than the memory of the performers?

**Dafne Vicente-Sandoval** is a bassoon player who explores sound through improvisation, contemporary music performance and sound installations. Her instrumental approach is centred on the fragility of sound and its emergence within a given space. She currently lives in Paris and works all over the world favouring long term and face-to-face collaborations (e.g. Klaus Filip, Bonnie Jones, Pascal Battus, Jakob Ullmann, Eliane Radigue and Klaus Lang). Her work has been shown during various music festivals (Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, England; Blurred Edges, Hamburg; Visiones Sonoras, Mexico), as well as in improvised music (Konfrontationen, Austria; No Idea, Texas) and sound art (Tsunami, Chile) festivals.

**Ivan Palacký** is a musician and architect. He has played with various groups and has taken part in several music projects. He was member of the guitar/double bass/bassoon group *Slede, živé slede/Herring, live herring* and currently performs in the duo *Tilko/Singlet* with Jennifer Helia DeFelice as well as in the audiovisual project of *Koberce, záclony* (Carpets Curtains) with Filip Cenek. Ivan Palacký “writes” sound diaries from all his journeys. He likes to take part in one-shot improvisational groups or duos (with e.g. Cremaster, Ruth Barberán and Margarida Garcia, Will Guthrie, Andrea Neumann, Klaus Filip, ...) as well as playing solo performances. As an architect he is interested in architecture without “building”.

## Andrea Neumann, Christian Kesten & Labor Sonor.

14

### Project of the concert series Labor Sonor 2013

In 2013 the Labor Sonor team commissioned a series of solo artists, ensembles and bands to either translate a piece, CD or even the entire works of a musician or group from the Echtzeitmusik (real-time music) scene into their respective musical language, or to transcribe one of their own works and to hand it over to interpreters of their choice in the form of a score.

Participants included Annette Krebs, Burkhard Stangl, Subroutine (Robin Hayward, Morten Olsen), Alexandre Babel, Rebecca Lenton, Theo Nabicht, Olaf Rupp, Mario de Vega, Andrea Neumann, Sabine Ercklentz, Tisha Mukarji, The Still (Rico Repotente, Derek Shirley, Steve Heather) and The International Nothing (Kai Fagaschinski, Michael Thieke).

One of the defining characteristics of Echtzeitmusik is that the musicians perform their music themselves: both composers and interpreters of their music, they are known as composer-performers. Rendered unnecessary, the process of communicating through scores – which serve to convey and make clear what should be played and how – ceases to apply. The music exists solely in and during the performance. Thus it is practically impossible to reflect on this music on the basis of scores, instructions and explanations. The concert itself is the mode of communication: a first-hand experience.

The project “The Sound of the Second Hand Clapping” aimed to initiate and document the processes of translating Echtzeitmusik. The idea was to gain a new perspective of the original, of its form and structure, of material and aesthetics, through the act of communication, whether in the form of transcriptions of pieces or scores and their interpretation,

## The Sound of the Second Hand Clapping.

or of direct re-interpretations passed on in oral form.

In this sense, the project was a musical reflection about music. As the interpreters are also composer-performers, independent works were created in the process which, in addition to making a statement about the original, provided insights into the approach, focus and perspective of the re-interpreters.

The series highlighted the work of composer-performers in the field of composition/improvisation/conception and notation/non-notation. The main aim was to question the music coming from the Echtzeitmusik scene in terms of its aesthetics, motivation, defining characteristics, preconceptions and intrinsic rules, and in so doing to put it in context and stimulate a debate about it. The concerts were accompanied by audience discussions.

### Communication could take various forms:

1. An author transcribes their own recorded piece/a core idea of their own way of improvising. This might take the form of a conceptual text score, a graphic notation transcribed as accurately as possible, or any other form. This score is then passed on to an artist or group of their choice to be interpreted.
2. An ensemble/band/soloist takes the recording of a piece of Echtzeitmusik (the idea being that the instrumentation of the original and the interpretation should be as different as possible), distils/transcribes an element of the music and converts it into music.
3. Author and interpreter meet and determine an appropriate form of communication.

15

## Participants (selection)

Due to space restrictions, we cannot comment on all the participants in this section.

Annette Krebs (electro-acoustic guitar, electronics) reinterpreted the entire works of the Viennese group Efzeg, captured on five CDs. (boris hauf, dieb13, billy roisz, martin siewert, burkhard stangl – saxes, synths, computers, feedback cam, video mixer, turntables, guitars, lap steels, electronics, vibraphone)

Theo Nabicht (bass clarinet) re-invented the music of Olaf Rupp (acoustic guitar). Communication took the form of a joint improvisation.

Andrea Neumann (inside piano, mixing desk) condensed her unique style into the written instructions “score for m”, which were interpreted by Mario de Vega (electronics, objects).

Tisha Mukarji wrote a composition commissioned by Sabine Ercklentz (trumpet) in the form of a text score. This text score was interpreted both by Tisha Mukarji herself (inside piano) and by Sabine Ercklentz (trumpet and amplified objects).

The Still – Rico Repotente (electric guitar), Derek Shirley (electric bass), Steve Heather (drums) – covered two compositions by clarinet duo The International Nothing – Kai Fagaschinski and Michael Thieke. The third piece was a joint adaptation of a composition by The International Nothing and was interpreted by both bands together.

What experience did the project provoke among the participants?

### 1. Annette Krebs.

After getting the task to perform the music of Efzeg on my instrument, I decided first to notate a certain piece from a CD and to recompose it as a solo piece in a similar way. However I realized quickly that this had been a diligent, but routine piece of work which would have been musically not very useful – to reenact this quartet on my solo instrument could have even sounded in some passages involuntarily like a caricature, since some structures and frequencies there are unplayable and would not sound good. Hence I decided to listen to and analyze all pieces of Efzeg in order to discover its spirit and its characteristic parameters,

and then to translate them with my instrument. During this process of hearing and partially transcribing the music I realized that it is possible to layer the pieces of Efzeg in an arbitrary order and always to receive an interesting result. Thus in my transcription I handled the translation of form very freely, and placed various segments of the pieces in new combinations next to each other. Poly-rhythmical structures I translated partially through the use of light signals, which were blinking silently at different speeds. Sound-wise, I transcribed these structures through the use of different propellers strumming specific groups of guitar strings in various velocities. Also crackle-noises, formed through the shorting of the mixing desk (no-input), and a dotted sound layer F – the morse-code-translation of the web-info of Efzeg – became part of my interpretation of Efzeg’s rhythmic layers and loops, reminding me sometimes of the interaction of microorganisms. ...

### 2. Olaf Rupp.

To prepare for our concert evening we met every day over the course of a week to rehearse together. For some mad reason, those high up in the German cultural policy and music industry have decided to treat improvised music like dirt. Theo didn’t do that. It was great to chat with him and make music together. Nothing more was needed yet so much was gained. This is something I’ll never forget and I’m so grateful to Labor Sonor for making such an encounter possible.

### 3. Theo Nabicht.

This exciting project forced me to reconsider the basic approaches to musical processes. As an improviser and interpreter of contemporary music, I’m confronted with different perspectives of both these groups, which I rarely understand. These are more to do with monetary aspects than strictly musical aesthetics.

Questions I asked myself before the project included: What’s the difference between writing something down and passing it on orally? Where does interpretation start? Does it depend on the score? What’s a composer? What does it mean to adapt something for your own playing and does it change me and the “composition”? Firstly, the question of whether or not music has been written down previously is irrelevant to how it is received. Composers (such as improvisers and musicians) develop their own language in many stages. Whether these can then be translated into a suitable interpretation depends on many factors. For starters, it is generally only symbols that, by consensus, can be translated into music with the help of musicians. Interpreting contemporary music now often requires you to engage with the composer on a personal level. What this means is that verbal exchange is still extremely important to an interpretation as well as the symbols. For the composer, the extent to which the music produced tallies with the way he/she had imagined it is vital. For the musician, of course, this is less of a concern. What

seems crucial, to me, is the degree to which the composer is willing to substitute/describe their musical ideas with symbols, which the interpreter then translates according to the composer's wishes, and (very important) which can be reproduced. This isn't to say that great music can't be produced if the symbols are misinterpreted, it just mainly depends on the interpreter rather than the composer. None of this matters for the music, but for the composer it can be catastrophic.

Unfortunately, preference is now all too often given to interpretation aspect than to how close a piece touches on the original composition. For me, the rapprochement of composition and interpretation involves deciphering the symbols, notes, comments – the analysis of the context, the technical requirements of the material. In my view, interpretation starts when and only when I have understood these symbols and have begun to develop an opinion of them.

Of course, the moment we start to play music we interpret and translate it. But I often seriously question the extent to which the composition is still the composition or if I as an interpreter am at the fore. This is a difficult balancing act. With larger ensembles, who play from notated music, generally the conductor (mediator) is the one with primary responsibility; the musician, however, remains the crucial interface.

In a first meeting with Olaf Rupp we spoke about the path we could go along together. Making music together was the only one we could envisage for ourselves. I wanted to learn about the musician, his musical preferences, the language, and the musical forms he uses and prefers. We spent a whole week together and played for several hours every day. Given that we have similar approaches to different instruments, it was really easy for me to immerse myself in his world. I learned a lot during these encounters. We rolled several steps into one: I learned to play musical keyboard, tackled the context and in the end I was playing by heart. We created music that, for me, had a lot to do with Olaf Rupp but with myself also.

If there are marginal differences between a composer and an improviser, it is often because the improviser is not used to translating his/her language into written form. We overcame this in a convincing way.

I'd like to stress that it doesn't matter for me whether you write something down, convey something orally, develop something together – make music together. What is crucial, however, is how strong the musical idea behind it is. Of course, using set written musical symbols to distribute music has its advantages, but it isn't the only way. Thanks for such an inspiring experience!

#### 4. Andrea Neumann.

For me, improvisation has been and is a type of activity that evades consciousness to a large extent. I find there's a certain quality to improvisation; the entering into an auditory realm, acting and reacting to sounds, whereby I am led by impulses that are difficult to identify and first and foremost are not rationally justifiable.

At the same time, a musical vocabulary and a musical language have developed over the years, a certain way of dealing with sounds that has appeared time and time again and can be described in specific terms. The instrument and the sounds available with it are the only constant elements.

Producing a score depicting my style of improvisation was an attempt to gain more awareness of the processes, an attempt to convert the semi-unconsciously developed musical language into notational musical parameters. This procedure is similar to an open-ended research trial: can the main qualities of improvisation really be analysed, given names and be improvised/repeated?

#### Procedure

I recorded 10 improvisations, 10 days in a row. Before playing I described what was going through my head, what I wanted to find out musically. Afterwards, I analysed the recording.

The analysis applied to specific parameters that could be described in objective terms, including:

- volumes, durations, breaks, frequencies, tones
- to forms of structuring such as transitions, splits, foreground and background, repetitions, deconstructions

and to subjective impressions with regards:

- expression
- the question of what I like
- the question of what the piece is about
- the question of the attitude with which I improvise

It was easier to present the specific parameters and forms of structuring in the form of a score. But these are more of a secondary concern when it comes to the success of an improvisation. It seemed more important to me to let the open, unplanned, lively interpretation of the music flow into the score, whereby processes of reflection (e.g. which patterns do I no longer want to play?) and processes of an unconscious nature (impulsive decision-making) would take equal precedence. The difference between the two processes might only be a matter of timing. Processes referred to as 'impulsive' are also based on reflections; but because they happen in an instant, it doesn't seem like they originate from consciousness.

To allow space for a lively interpretation of the material, being in the moment seemed essential, to me. It also became clear to me that following instructions (which may imply the handing over of responsibility to another entity) was a barrier to success for improvised music. To accommodate the personal responsibility of the interpreter, the following statement was written at the end of the score:

After trying to understand and follow the instructions (see above) forget them. Play in a way that suits you, the time and the moment. Your own existential needs for playing should be included.

### Score for Mario by Andrea Neumann.

Approach to my way of improvising.

Duration: Around 20 minutes

Material: Around 15 sounds that the interpreter likes

The starting point of every musical activity is listening. Before playing the first sound: listen to the room. The perception of the room and your own disposition (what comes into your mind) is the starting point for the first sound. Listen to the sound, discover a characteristic that you want to follow/that you want to deal with.

To follow/to deal with means:

To change its colour, density, frequency, volume, tempo

To add another sound that:

- supports the first sound (due to a similar colour, density, frequency, volume, tempo)
- contrasts the first sound
- disguises the first sound (e.g. cover certain frequencies)
- sabotages the first sound by erasing its characteristic parts
- mirrors the first sound by highlighting its qualities

Listen to what comes out of the interaction and again follow elements that catch your attention by adding other sounds (see above) or by subtracting sounds or parts of sounds.

These elements should happen during the piece:

- Breaks (silence) between one and 40 seconds
- Abrupt changes (dynamically, sound-wise, construction-wise)
- Durations of static sounding
- Single actions: a single action is a short sound surrounded by silence
- Hiding sounds: you only hear the hidden sound when the sound hiding it disappears
- Ways of hiding include: volume, frequency, etc.
- Repetition of elements
- Change of fore- and background
- Dismantle sounds or streams of sounds (To mantle means: to add elements such as vibrato, filter, high volume, or undamped strings. To dismantle means: to stop the vibrato, the filter, the low volume, or to dampen strings). The result of dismantling often creates the impression of a sound being more naked.)
- Deconstruction/Showing the 'Making Of': When intense ambience appears (intense means: expressive, dramatic, loaded) take it apart and show the single elements that construct it.

### The attitude of the interpreter

The sounding events have priority over a plan made beforehand. Allow sounds to create their own life/agenda. The interpreter is both active and passive. Action is needed so that something happens. How the music develops depends at the same time on the self-reinforcing tendencies of the sounds and the structure of the ear that listens to it.

After trying to understand and follow the instructions (see above) forget them. Play in a way that suits you, the time and the moment. Your own existential needs for playing should be included.

In the process of transferring my improvisational practice into a score, I came to the realisation that it is not without good reason that improvisation is passed on orally; that the complexity of that which happens during improvisation (such as pauses, deliberation/determination when playing, relationship to the instrument – how you touch the instrument and what effect this has on the sound –) is conveyed most comprehensively when you play together; that the sound quality of music produced by composer-performers is characterised by a creative passion that is extremely hard to replicate in a score.

### 5. Tisha Mukarji and Sabine Ercklentz.

in the form of an interview

**Tisha Mukarji** Firstly I wanted to know what was your thinking behind your choice for the piece, you mentioned a challenge to your style of playing, was there something else? ...**Sabine Ercklentz** We've known each other for some years now and have spoken a lot about music, but have never played together or played each other's music. In your music I hear features which are kindred to mine, but also some which are foreign to it. For me, interpreting your piece is also a way to continue our dialogue about music by other means.

About the concrete interpretation of the score: I decided to interpret each line of the score with a different sound material. To realise the two voices I combined the sound of the trumpet

with the sound of an amplified object (white noise of a hard disk, dissolving of (an effervescent tablet?), boiling water, electric tooth brush on metal). In each line I was interested to come as close as possible with my sound to the notation of the two different voices (line and dot), with the amplified object shaping an ostinato and the trumpet translating the dots into sound.

**I feel with these new questions I become again a kind of composer, since my score is not only a set of instructions – it also contains several questions to you as a listener, as a performer and as a composer.**

**Perhaps it would be useful to explain the different approaches you**

**have to music, whether you can clearly differentiate each position or whether you have found a more organic and fluid way?** . . . The starting point is the perception of sound. As a listener I move through many sound spaces. My listening attitudes vary—sometimes I listen analytically, reserved and reflective, other times I want to be touched directly, to lose myself in the sound, sometimes music needs to move me physically... and so on. As a composer-performer I try to integrate these various attitudes and intuitively create accessible sound spaces.

About the concrete interpretation of the score: I integrated a performative aspect into the choice of the material, which is regularly a part of my work.

Although I chose different sound material for each line of the score, I arrived at a more reduced way of playing than I do in my own compositions. In my perception, the piece carries your signature as well as mine.

Making music, listening to it and speaking about it also always represents movement within a social space; it is a form of social interaction and makes us what we really are.

When interpreting your piece I pushed my aesthetic limits as a composer-performer, using my own methods to interpret your score but also touching upon new aesthetic ground. The experiences I had will now continue to be part of the music I develop in future.

### Tuning IV (For Sabine Ercklentz)

This music doesn't exist on paper. It's a music of relationships, between sign on paper and your "reading aloud".

We can call this a music to be read aloud.

The first relationship is that each note needs another note for this music to develop. The two notes can imitate each other, or they can correspond.

Take a note\*, play it continuously. Walk with it gently. While the first note is playing, play another note with a shorter duration and repeat it.

\*Note here could be a tone or a sound.

The second note should be close to the first one. Not too far away

The second relationship is the one of space. One note is continuous even if there are variations it is stable and the second note punctuates it. It plays with the first note and it listens to it. It listens to it with its punctuation.

The third relationship is the one of time. When to play. When to insert the punctuation. How long are the pauses. Do you play slower or longer than the time indicated

Tisha Mukarji

For SABINE : TUNING IV

**PART I**

NOTE i: ————— 02:30

NOTE ii: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

PAUSE

**PART II**

NOTE i: ———— ◡ ———— ◡ ———— 03:00

NOTE ii: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

PAUSE

**PART III**

NOTE i: ————— 03:30

NOTE ii: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

**PART IV**

NOTE i: ———— ◡ ———— ◡ ———— 04:30

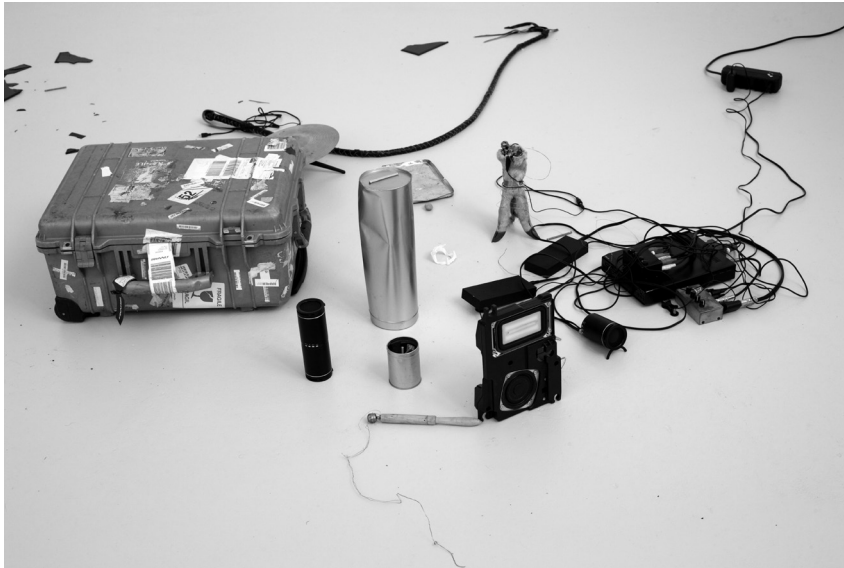
NOTE ii: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

## 6. Mario de Vega.

Transmission/Notation.

To read (Second hand clapping)

20'20"



A followed instruction. An open interpretation of an absent presence.

A trap. A lie exhibited as a truth. An imitation. A chimpanzee.

A palindrome.

Two poles. A need of control and a need of losing control. Losing control as a strategy to get an incident. An excuse to explore the value of unstable systems and the potential of its failure.

## 7. Derek Shirley.

For the October 2013 installment of the “Sound of the Second Hand Clapping” series at Labor Sonor, The Still (Derek Shirley . bass, Rico Repotente . guitar, Steve Heather . drums) were asked to interpret the music of the International Nothing (Michael Thieke & Kai Fagachinski . clarinets). The music of the IN is composed, not improvised. The music of The Still combines elements of both, and could be described as minimalist rock.

As a member of The Still, and an intermediary of the project, it was my primary concern, while absorbing the music of someone else, not to lose that which defines the music of The Still. We decided to interpret three songs of the IN – each one representing a slightly different approach. For each song The Still defined a tonality or pitch group to be used – for two of the songs this was represented by a repetitive ostinato bass line while the third was relevant pitches taken from the IN song.

It should be mentioned that one of the defining elements of The Still is for each piece to have some sort of ostinato that continues from beginning to end – the goal being prolonged suspension and continuation of this idea.

- The piece “Crystal Clear Fog” was represented by a bass ostinato and direct usage of melody fragments by the guitar.
- “Dichtung und Wahrheit” was represented by a percussion ostinato (textural as opposed to rhythmic) with abstracted/reduced pitches from the piece by guitar and bass (arco).
- “Amongst Dissidents” again used the bass ostinato with the guitar and drums playing traditional accompanying roles, while the International Nothing themselves played the melody.

From my perspective the project was a pleasant success. Directly using the material of the IN (although not necessarily always recognizable by anyone but ourselves) and for each song using a different but similar approach. The Still kept intact its own defining musical elements while producing music impossible without the IN influence.

· · ·

## Résumé

In retrospect, it can be said that the task of re-interpreting non-written and improvised music is like a balancing act. On the one hand it seems absolutely key that the interpreters make the original music their own and develop their own musical creativity. On the other hand it was important that they brought into the original and let elements of it flow

into their own piece. The difference between the original, the interpretation and the musical languages of the interpreters was as important as the analogies between them. Since new pieces were produced through the translation process, the term interpretation is misleading. It would surely be more worthwhile to speak about mirroring one work through another.

**Andrea Neumann** has been significantly involved in the formation and development of the 'Echtzeitmusik' scene in Berlin, which borders on fields as varied as noise, electronica, contemporary composed music, performance and sound art. She has co-organized Labor Sonor, a series for experimental music, film and performance in Berlin since 2000. She has engaged in intensive cooperations in the mixed border areas between composition and improvisation, between electronic and hand-made music, between instrumental and performative music.

**Christian Kesten** is a composer and vocalist. He gives international presentations of solo performances and ensemble compositions. He is member of the ensemble Maulwerker and artistic director of the series 'Maulwerker performing music'. He co-curates the concert series 'Labor Sonor' and is co-editor of the book 'Echtzeitmusik Berlin'. He holds teaching positions and gives guest lectures in Germany, Austria, Israel, the U.s. and Canada.

**Labor Sonor** is a series for experimental, new, improvised, conceptual music, performance art and film/video. It was initiated in 2000 by Gregor Hotz, Andrea Neumann and Steffi Weismann and is now curated by Fernanda Farah, Christian Kesten, Andrea Neumann, Derek Shirley and Arthur Rother. It takes place once a month in the theatre space of art-house KuLe in the center of Berlin.

## Christoph Cox.

Christoph Cox is professor of Philosophy at Hampshire College and a faculty member at the Center for Curatorial Studies (ccs), Bard College. He is the author of *Nietzsche: Naturalism and Interpretation* and co-editor of *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*. He is editor-at-large for *Cabinet* magazine and his writing has e.g. appeared in *October*, *Artforum*, the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, *The Wire*, the *Journal of Visual Culture*, *Organised Sound*, *International Studies in Philosophy*, *The Review of Metaphysics*, and elsewhere. He has curated various exhibitions and currently prepares a conceptual and historical book about sound art, experimental music and metaphysics.

## Versions, Dubs, and Remixes: Realism and Rightness in Aesthetic Interpretation.

The questions I want to ask are basic ontological and epistemological ones. What is an interpretation? What is a text? What is the relationship between an interpretation and a text? How might one's answers to these questions differ depending on whether one's ontology is realist or constructionist? Alongside these, I want to press a set of broader cultural and historical questions. How might focusing on the small class of artworks on which philosophers of art overwhelmingly tend to focus (namely, the "high art" of post-Renaissance Europe) implicitly lend credence to certain hermeneutic and ontological claims? How might a focus on other sorts of artworks lend support to a different set of claims?

First, consider the question: what is an interpretation? The ordinary answer to this question is implicitly realist and singularist. It runs something like this: There is some primary object out there called a text. There is some secondary thing called an interpretation. And the aim of interpretation is "to get the text right." This aesthetic view, of course, is analogous to the traditional epistemological picture, according to which there is a world out there and, as inquirers, our aim is "to get it right." Nonetheless, if we examine these epistemological and aesthetic scenarios together, we find some intriguing differences and similarities.

In the epistemological case, "getting the world right" is surely never a matter of simple mirroring; rather, it always involves translation and transformation: that of physical objects or states of affairs into beliefs or sentences. Insisting upon the *aesthetic* character of this epistemological translation from one domain to another, Friedrich Nietzsche asserts that knowledge and language are inherently "metaphorical" in the etymological sense of this term: to carry over or across.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the case of aesthetic interpretation would appear to allow for a more direct and literal way of "getting right" its object or text. If the

1. Friedrich Nietzsche (1873), "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense."

object is a photograph, one might re-photograph it, as the artist Sherrie Levine has done with the photographs of Walker Evans, Alexander Rodchenko, and others. If it is a literary text, one might rewrite it word for word, a practice that Jorge Luis Borges describes in his well-known story “Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*,” which tells the tale of an early twentieth-century author who sets out to write “a few pages which would coincide—word for word and line for line—with those of Miguel de Cervantes.”<sup>2</sup> Of course, as the narrator and Menard himself acknowledge, given the temporal and contextual differences that separate “text” and “interpretation,” even such repetition never quite manages “to get the text right.” “To compose the *Quixote* at the beginning of the seventeenth century,” remarks Menard, “was a reasonable undertaking, necessary and perhaps even unavoidable; at the beginning of the twentieth, it is almost impossible. It is not in vain that three hundred years have gone by, filled with exceedingly complex events. Amongst them, to mention only one, is the *Quixote* itself.”

It would be a mistake to dismiss such examples as mere pranks, for they exemplify fundamental features of the work of art in the age of mechanical and digital production and reproduction, and raise important issues concerning the original and originality, recording and repetition, and so forth. More to the point, they help us to see that interpretation never is or can be a matter of “getting the text right,” that even the most faithful interpretation will involve something other than simple repetition. Interpretation always involves transformation—or, as Nietzsche polemically puts it “forcing, adjusting, abbreviating, omitting, padding, inventing, falsifying, and whatever else is of the *essence* of interpreting.”<sup>3</sup> To put it another way, no interpreter of a text (with the possible exception of the classical music performer, whose practice we will examine in a moment) ever cares simply to reproduce the original, which, after all, already exists. Rather, he or she cares to bring something new into the world, namely a new text that transforms (by selecting, highlighting, rendering in a different medium, etc.) the original text. And I think that this basic fact puts realism and singularism under strain.

Moreover, the focus, in philosophical aesthetics, on works of “high art” in the modern European canon lends undue credence to the realist, singularist view. For complex historical, political, and economic rea-

sons, modern European works of high art are extraordinarily and unusually fixed and stable. In literature and music, for example, the modern work is fixed in writing, signed by an author, and protected by copyright. Hence, there is a stable and bounded *thing* called *the work*. And for another complex set of reasons, the modern European tradition has separated and hierarchized the practices of creation and of criticism. Parasitical on the work of the creative genius, it is said, there is a class of literary critics or musical performers whose interpretive productions are secondary and beholden to the original work of art.

Contemporary musical aesthetics has largely taken for granted these conceptions of the work and of interpretation. Despite their differences, nominalists and Platonists alike take the musical work to be a kind of thing or object—for the nominalist a score, for the Platonist an ideal type—and “interpretation” to be a matter of fidelity to this object. Yet the notion of music as embodied in fixed objects is an anomaly in the history of music. It is characteristic only of about two hundred years of Western art music—a tiny slice of musical history and geography that in no way exemplifies music in general. Throughout most of human history, music has existed without reference to a fixed object; and throughout most of the world (the West included), it still does. Indeed, it is arguable that the *thinghood* of music is merely a contingent byproduct of the economics of musical life in modern Europe—that music became a thing only when composers and musicians were forced to sell their wares on the market, which favors fixed and exchangeable objects that are the legally protected private property of an author. Indeed the concept of “the musical work” would appear to be an exemplary instance of what Karl Marx calls “the fetishism of commodities” and what Georg Lukács calls “reification”: the process by which the products of human, social activity take on a life of their own and confront their producers as autonomous objects with a “phantom objectivity.”<sup>4</sup> This characteristic of modern life is facilitated by the division of labor (for example, between composer, conductor, and performer) and by the elevation of the product over the process, the abstract over

2. Jorge Luis Borges (1939), “Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*.” 3. Friedrich Nietzsche (1887), *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Essay III, §24.4. Karl Marx (1867), *Capital*, Volume One, Section 4. Georg Lukács, “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat.”

the concrete, and the objective over the subjective (for example, the score over performance).

The “reification” of musical practice – the transformation of a process into a thing – has its philosophical analog in musical Platonism and score-nominalism. Faced with the obvious sensuous facts that (1) music is a temporal art, (2) musical performances are ephemeral, and (3) no two performances are alike, modern musicians and philosophers have sought the identity of the musical work in a conceptual abstraction outside of and beyond the irreducibly physical, sensuous, temporal, and individual character of actual musical performances. What began as a mnemonic aid for performance – the score – became an autonomous entity that governed performances and to which they were held accountable. This is precisely the Platonist move that both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein warn us against: the pre-post-erous inversion by which the concept “leaf” becomes the cause of actual, particular leaves – or, in the musical case, an abstract non-musical entity becomes the cause of actual musical performances.<sup>5</sup> But the inversion will be seen for what it is: a conception of music standing on its head. There are only musical performances, each one different from the next to a greater or lesser degree. Only a “family resemblance” among performances allows one to identify anything like a musical “work,” a designation that will only ever be a conceptual abstraction. Music is a becoming, not a being, a process, not a thing. One can try to halt this process by producing an abstract, transcendent object that serves as the model for performances; and “interpretation” can be taken as a matter of performing in fidelity to this model. But actual performances will always reassert process and becoming by introducing variations; and “interpretations” will always be – whether desired or not – creative.

This becomes clearer once we consider pre- and postmodern works of art. Take, for example, the *Iliad* – not the written text attributed to Homer but the fluid and anonymous oral poem that – over centuries, was continuously added to, subtracted from, and reworked. In this case, there simply is no single text, no “original.” And interpreters (that is, the successive poets) are not “getting right” some original text but inheriting a version and reworking it in performance. In the twentieth century, this is more or less the way the jazz canon works. The jazz

“standard” is merely a rudimentary chart or prompt for improvisation; and improvisations respond to other improvisations rather than to any “original.” Hence, there is not one “Body and Soul” but thousands. The original (written by the comparatively obscure team of Edward Heyman, John Green, Rob Sour, and Frank Eyton, and debuted by Gertrude Lawrence and Jack Hylton’s Orchestra) is now buried under stronger versions (for example, those by Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong, Thelonious Monk, or John Coltrane); and the “interpreters” are simply the authors of new texts.

These examples begin to suggest a constructionist answer to the questions “what is an interpretation?” and “what is the relationship between interpretation and text?” In the epistemological and ontological context, the constructionist dissolves the firm distinction between self and world, subject and object. The world is not some independent given thing out there that our job as knowers is to represent adequately. Rather, subject and object, self and world are terms in a symbol system (Nelson Goodman), web (Richard Rorty), text (Jacques Derrida), or discursive field (Michel Foucault). Similarly, in the aesthetic context, the constructionist undermines any firm distinction between interpretation and text. For the constructionist (Nietzsche or Derrida, for example), the text is always itself an interpretation, a reworking of materials already on hand; and any new interpretation is simply an interpretation of an interpretation, with no ultimate or final *Ur*-text underlying this process. On this model, then, the question about interpretation is not the realist question “is it right (in the sense of ‘faithful’)?” but the pragmatic, constructionist questions “is it interesting?” “is it new?” “is it useful?” “is it important?”

Indeed, when we survey the actual practice of what we ordinarily call aesthetic “interpretation,” I think we find that this is precisely what “interpretations” do and precisely what we want from them. What does the literary scholar do? Via a host of conventions, he or she mixes literary with analytical prose to produce a new text. What does the art critic do? He or she translates the visual into the verbal and supplements descriptive with evaluative prose to produce a new text. And these

5. Friedrich Nietzsche (1873), “On Truth and Lies”; Ludwig Wittgenstein (1933), *The Blue and Brown Books*.

“interpretations” are judged not according to how faithfully they reproduce the original but according to whether or not they show us something new, interesting, or important.

In this regard, I want to take up and extend Goodman’s notion of the “version.” For Goodman, all knowledge and inquiry (scientific, aesthetic, etc.) is a matter of inhabiting and producing “worlds” or “versions,” which have the peculiar characteristic of being without an original, singular, or common base. That is, according to Goodman, there is no single, given World but only ever various “worlds” or “versions,” which are themselves constructed from other “worlds” or “versions.”<sup>6</sup> Among other virtues, Goodman’s notion of the “version” is felicitous here because it links with an important musical use of this term. In Jamaican dancehall reggae during the late 1960s, the term “version” referred to the instrumental B-side of a reggae single. These B-sides were to be played by a DJ in a dancehall as the backing tracks for a “toaster” who would rap (or “toast”) over them. It did not take long before producers such as King Tubby, Errol Thompson, and Lee “Scratch” Perry began to think of the “version” (or “dub”) as its own entity. Their “dubs” drastically reworked the original tracks, fragmenting the vocals or dropping them out entirely, foregrounding a single element (like a bass line or a hi-hat rhythm), splicing in portions of other tracks, or highlighting studio effects (such as echo and delay).

In contemporary electronic music, this practice has been considerably extended via the notion of the remix. In the early 1980s, remixes maintained a fairly strict fidelity to their original tracks, and served primarily to make them more dance-friendly by extending them and foregrounding the rhythmic elements. However, in the past decade or so, the practice of remixing has become much more radical and creative. Remixes now often radically overhaul the original material such that only very select bits are maintained in the new versions. Indeed, there are remixes that bear no audible relationship whatsoever to the original (for example, Oval’s 1996 remixes of tracks by Tortoise).

Why deem such tracks “remixes” or “interpretations”? Why not simply call them new “originals” or “texts”? In the first place, these tracks come with the designation “remix,” which, like any title, sets up audience expectations—in this case, that one track (the “remix”) will be heard in rela-

tion to another (the “original”). Secondly, regardless of its sonic properties, the remix is economically and legally tied to the “original,” for, in current practice, the remixer is paid a flat fee, while the original artist maintains the copyright (and hence, collects royalties) on the remix. Finally, such extreme cases call attention to that fact that, in the age of recording and digital sampling, so much of contemporary music is a matter of sonic recycling that every track is a sort of remix. As the producer Kevin Martin puts it “neither the artist nor the remixer are ‘creators’ in the traditional sense”; rather both “act as ‘filters’ for a sort of cultural flow.”<sup>7</sup> In the digital age, notes Brian Eno, “the artist is more curator than creator. An artist is now much more seen as a connector of things, a person who scans the enormous field of possible places for artistic attention, and says, ‘What I am going to do is draw your attention to *this* sequence of things.’”<sup>8</sup> In short, the artist is an interpreter and the interpreter an artist.

Hence, within electronic music culture, the measure of a remix is not “is it faithful to the original?” (Nobody wants that, for the original already exists. Why repeat it?) Rather, a remix is evaluated by answering the questions “where does it take the original?” “what’s left of the original?” “is it interesting?” Again, I suggest that this is what any interpretation actually does and always has done. If this is the case, then the focus of interpretation will be shifted away from the realist, singularist aim of “getting the text right” to the constructionist, multiplist aim of transforming a text that is itself an interpretation.

To the classical music aficionado and the traditional philosopher of music, the musical practices of versioning, dubbing, and remixing may appear exotic and exceptional. My contention, however, is that it is but a contemporary instance of the age-old practice of music making, a practice obscured by a focus on the classical aesthetic. From Homer through John Coltrane, Grandmaster Flash, and Oval, music has always been a matter of transformative performance, of reinterpreting texts that are themselves interpretations. Theodore Adorno and Jacques Attali argued that musical recording reifies and commodifies music to

6. Nelson Goodman “The Way the World Is” (1960) and *Ways of Worldmaking* (1978).  
7. Cited in Simon Reynolds (1999), *Generation Ecstasy*. 8. Brian Eno (1995), “Gossip is Philosophy”.

an even greater degree than does the classical score.<sup>9</sup> Yet sampling and remix practice demonstrate the contrary: that recording makes possible a new kind of musical practice, a new *musica practica* that anyone with rudimentary playback technology can engage in. Indeed, as Chris Cutler and Mark Poster have argued, art in the digital age recapitulates (albeit via different technology) the folk mode of production exemplified by oral poetry, with its focus on performance and the continual transformation of inherited, all but anonymous, public texts.<sup>10</sup> If this is what music is and means, then philosophers of music have been asking the wrong questions about music and coming to the wrong conclusions about it. At best, they have been “philosophers of classical music” who have taken the exception to be the rule.

To conclude, I have tried to argue for the following claims. Realism and constructionism differ significantly about what they take a work of art and an interpretation to be. Interpretation never really is what the realist takes it to be, namely, a faithful rendering of an original text. Rather, interpretation always transforms the text via translation, selection, supplementation, deformation. That is, interpretation is always a constructive, indeed *artistic*, project that challenges the firm distinction between the work and the interpretation, and challenges the hierarchy that places the former above the latter. On the constructionist model, the question about interpretation is not “does it get the original right?” but “how does it render the original otherwise?” and “is this interesting? new? significant?” Along the way, I have insisted that the exclusive focus on European high art, with its unusually fixed and stable works, has given undue credence to realism and singularism and that a focus on different aesthetic objects and practices can begin to lend credence to the constructionist conception of what a work of art is and what an interpretation is. Finally, I have suggested that a “philosophy of music” worthy of the name would come to see classical music as the exception rather than the rule. It would begin to examine music more broadly and hence to take as primary not fixed abstract objects but the fluid process of actual, physical, temporal music-making and remaking.

9. Theodor W. Adorno *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* (1962); Jacques Attali (1977), *Noise*. 10. Chris Cutler (1982), “Necessity and Choice in Musical Forms”; Mark Poster (2001), *What’s the Matter with the Internet?*

## Jennifer Walshe.



'But here I've only discussed levels of self and identity looking inward. What makes 2012 so much more interesting than 1912 is that we now have this thing called the Internet in our lives, and this Internet thingy has, in the most McLuhanistic sense, become a true externalization of our interior selves: our memories, our emotions, so much of our entire sense of being and belonging. The Internet has taken something that was once inside us and put it outside of us, has made it searchable, mashable, stealable and tinkerable. The Internet, as described by William Gibson, is a massive consensual hallucination, and at this point in history, not too many people would disagree.'

Douglas Coupland, *On Supersurrealism*

## The Total Mountain.

'Every artistic movement from the beginning of time is an attempt to figure out a way to smuggle more of what the artist thinks is reality into the work of art. Zola: "Every proper artist is more or less a realist according to his own eyes." Braque's goal: "To get as close as I could to reality."'

David Shields, *Reality Hunger*

'Aesthetic experiences and objects are now dividing into the binary categories of downloadable and non-downloadable.'

Douglas Coupland, *On Craft*

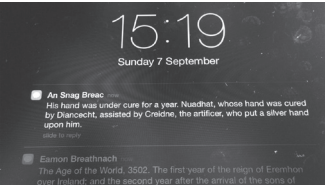
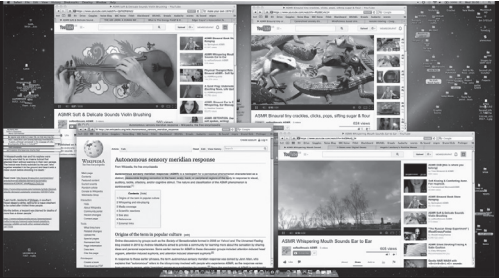
'The popular preconscious...those ever-shifting contents which we may reasonably suppose can be called to mind by the majority of individuals in a given society at a particular moment in history; that which is "common knowledge."'

Victor Burgin, *The End of Art Theory*

'But the Internet, with its swift proliferation of memes, is producing more extreme forms of modernism than modernism ever dreamed of... this type of content is about the quantity of language that surrounds us, and about how difficult it is to render meaning from such excesses... These ways of writing – word processing, databasing, recycling, appropriating, intentionally plagiarizing, identity ciphering, and intensive programming, to name just a few – have traditionally been considered outside the scope of literary practice... We don't read: we skim, parse, bookmark, copy, paste, and forward. We become information hoarders and amateur archivists who frantically collect, store, and move artifacts that we'll never interact with.'

Kenneth Goldsmith, *The Writer as Meme Machine*





Jennifer Walshe was born in Dublin. She studied composition with John Maxwell Geddes at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Kevin Volans in Dublin and graduated from Northwestern University, Chicago, with a doctoral degree in composition. Her chief teachers at Northwestern were Amnon Wolman and Michael Pisaro. In 2003 Jennifer is a fellow of Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart and in 2004 she took up residence in Berlin as a guest of the DAAD artist-in-residence programme. Jennifer's work has been performed throughout Europe, the U.S. and Canada. In addition to her activities as a composer, Jennifer frequently performs as a vocalist, specialising in extended techniques. She is also active as an improviser, performing regularly with musicians in Chicago and Europe.

## Camille Henrot.

Best-known for her videos and animated films combining drawn art, music and occasionally scratched or reworked cinematic images, **Camille Henrot's** work blurs the traditionally hierarchical categories of art history. Her recent work, adapted into the diverse media of sculpture, drawing, photography and, as always, film, considers the fascination with the "other" and "elsewhere" in terms of both geography and sexuality. This fascination is reflected in popular modern myths that have inspired her, such as King Kong and Frankenstein. The artist's impure, hybrid objects cast doubt upon the linear and partitioned transcription of Western history and highlight its borrowings and grey areas. In the series of sculptures *Endangered Species*, for example, the artist has created objects inspired by African art by using pieces from car engines; placed on tall pedestals, these slender silhouettes with zoomorphic allure make reference to the migration of symbols and forms as well as to the economic circulation of objects. This survival of the past, full of misunderstandings, shifts and projections (as shown in the slideshow *Egyptomania*, the film *Cynopolis*, drawings of the Sphinx, and even in the photographs of prehistoric flints) troubles cultural codes and conventions. In this way, Camille Henrot's work questions mental resistances and the past's resonance, whether it be drawn from myth or from reality.

Devika Singh

Source [www.welcometothesalon.be](http://www.welcometothesalon.be/?journal=Interviews&id=101)  
/?journal=Interviews&id=101 (2014, February 21)

## on Editing and Excess. Interview by Maaike Lauwaert in Le Salon.

**Maaike Lauwaert** Your work *Grosse Fatigue* won the Silver Lion during the 55th Venice Biennale. It was a well-deserved prize everyone felt. Yours was a work that mesmerized, that caught the attention and kept people in the rather small screening room for a long time. *Grosse Fatigue* was encompassing in terms of its scope but at the same time you never claimed to produce an objective truth. Rather, you set about telling one of the most fundamental and yearned for stories, through the "impossible" lens of excess information. ... **Camille Henrot** Excess is the way in which the universe appears to the subject. The universe exceeds representation. I was inspired by this quote of (French philosopher) Jean-Luc Nancy: "*Our question thus becomes clearly the question of the impossible experience or the experience of the impossible: an experience removed from the conditions of possibility of a finite knowledge, and which is nevertheless an experience.*" (*The Creation of the World, Or, Globalization*, SUNY Press, 2007, p. 65).

There is a contradiction between the intellect's unlimited ability to make connections and the human need to realize the idea of totality into one limited object that we can "grasp." I wished to emphasize the burden and the madness of such all-encompassing projects as well as the necessity for humans to

build these representations. In the contemporary context of the endless dissemination of information, where overcommunication and over-saturation must constantly be navigated, efforts to gather and structure knowledge in a totalized worldview resemble an artistic goal or artistic project. Subjectivity and imperfection are inevitably creeping in.

I knew that the only way to do such an ambitious project without losing my head would be to delve sincerely into the dark side, the madness of it. The ghost of obvious failure would be floating around as an incarnation of human arrogance and limited experience. Mixing very anecdotal and very universal references would be the only possibility to go over this limit because it's what is the most personal that is often what connects us to the rest of humankind.

**How did you make decisions? When or how did you know this image or that sentence was right for the film, the rhythm, narrative? While looking at your film, I kept wondering "how on earth was she ever able to choose?" And you made excellent choices. How did you go about this? ...** It is a mix of intuition and information. A little bit like the art of calligraphy: you practice a thousand times and then the actual action only takes a few minutes and has to be performed in a relaxed,

intuitive but focused mood. After intense research, thinking, writing about the project I decided to follow my intuition, to be as free/unexpected as possible.

It's actually more difficult not to make sense than to make sense because of humans' ability to make sense out of heterogeneity. This is an impressive ability that can be observed in the whole divination process. We make sense out of a google search result as much as we do out of coffee marks in a cup, or the fold of a shirt or the wrinkles on a hand.

But editing is indeed a very long process when you deal with simultaneous images, the computer was very slow in processing the images. So I had to draw a sort of "map" in order to know in which direction to go in advance. The slowness of the computer thus forced me to build a kind of "scenario", something I usually try to avoid when editing my films.

The solution I came up with was a sort of grid I designed. In this grid I had connected ages of man, ages of the universe, archetypal signs, technological inventions, and the evolution of animal species. It was extremely empirical: for example, the reptiles were connected in the grid to knowledge because of the reptilian brain (which is the most ancient part of our brain that has a binary coding (escape and aggression) like the digital binary language based on zeroes and ones.

**Editing is obviously a big part of your work. Knowing what to choose and what not to choose. A large part of our twenty-first century lives consist of editing. What we read, what we go**

**see, what we like, what we post, what we agree to work on etc etc. We are constantly, incessantly editing. How do you feel about this? Is this something you engage with consciously or politically? Or is it simply part of your working method? Walter Benjamin wrote about a "cataloguing psychosis", we seem to exist more in an "editing psychosis". Would you agree?**

It depends if you have to produce something out of the information you are gathering or not. But I imagine that one can just enjoy contemplating the flux of images, ideas, moods, and have no desire to edit – no eliminating factor other than time (the most recent thing pushing the previous one into oblivion).

Personally I'm having a hard time with excluding, selecting. I am not a selective person, I like to keep the circle as open as possible. I realized this very strongly when asked to choose a topic of research at the Smithsonian Institute. I had interests for too many different fields and institutions and it felt frustrating to eliminate before even starting the research. I normally delay the moment of choosing as much as I can.

(French theoretician) Murielle Gagnebin wrote in her super interesting book *Du divan à l'écran. Montages cinématographiques, montages interprétatifs* (1999, Paris P.U.F.) about creation and described two steps: the maniac moment where the ambitions are excessive and the mourning where you actually have to resign to possibilities and accept reality and its limits, followed by the principle of the "final cause", the preoccupation of the artist to match the



**Grosse Fatigue** 2013, © ADAGP Camille Henrot. Courtesy the artist and kamel mennour, Paris; Johann König, Berlin; Metro Pictures, New York.

idea to the social standards and expectations of the audience. If the final step is too strong the works may become too formal but if it's too weak, the works can be obscure, unreadable or obscene.

I am trying to keep this "final cause" as distant as possible and am currently also experimenting with the idea of no editing. This is very much the experience I'm trying out with the upcoming exhibition at Chisenhale Gallery in London called *The Pale Fox* (February 27–April 13, 2014).

**Could you say something about the works you are currently working on? Are they engaged with comparable topics? Are they part of "your search" for, or fascination by, what you referred to in an earlier interview as what "lies beyond the limit?" of our knowledge and access?** . . . *The Pale Fox* exhibi-

tion aims to show how the world of the digital era in which we live, promotes the perception of inclusion of nominal things (God, death, the history of the universe, the non-story), and phenomenal things (arbitrary cultural thing and events). *The Pale Fox* evokes the ambivalence of the desire of meeting, madness of grouping and collecting. Hoarding is connected to the museum's collection, this aggregation to reproduce the FUNCTIONING of the universe, the idea of expansion. But it also builds an isolated world within the world. This can be perceived as a pathological relationship to the outside.

*The Pale Fox* refers to the Dogon (nomadic African tribe living in Mali) cosmological character of Ogo, the fox-like creator of disorder. The Dogon cosmology has been described in the seminal anthropology book *The Pale Fox*

by Marcel Griaule and Germaine Dieterlen (Afrikan World Books, 1986). For me the expression “a pale fox”, refers to a being who embodies the sickly curiosity, a man in his guilty dimension, in his greed and impatience, in his insatiability too. Someone who wants to know, and accumulate.

**What has been the effect on you of winning the Silver Lion? You have, for example, many solo shows coming up and you will co-curate a show with Ruba Katrib at the SculptureCenter in New York. These must be exciting times. On the other hand, I can also imagine the pressure and expectations. Is there a downside to winning such a price and being in the center of attention?** . . . I'm not good at saying no, probably because I have problems myself admitting that not everything on earth is possible so I'm learning to do that as I go along. As for the pressure: I would lie if I would say I don't feel it. But I was feeling so much under pressure when I worked on the piece for the Venice Biennale that I guess I got used to it. The reception of the film has been so great that I know people can only be disappointed by the new work I am now making. So I feel free to do something that is amusing and experiment with things I haven't been able to do before.

**And on a more practical, maybe curatorial note, how do you feel about the artist as curator? Is it something you have done before or look especially**

**forward to? Do you already know what you will curate?** . . . I am interested in making an exhibition because it helps me think about art. I usually never get to think about art in such a direct way. I like to think about all aspects of the making of objects—not only art-oriented. Curating a show helps me to understand what being an artist means, what the perception of a big exhibition with many different voices can be—a sort of polyphony. One work might not be my favorite work in the show but the “sound” of it works well with the other works and might as such support a work that is key to the show. Curating, I am finding out, is not about making lists of “favorite pieces”, but about building an open narrative that everyone can tap into. I feel there are still so many possibilities to be explored with this! Sometimes I even feel that it's almost absorbing me too much, I can get more excited by the works of other artists than by my own work. I envy the curator position, he or she is a sort of “meta-artist” able to penetrate in so many different minds. I was also surprised to find out how different every artist is in his or her own anxieties and in the relationship they have with their work and the outside world.

As an artist it's not easy to be a hundred percent satisfied with your work. I don't know if it is even possible, or maybe it is, but satisfaction is not stimulating. If you are satisfied with what you have done, there is no energy anymore to keep producing. As in Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu's famous sentence: *“He who knows, does not speak.”*

## Franziska Windisch.

**Franziska Windisch** lives and works in Cologne and Brussels. She studied fine arts at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design Jerusalem and Städelschule Frankfurt/Main. In 2010 she graduated in Audiovisual Media at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne. Her work concentrates on the recording of movement in time and space in the sense of formalization and transfer. Various aspects of those translation practices are investigated in audio-visual installations, concerts and site specific performances.

## Corrosion.



FOUR POSSIBLE WAYS  
TO THINK ABOUT  
THE MEDIUM (OR TEXT)  
09/2014

The lecture-performance **Corrosion** listens into electro-chemical processes between metals and saltwater and contemplates on batteries, decomposition and the relation between intensity and sensitivity.

## Manfred Werder.

Manfred Werder is a composer, performer and curator. He lives in situ and focuses on possibilities of rendering the practices regarding composition and field. His recent scores have featured either found sentences from poetry and philosophy, or found words from whatever sources. His performances, both indoors and outdoors, aim at letting appear the world's natural abundance. Earlier works include *stück 1998*, a 4000 page score whose nonrecurring and intermittent performative realisation has been ongoing since December 1997.

merkén  
July 16, 2014

## time [of] incidence.

figue  
August 12, 2014

zwetschge  
August 30, 2014

turbulentia  
September 4, 2014

iteration  
September 14, 2014

But one can imagine the concert—later on?—as exclusively a workshop, from which nothing spills over—no dream, no imaginary, in short, no ‘soul’ and where all the musical art is absorbed in a praxis with no remainder.

Roland Barthes, *MUSICA PRACTICA*, 1970 (transl. Stephen Heath)

What could be this practice of the musical art from which nothing would spill over, no dream, no imaginary, no ‘soul’?

Approaching this question rather frontally runs the risk of becoming itself the dream of such practice.

The times of the economy between the overspending (*Vorausgabung*) and the dream, the imaginary, imposed by the intimidation of culture –

In this economy the overspending tends to a proliferation of enchantments which – particularly under the metaphor of light (which includes the metaphor of its absence) – , as projection of dream and imaginary contribute to the production of monuments.

The disaster of production –

The times of recurrence of enchantments and their monuments.

What could be the sound of a practice beyond intimidation and overspending?

incidence  
rarity  
coincidence  
reality  
space  
time  
inclination  
fall  
pleasure  
noun  
inherence  
abundance  
gravity

I gave a talk with this title last spring in the Experimental Drawing Studio at UCSD, together with my friend the art historian Liz Kotz. The notion of the musical score as drawing was to be examined, and surrounding us on the walls of the room were examples of notations, which we were invited to view as drawing. I quickly discovered that I am nearly unable to view notation as drawing; the talk proved to be divisive and confusing. Liz and I projected a range of score examples that we found interesting, and we tried to pragmatically break down what each score was asking the musician to do, and through what means. It emerged that every single score demonstrated a markedly different set of expectations and requirements; the *concept* of notation varied radically from score to score; nothing resembling a common methodology could be claimed.

Bill Wilson, who writes about the collagist and mail artist Ray Johnson, gave me a great phrase for music notation: “instructions which require instructions.” The circularity of this phrase says as much as the words themselves. An interpreter is at all times moving in a particular thought world, an aural world, whether that of Feldman or Lucier or Beethoven or Radigue, which cannot be fully represented except in performance. And each of those worlds is radically different. The fact that a notation exists does not imply that any aspect of that notation can be taken for granted. We are always, I think, seeking the instructions for the instructions, even in performance.

This brings up the most useful thing that could be said about drawing, which Liz put forward in the talk: that drawing is an action, and not the

## Drawing in the Air: Sound and its Representation.

marks on the page. Liz quoted Richard Serra: “There is no way to make a drawing, there is only drawing.” Liz went on to talk about process art and sculpture and video art and performance, and the focus on drawing as gesture, action, activity in time.

There are a few reasons why I don’t like to look at scores as drawings. First, I think it aestheticizes and fetishizes what is meant to be a sincere communication between musicians. Why must we elevate a humble and heartfelt script to the status of independent object of value? Next, I think it contributes to a shift in the ontology of the work from its primary existence in performance to its workings-out on the page. This is convenient for many composers who would like to see their doings as taking precedence over the performers’. Next, the admittedly beautiful examples of pictorial notations – Bussotti or Cardew come to mind – seem to me perfectly successful as pictures but nearly useless as notations. *Treatise* would be a case in point. I can see it as very attractive drawings, but I feel it has just walked away from the very serious task of collaborating productively and in good faith with performers. (This could also be said of a great deal of non-pictorial notation.) And finally, if I really think about it, notation for me is a kind of language, not a kind of pictorializing. It is instructions – complex, dense, requiring constant enquiry, invariably very personal, and asking to be parsed and understood on their own terms – as a link to performance.

Alvin Lucier used the phrase “drawing diamond shapes in the air” to describe the form of an orchestral piece called *Diamonds for 1, 2 or 3 Orchestras*. This idea stayed with me, and I have converted it to my

own purposes, which is the impulse for our title. If we are to talk about drawing, especially in the eloquent form which Liz Kotz pointed to, as process in time, then we are manifestly talking about performance. Lucier's diamond shapes – simultaneous upward and downward glissandi changing direction at a midpoint and returning to unison – are not drawn on the page. They are *notated* on the page, with a staff and all its agreed-upon appurtenances and symbolic details, and they don't even really look like diamonds. They are drawn 'in the air,' in the space of listening and performing. They are not even drawn such that the listeners should be able to recognize those exact shapes; something much, much more interesting happens, namely, the unfolding of continuously changing acoustical detail. The shape is just a jumping-off point for something infinitely complex and unpredictable; a diamond shape is banal compared to that. Also, a diamond shape is an abstraction; its materialization in performance is concrete and primal.

I'm a cellist, and I draw a bow across the strings. Drawing also involves extracting and extending, pulling, stretching, carrying, prolonging and closing. The word is so evocative of what I do in the moment of performance, in actual space and time, that it seems perfectly at home in that context.

Leaving aside the question of notation as drawing, and embracing notation as a communiqué: obviously I locate the primary existence of the musical work in its performance, not in its notation, and I know that not everyone agrees with this. At the same time, I take the language of notation very seriously and aspire to approach every score as a *sui generis* field of production. I would even say that every time I approach a score, for the however-manyeth time I have played a piece, I would like to readdress it, re-scrutinize it, since, having myself changed, it has changed; with every performance, even those I have not participated in or even heard, that piece has changed. The instructions may appear to be the same, but they are not; and certainly the instructions for the instructions, which we must continually search out, will change, if we really take the matter seriously. There is no final, definitive version, just as, conversely, there is no *Urtext*. The concept of *Urtext* is a ploy to

intimidate unsuspecting performers. Curiously enough, it works. I'm astonished at the number of musicians who have come to see the score as a writ of law to which we must accede. The literalness with which musicians will debate the start-point of a decrescendo within a quarter-note in Schubert is bizarre to me, or the exact meanings of dots, dashes and carrots. As if these were instrumentalized commands; as if the exact replication of an assumed intention, assumed to be embedded within these signs, were proof of a musical and moral superiority, conferred upon the performer by the purchase of the *Urtext* edition. This absolutist 'textism,' while couched in seriousness, is in fact unserious. By reference to an external authority, the performer relinquishes the responsibility to listen through, play through, talk through, read through the notation and its varied traditions as a multifarious, unstable and ultimately fragile link to the composer's 'intentions.'

One could turn to innumerable cases in point. Giacinto Scelsi's works from the early sixties were generated late at night, in private, as improvisations on the Ondiola (an early synthesizer) and recorded to two Revox tape recorders, sometimes multi-tracked or recorded-over with simple tape collage techniques. He 'composed' purely in sound. The tapes were then handed over to Scelsi's friend (and for these purposes, employee), the composer Vieri Tosatti, who transcribed what was in essence a private sound performance into a conventionally notated, published score to be read and re-realized in public. The soprano Michiko Hirayama writes of eaves-dropping on these all-nighters from the stairwell outside Scelsi's apartment, and of her fascination with the cult-like atmosphere of experimentation and creation; as interpreter of some of these works, she stresses the need to recapture the intuitive and spontaneous qualities of their first incarnation. This is not going to happen from counting rests and espousing fidelity to a score, the very existence of which is awkward to say the least.

Private performance to tape brings to mind the incredibly rich musical world of Eliane Radigue, who for something like forty years made work of an entirely private nature, existing only as tapes made (for the most part) in her home studio on electronic devices. When she

and I agreed to embark on the uncertain quest to make a work for live acoustic cello, that would still be unmistakably her composition, even though she had never before so much as thought about composing for the cello, the suggestion of a score never arose. To abstract Radigue's deeply personal experience of sound to marks on a page, and to then attempt to re-concretize those marks in a scripted performance, would posit performance as a copy of some absent original, rather than a first-order creative event.

The task of the interpreter became then the complete internalization of habits of listening, sense of pacing and change, attention to timbral details, and all else that is singular to Radigue's music; and then the performance of this in public. The composition exists as a carefully arranged and agreed upon sequence of sounds and techniques, but their realization in a given place and moment depends on reacting to their unfolding as Radigue herself would. It is almost as if I am to conjure her creative presence as if in a seance. To achieve this required a long and intense collaborative process involving only sound; nothing was written down. Compared to this, Scelsi's contracted-out scores seem strangely compromised and at odds with the source of the work. It's my position that the essence of Radigue's relationship to sound would not survive the transfer to notation; the immediate relationship to sound in the present would become generalized and crudely approximated.

For a mathematician the idea of working out complex computations without writing anything down would seem preposterous; and Beethoven's sketchbooks show another approach to composition, a shaping and sculpting of potential sounds via their symbolic representation, apart from actual sound. Above all, Beethoven shows us for the first time the multidirectionality of correcting and revising, spinning out immense virtual structures that can hardly be conceived as sound totalities; the late works can only be appreciated in narrative time, particularly as they set up and then frustrate our expectations, keeping us off guard and controlling our attention. Beethoven's scores need to be read very closely, but even then they do not tell us everything; the closer we look, the more we need to conjure, extrapolate and speculate.

What does he mean by writing *Beklemmt* in the violin part (only in the violin part!) of the Cavatina in Opus 130? It is not an expressive marking, but a state of mind - whose? Why is that section notated in the nearly fictional key of C-flat major, where over the course of three long bars every single note in all four instruments is flatted, except for a lone G-natural as passing tone between A-flat and G-flat? And what sorts of polyrhythms did he imagine between the first violin's sixteenth and thirty-second notes and the remaining instruments' steady triplets, an asynchronous coexistence of durations which had probably never before been notated?

Here Beethoven has moved so far from the immediacy of sound that even he almost certainly does not hear exactly what he is notating - and this has nothing to do with his deafness. The marking *Beklemmt* is especially provocative; if we treat this as a generic expressive marking, like *sotto voce* or *dolce*, we are pulled into the realm of dissimulation, acting, feigned affect: the opposite of an honest and immediate engagement with sound. Here we would perhaps do best to simply allow *Beklemtheit* to emerge from the supernatural scenario that Beethoven has carefully constructed.

Feldman in his late work proudly claimed to not hear what he notated; he too used 'fictional' note names. In the beginning of Clarinet and String Quartet the notes which in sound spell H, C, A and B - Bach backwards - are spelled C-flat, C, A and B-flat in one instrument, and B-natural, D-double flat, G-double sharp and A-sharp in another instrument; and these instruments play in unison. We are instructed to play these notes spelled this way, but we have no instructions for what these spellings mean. According to Anthony Burr, the spellings "can only be understood as a provocative act of writing." The insistence with which Feldman pursued these eccentric spellings forces us to take them seriously. The solution, resorted to by some musicians, to re-notate them with normal note names, is completely wrong; even if reading them in Feldman's spellings produces a garbled or halting or 'incorrect' delivery, this would be the correct reading. The slight differences, and the seeking of slight difference, give rise to an acoustical complexity and a

performative bearing that are specific to the moment of performance, as unpredictable in result as the score is weirdly specific in its notation.

La Monte Young asks the performer to

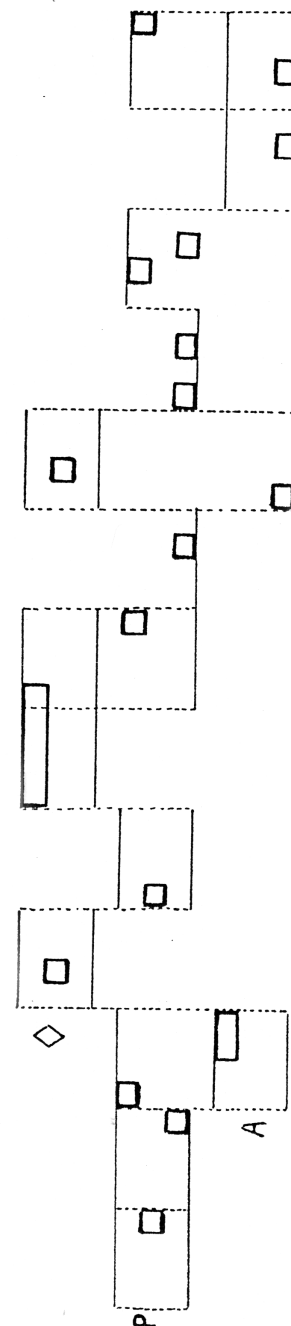
Draw a straight line  
and follow it.

This instruction is framed as a musical composition, Composition 1960 #10/to Bob Morris. We are not told what the reference for straightness might be; we *are* told to draw and follow in one motion, suggesting a single action in only one direction. What is visionary about this work is that it heralds an action which rigorously obeys its own internal conditions. In my view of music interpretation, this is the authoritative model for performance and the axiom which governs an understanding of the composition as a one-time-only event that cannot be repeated. The fact that the Compositions 1961 contain the very same instruction twenty-nine more times merely drives home the point that in performance there is no repetition, but rather an unfolding of conditions intrinsic to that performance alone.

Charles Curtis became known during the 1980s all over the world as a performer of traditional cello repertoire, but at the same time he opened up new horizons amidst the downtown New York music scene in the worlds of experimental rock, minimalism, contemporary classical music and sound experiments. A graduate of the prestigious Juilliard School, Curtis has been involved with the music department at Princeton University and at the University of California, San Diego where he has served as Professor of Contemporary Music Performance since the year 2000. He has studied under such masters as vocalist Pandit Pran Nath and composer La Monte Young and he still regularly records and performs.

## PROJECTION 1

Morton Feldman



Morton Feldman Projection 1

COPYRIGHT © 1962 BY C.F. PETERS CORPORATION, 373 PARK AVE. 50, NEW YORK 16, N.Y.

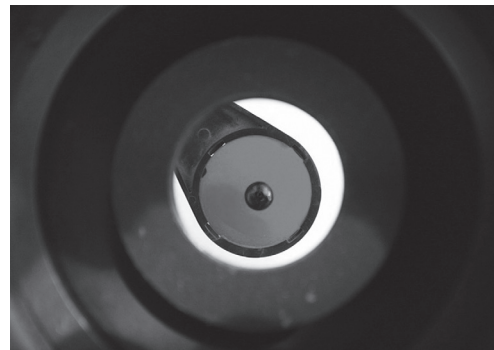
## Bartaku, Ruta Vitkauskaite & Karl Heinz Jeron

... and now in the movement No.8 of the aronia overture, the essence of the aronia berry will be expressed with the help of the human mouth piece

Within the resulting topological aroniaprint on the tongue lies the code to aronia's metabolism. A metabolism that has offered birds, bees, deer and humans impressive food energy, and in some cases low blood pressure and shrinking sing pipes. But in particular the deep color intimately interweaves the large and the small energies, transforming light into electrical energy.

May I hereby invite three people who wish to paint aronia, and three persons who would like to have their tongue painted with aronia power and then print it against the white canvasses here on the window.

## Aronia project.



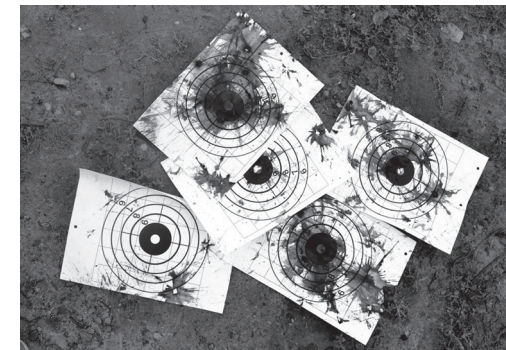
### Raison d'être.

About the will or the effect, it is.  
What is the reason to be this nor that berry?  
Attract some, scare off others.  
Some do not mind for this astringency.  
Birds do not mind.  
Humans do not mind.  
Deer do not mind.  
In them it goes, nurturing them  
with dark juice and skin.

And in them-likes  
so they can reach far away places.

Left over energy for power,  
for protection.

Then as a tiny stone in drop,  
in hide, in transmute;  
soon we start over.



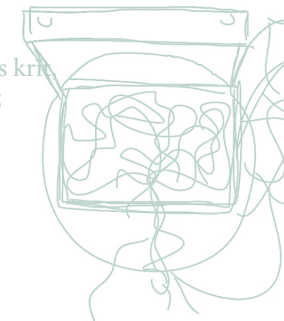
### Mērķis.

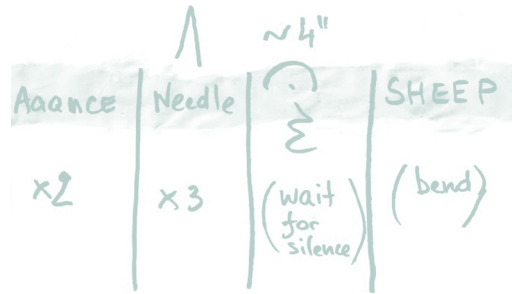
Par testamentu vai efektu, tas ir.  
Kāds iemesls būt šai, ne tai ogai:  
Kādu piesaista, citu atbaida valkanība.  
Daži neiebilst šai valkanībai.  
Putni neiebilst.  
Cilvēki neiebilst.  
Brieži neiebilst.  
Tām tā nodrošina  
tumšo sulu un apvalku.

Un tāpat kā līdzīgas būtnes –  
viņi var sasniegt tālas vietas.

Pāri paliekošā enerģija priekš spēka  
un aizsardzības.

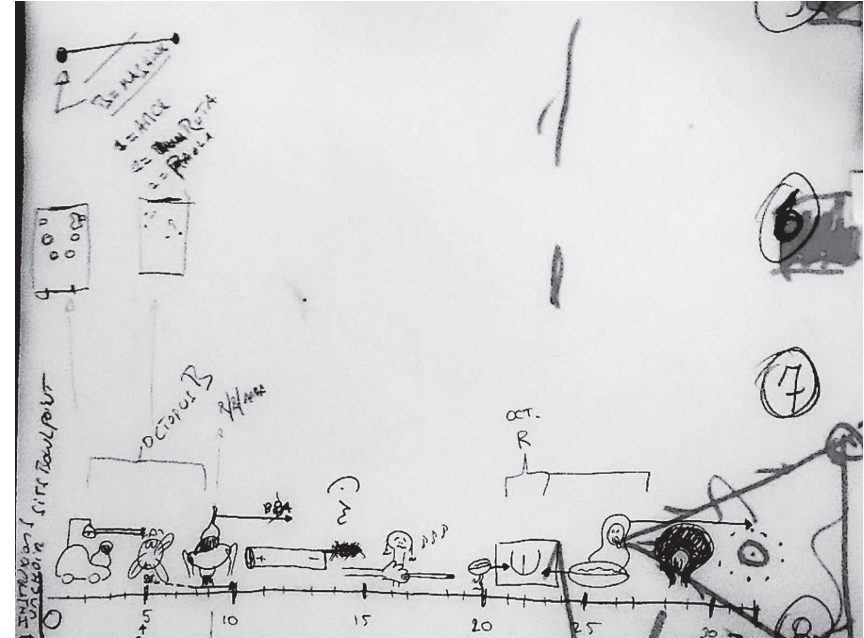
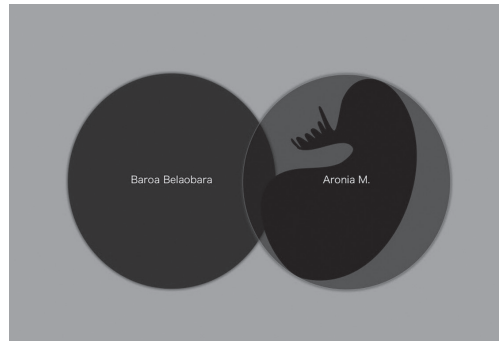
Tad kā maziņš akmens tas kri  
tas slēpjas, tas pārmainās;  
drīz mēs sāksim no gala.





They just grow.  
There is no one who would weed it  
There is no one to water it. →†  
There is no one to cut it.

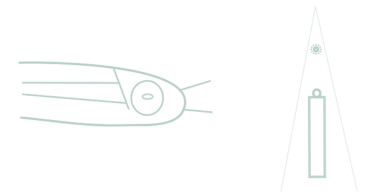
There is Nothing.  
Agita Kemere, Aizpute (LV), 2010



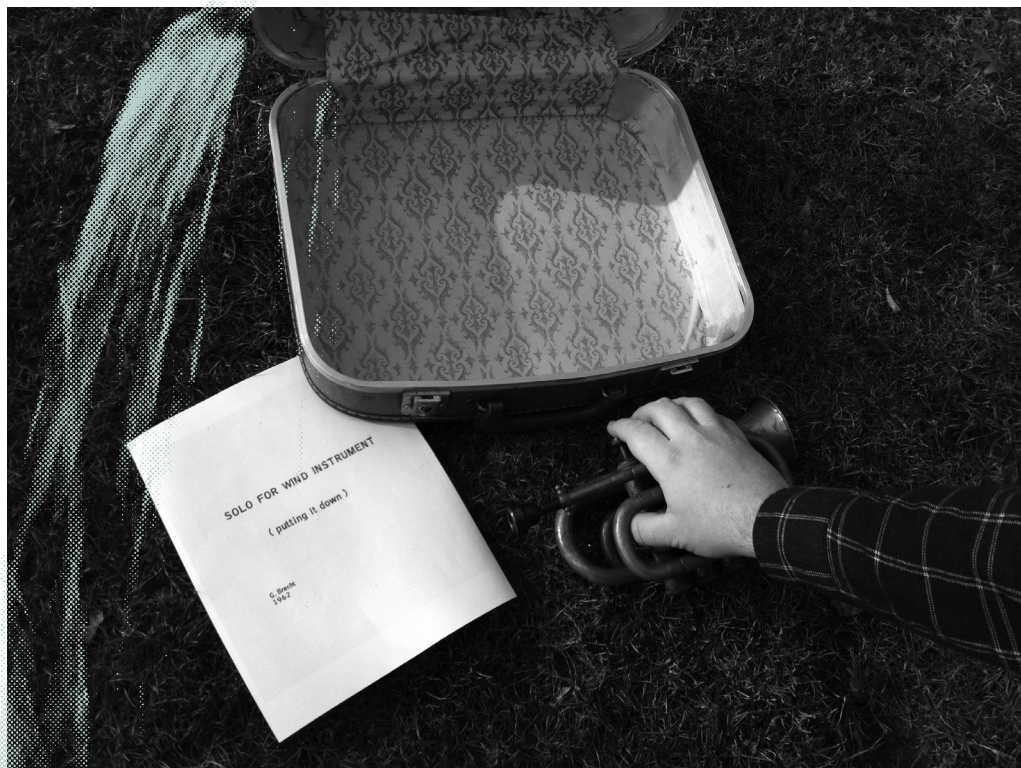
**Bartaku** is an artist/researcher who is inspired by systems thinking and driven by quest. Through interventions, installations, residencies, talks and public labs he explores troping of light and language, both human and non-human. After having explored the wind up realms of threads through various installations, he started in 2007 the ongoing research PhoeF: The Undisclosed Poësis of the Photo-voltaic Effect.

**Ruta Vitkauskaitė** has widely varied musical interests. While working in the field of classical composition, she has also been an active initiator of experimental music projects, organizer (Druskomanija festival) and performer (violin, piano, voice, electronics). Since moving to the UK, she has developed deep interest in music education and in research in personal music performance.

**Karl Heinz Jeron** was born in Memmingen (GER) and currently lives and works in Berlin. From 2000 to 2006 he has been lecturer Multimedia Art at the University of Arts Berlin. His works have been exhibited at zKM Karlsruhe, Ars Electronica Linz, Documenta x, ICA London, Walker Art Museum Minneapolis, Berlinischen Galerie Berlin and the Museum of Modern Art San Francisco.



## Compost and Height, Patrick Farmer and Sarah Hughes.



Jason Brogan & Mustafa Walker Solo for Wind Instrument

**Compost and Height** is a curatorial platform set up to facilitate the dissemination of contemporary music and associated arts practice via free downloads, online projects, live concerts, exhibitions and publications. Founded in 2008 by Patrick Farmer and Sarah Hughes, Compost and Height promotes various practical, theoretical and historic aspects of contemporary sound- and composition-based practices.

## On Water Yam.

In 2011 Compost and Height, a curatorial platform founded by Patrick Farmer and Sarah Hughes, invited twenty-two artists, musicians and writers to present realizations of George Brecht's *Water Yam* (1963). The resulting works, comprising sound, text and photographic documentation, are published on the Compost and Height website alongside an essay by Jesse Goin. This *Water Yam* project complements another project curated by Compost and Height in 2009, which saw twenty-one realisations of Michael Pisaro's *Only* (Harmony Series #17) (2006). Together, the projects focus on two scores that share similar concerns, are both informed by chance and indeterminacy, as well as representing a period of text- and event-based composition spanning more than 40 years.

Brecht's event-scores often comprise characteristically short, enigmatic instructions for performance. Such pieces were initially distributed through the mail to friends and colleagues, as well as being exhibited in galleries. Around fifty of these scores were collated and published as *Water Yam*, the first of the Fluxus Editions published by George Maciunas. Arguably a proto-Fluxus work, the economy of means employed by Brecht in *Water Yam* presents an open-work that finds provenance in the automation of the Surrealists, art trouvé, or Marcel Duchamp's embrace of chance and the readymade. Brecht reconfigures the Duchampian readymade by specifically presenting an existing action, sound or event, often carried out unwittingly as part of a normal everyday routine. By demarcating an action such as "Exit", the 'performer' is made redundant and yet the potential for 'performance' is increased. Still further, the logical tendencies of narrative structure, or even cause and effect within a performance, are subverted.

In his 1966 essay 'Chance Imagery' Brecht cites one of the games of the Surrealists, the *cadaver exquis* (exquisite corpse), as being a means by which the "cause of an event" can be "lost... in multiplicity". Brecht's appeal to everyday activities, especially the frequency with which such

mundane actions occur, not only ties in with an implied openness in terms of the innumerable ways such events may be actualised, but also in allowing the authorial voice of both composer and performer to be atomised as a multiplicity of possible realisations. Brecht's reference to the game of *cadaver exquis* also relates to his own confections and subversions between word, image, action and sound, where even the prefix "Word-event:" complicates the ostensibly simple instruction: "Exit". Maciunas observed in a 1964 letter to Tomas Schmidt that event-scores such as 'Exit' *eliminate themselves* through their performance. In an earlier correspondence with Brecht, he expressed an appreciation for pieces that fall back into the continuum of everyday existence. The possibility for such incidental realisations of some of the *Water Yam* scores arguably become reduced when fixed (for example) in the multiple interpretations curated on Compost and Height – demarcated and made available as sound, text or image files. The project presents the curators' own interests and the provenances they find to be significant not only to their own work, but also to the formation and continued publication of projects on the site. It is in the area where the boundaries between chance and deliberative action are open to question that *Water Yam* becomes most effective, and where Farmer and Hughes's interpretations of the collected works are best articulated.

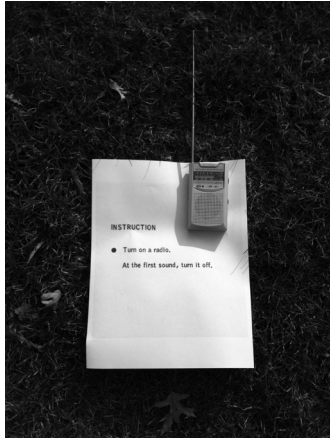
In light of the theme of 'Interpretations' presented at the Q-O2 Winter School, Farmer and Hughes present two separate interpretations of their involvement with *Water Yam*. They each elaborate on individual research interests, the role that Compost and Height plays in the development of such interests, and their own accounts of collaborative practice. By welcoming any chance repetitions, contradictions and diverging interpretations of the project, the authors propose a point at which contraries can meet.

Hughes retrospectively articulates the *Water Yam* project in line with ideas developed in her 2014 essay 'The Continuum of the Field', which discusses Pisaro's *Only* (*Harmony Series #17*) and John Berger's 1972 essay 'Field'. Hughes further explores the role of the event within contemporary composition, both through *Water Yam* and its antecedents in the work of various Surrealist writers, poets and artists. By making connec-

tions to preceding exponents of artistic practice, Hughes questions the political economy of a certain type of artistic production that evades commodification and the agency inherent to both historic and contemporary work.

For Farmer, Brecht's event-scores are interpreted as a means of correspondence and an affective mode of expanded listening. Farmer's approach to the *Water Yam* project concentrates on his interpretation of the collected event-scores as being a 'species' of novel. Three textual realisations, by Julia Eckhardt, Jason Kahn and David R J Stent, are considered by Farmer as a slowing down of the way we approach plain language, with the interpretations being viewed as distortions of Brecht's desire to pay attention to the focused and humorous surround of the everyday, such as the turning on of a light switch or the ignition of a car. Developing his current research, Farmer will discuss Jack Spicer's 1957 publication, *After Lorca*, in relation to what he feels are the main differences between 'corresponding with' and the 'performance of' event-scores. Farmer's interest, in particular, concerns how the former approach may lend itself to a textual co-response that ultimately tries to establish a kind of osmotic rapport between the writing and its participant.

Sarah Hughes, September 2014



Jason Brogan & Mustafa Walker  
1. Instruction 2. Exhibit 3. Umbrellas

Sources: Brecht, G. 1957/66. Chance Imagery. Originally published as a Great Bear Pamphlet by Something Else Press, New York. Kotz, L. 2001. Post-Cagean Aesthetics and the "Event" Score. October Magazine Mir

## IMPOSSIBLE EFFORT



• Do 1. (one egg, one shot glass, 33rpm)



• Do 2. (two eggs, two shot glasses, 45rpm)

**Stephen Cornford** Impossible Effort

**Sarah Hughes** works with sculpture, installation, music and composition. She has exhibited and performed internationally, with exhibitions including *Now now*, Sydney Non Objective, Australia (2014); *Open*, Oriel Davies Gallery, Wales (2014); and *The Silence on the Floor of my House*, Supplement, London (solo 2008). Concerts have included performances at Musee de Beaux Arts Nantes, France; *Blurred Edges*, Hamburg; *Q-O2*, Brussels; *The Wulf*, Los Angeles and *Café Oto*, London. She is the co-founder of *Compost* and *Height*, Wolf Notes and of *BORE* publishing.

**Patrick Farmer** plays motors as if they were spinning drums and writes books. Recently he has picked up on some old habits, such as turning bass drums into plant pots and recording greylag geese. He is the co-founder of the *Compost* and *Height* label along with Sarah Hughes. When he finishes his PhD, he has promised himself he will walk the Norfolk Coast.



**George Maciunas** performs Brecht's *Drip Music Festum Fluxorum*, 1963 (photo Manfred Levé)

## Julia Eckhardt.

74

The idea for this piece was initially inspired by a large mural that I saw by chance in 1973, at the Museum of Natural History in Los Angeles. It showed the 'spectrum of electromagnetic waves' moving from the largest to the smallest of known measurable wavelengths. Out of this large spectrum, there is a tiny zone from slightly less than 100 Hz to slightly more than 10 KHz that the ears of certain species populating the planet earth, have transformed into 'sounds'. Later, I discovered interesting parallels with several of my reflections on William of Ockham and his famous treatise 'Ockham's Razor'. Expressed most succinctly in his own words, "The simplest, the best", it has been adapted and used by numerous artist/creators.

Last, came the distant recollection of a science fiction story I had read about the existence of a mythical ocean. Only the title remained etched in my memory, Occam's Razor, which explains the origin of the spelling I chose. It seems in fact that the Ocean with its multiple waves allows us to symbolically be in contact with a rather large spectrum of vibrating undulations, stretching from great deep-sea swells to wavelets sparkling on a fine summer day. This explains the overall 'structure' of the project.

The work mode is based on an individual 'image' illustrated and evoked within each solo. Each musician is guided by his or her personal 'image'. This provides the essential, letting descriptive words and evocations establish a system of communication as the piece is being elaborated, and through this intuitive-instinctive process, we are guided to the very essence of music.

There will be as many solos as there are volunteers willing to enter into this shared experience. They become the 'sources'.

Eliane Radigue about OCCAM OCEAN 2011

## Eliane Radigue, OCCAM OCEAN.

75

Eliane Radigue was born in 1932 and became after her studies of musique concrète with Pierre Schaeffer in the 1950s the assistant of Pierre Henry at the studio Apsome (1967–1968). Her first own musical experiments focused on the use of feedback and the idea of music as a continuous flux.

In the 1970s, Radigue took up a residency at the New York University School of Arts. It was during this period that she developed an interest for the ARP 2500 modular synthesizer the instrument for and on which she would compose most of her music throughout the next few decades. After having composed electronic music her entire career, Radigue surprisingly started to collaborate with instrumentalists at the turn of the 21st century. In these late works subtlety in change and the idea of music as a flux of time however remain key concepts.

Via 'Elemental I' for e-bass and 'Elemental II' for laptop-ensemble, she came to conceive music for acoustic instruments, with the cycles 'Naldjorlak' (2005–2009) for cello and two basset horns, and 'OCCAM OCEAN' (start in 2011). Those pieces have been made in close collaboration with the instrumentalists, and are 'written' as a mental image and transmitted aurally.

Whereas 'Naldjorlak' is a clearly delineated three-part-form, 'Occam Ocean' is unfinished because unfinishable, because of the exponential amount of possible combinations: with each musician Eliane Radigue creates firstly a solo, and subsequently derives ensemble pieces, going from duo to orchestra, in which however the individual parts differ from the solo's. As starting point serves a paradigm (see above) which is valid for all pieces and musicians, combined with an individual image related to water or a watercourse, which is chosen together. These images serve as scaffolding to build up the piece and may be forgotten once the piece is ready – actually just as any other musical score. Yet there is an essential difference to traditional collaboration in the holistic approach of personal exchange. The creation of the piece is absolutely personal and is brought about through a true two-way communication, through mutual propositions, and with the passage of time as an important factor of its development.

From the perspective of the musician, clarinetist Carol Robinson puts the experience in words as follows:

“The work, though very demanding, is fascinating and extremely rewarding because it obliges the performer to enter into a state of hyper acuity, sensitivity and in some ways, belief. The work process is unlike that for other music. Not truly belonging to an aural tradition, the musician is instead guided, often through a visual image, into an awareness and level of reactivity that increases as the sound material itself is assimilated. In this way, it is never a question of reproducing an event or sequence, but rather of understanding the elements that produced the event and then allowing those elements to develop further. The pieces are completely defined, but can never be exactly the same, because particular interaction between sound, instrument, musician and acoustics requires constant adaptation. For this reason a conventional score is not relevant.”

### A nulle autre pareille

Eliane Radigue's work is based on continuous sound, yet can't be compared to others in this domain. She insists that it's music what she composes, not soundscape, neither can she be associated to the minimal movement, drone or mystic tradition. She is, as states Bernard Girard “à nulle autre pareille”:

“Listening to Eliane Radigue's music is an experience which demands a vigilance at all instances, (and) bears in this resemblance to the experience of meditation: fixed on one sound, following it as long as it is present. You don't fall asleep listening to Eliane Radigue's music, you don't let yourself being carried, you are fixed on one sound which only seems (appears?) to be immobile. In real, this music invites us to discover our perceptive mechanisms, this capacity which our ear has, to differentiate, analyse, dissect and discern, if only we give it the freedom. ‘Lending a new ear to a primitive and naïve way of listening’, she says in one of her rare theoretical texts.”<sup>1</sup>

### The Mysterious Power of the Infinitesimal

In the same text, Eliane Radigue continues:

“In the beginning, there was the air's powerful breath, violent intimidating tornado's, deep dark waves emerging in long pulsations from cracks in the earth, joined with shooting fire in a flaming crackling. Surging water, waves streaming into shimmering droplets. (...)”

Was it already sound when no ear was tuned to this particular register of the wave spectrum in this immense vibrating symphony of the universe? Was there any sound if no ear was there to hear it?

The wind then turns into a breeze, the base of the earth into resonance, the crackling fire into a peaceful source of heat, water, the surf against the bank, cooing like a stream.

Life is there. Another level, another theme begins. An organ adapts itself to transformation of a minuscule zone from the immense vibrating spectrum decoded into sounds captured, refined, meaningful.

Crackling, roaring, howling and growling, the noises of life – cacophony punctuating the deep ever-present rhythm of the breath, pulsations, beating. (...)

A few more million years, the noisy emissions organize into coordinated sounds and with reflection, become a language.

But breath, pulsations, and beating remain.

How, why, the sound of the wind, of the rain, the movement of clouds across the sky as they appear and disappear against the blue of space, the crackling of fire, how, why, through what mysterious alchemy will all this turn into a chanted recitative for one of these beings, recently appeared; how, why does the experience of an impression become sound, music?

An ordering is underway. Breaths caught in hollow tubes become tamed sound sources, hollow percussive objects become sources of rhythm, strings stretched over yet other hollow objects, through the stroke of a bow, turn into sound waves.

Haunting recitative. The Voice, the Path is there.

Hollow tubes with holes, assembled in different lengths. Hollow objects with a skin stretched over cylinders of various dimensions. Strings stretched over resonating chambers with more sophisticated shapes, fitted with sound posts that transmit and hear, animated by ‘arcs’ turned into ‘bows’.

And the Path, always more and more the mysterious ‘Path’. Supple and fluid, breath, earth, heat and water, everything at once. The subtle alchemy of sounds becomes, oh wonder, understood. One-half, one-quarter, one-third of a string's length reveal their perfect harmony, as later confirmed by images on an oscilloscope. Except for... the tiny, infinitesimal difference – when left to their own devices, natural harmonics unfurl into space in their own language.”<sup>2</sup>

### Oral transmission

About the much intriguing concept of oral transmission which is used for the creation process, Emmanuel Holterbach writes:

“Radigue's music cannot be written, even by using microtonal or spectral techniques. Her approach involves getting the instrument to sound according to its own specificities, in a way by feeding its own resonance back to it. Something

1. Girard, B. Entretiens avec Eliane Radigue, Editions Aedam Musicae, 2013 2. Radigue, E. The Mysterious Power of the Infinitesimal, Leonardo Music Journal, Vol. 19, 2009

that will change from one day to the next, from one place to another. Since ambient conditions were interfering with the creative process, a totally new way of working had to be defined.

It may seem surprising in our culture, but from a historical point of view across all humanity, there is no doubt that oral transmission is the most common way to transmit music, not just so-called 'primitive' music. Consider some very refined non-Western traditions, like Balinese Gamelan or Indian classical music.

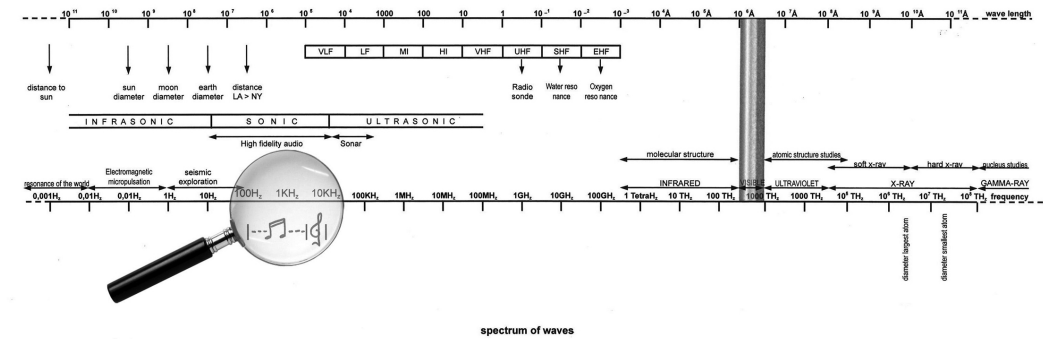
The issue of oral transmission is interesting because it's about conveying ideas through speech, conversation. This requires that the instrumentalist and the composer remain focused at all times on what is happening to the sounds. In this case, we have a musical composition which is entirely based on listening, as was already the case with Eliane Radigue's electroacoustic music. No abstraction is used, no intermediate phase of writing. As always, Radigue works directly with the raw material: sound.

It goes without saying that this composition process requires great intimacy with the musician. As he suggests sounds, Eliane 'cherry picks' as she puts it, organises the development, advises, influences the instrumentalist's play... and, little by little, a work emerges.

The musicians who seek to collaborate with her know her work, which means that the subjects they put forward are often close to what she would expect. Somehow, in the background, Eliane Radigue plays her musicians, the way she used to play her synthesizer. The methodology is rather similar. Instead of a control panel, she relies on a person capable of making suggestions to her.

She selects the sounds that she feels match what she has in mind, guides the musician and defines the pace for the changes in the sound material. Whilst she used to record the sounds and mixes on magnetic tape, the musician now has to memorize and organise the sounds and their evolution in his mind and his body, in order to reproduce them.

Radigue is totally aware of the fact that, inevitably, the musical piece will evolve with the musician, that it will not remain the same as what they created together. She even believes that it makes the process more meaningful. Because of this creative process, the collaborating musician is the only dedicatee of the piece and in a way, owns it. Only s/he can later decide to pass it on, or not. Once validated, the composition is given. Eliane Radigue never goes back to it, moving to another.<sup>3</sup>



Eliane Radigue spectrum of waves. © Stéphane Roux

"It is evident that the oral tradition has been the very first mode of transmission, not only of music but as well of word, of thought, of ideas, all that shapes our humanity. It still is, in what concerns the universe of music, the most propagated mode of transmission in the world. There are as well very divers systems of notation in numerous cultures, mainly in oriental cultures, but they all leave a margin of vagueness, which allows a certain liberty to the interpreter inside of what has been transmitted orally with extreme rigour. It does not seem that this mode of transmission could be more unfaithful than the interpretation of an abstract score, which is read and mentally projected like any other reading, but which gains life and sense only through the talent of the interpreters who operate their own transmission from it."<sup>4</sup>

3. Holterbach, E. Eliane Radigue Portraits polychromes, Inst. nat. de l'audiovisuel 2013

4. Radigue, E. Pour répondre à la demande de Julien, in Portraits polychromes, Inst. nat. de l'audiovisuel 2013

## Angharad Davies.

The four tracks on Angharad Davies' Six Studies are titled as if they were exploratory exercises for the experimental violinist, (Circular Bowing Study, Balancing Springs on Strings Studies 1–3), and are sealed in an anonymous tin.

Cat gut, metal and plastic scrape on string, at a succession of angles, sounds sawn from air.

Time slows, scale reverses, and you're up close to the process.

Gulliver traverses the violin neck, watching sound vibrate off overhead cables in great powerful waves.

*Stewart Lee about Angharad Davies' Six Studies (24.03.2014)*

## Six Studies.



The Six Studies recording came at the end of a period of withdrawal from my regular teaching schedule. Aware that I'd not made much solo work, this recording I made with Sebastian Lexer was set up to be a document of the preparations and techniques I was using at that time and serve, hopefully, on reflection as a stimulus for a bigger solo work. The idea was to observe and exhaust the potential of each preparation and present myself a microscopic research portfolio of my most used sounds.

A year later, this portfolio of recordings was still waiting to be listened to but I was happy that I at least had the seeds to turn to, as and when the time came. A casual trip to the Tate Britain, one afternoon to see some Francis Bacon and Lucien Freud in particular, got me thinking about these recordings again. By looking at them as a series of sketches and

not finished pieces I felt a great sense of relief that I was able to present them as works in their own right.

Even though the intention was very strong at the outset of all these studies that I was just making a log-book of sounds, as an improviser I find it impossible to play without responding to direction, focus, texture, timing, concentration, sound production, phrasing, unpredictability of the preparation (if I use one), speed, rhythm, dynamics, harmony, density, clear lines and such like but in my mind, this is the closest I've got to a recording that is not motivated by trying to make a piece of music.

83

Angharad Davies is a violinist, one at ease in both improvising and composition, with a wide discography as part of a varied range of ensembles and groups. She is a specialist in the art of 'preparing' her violin, adding objects or materials to it to extend its sound making properties. Her sensitivity to the sonic possibilities of musical situations and attentiveness to their shape and direction make her one of the most fascinating figures in contemporary music.

#### ④ Travel study

23:16 - 32:48

#### ⑤ Bathing study

33:19 - 38:50

36:44 w 37:17 cough 37:44 w 38:



#### ⑥ 39:17 ?

#### ⑦ 40:25 Chord study

41:28 returning of pegs without editing

some chords better than others -

we note if they can be looped with machine itself.

#### ⑧ 1:00:21

1:02:48 - 1:09:06

\* 1:09:47 - 01:15:07

#### JAPAN

CHINA - Tai Chi course

Baroque

Disputa

Building see projects.

Solo stuff.

Computer software lessons

— CAD  
— Photoshop  
— protocols.

SOLO Seb Session

⑨ → 0 - 10:48

⑩ → 11:01 - 13:45

Therapeutic Circular band study ③

14:32 - 21:45

19:53 any chance of being able to bring background levels up?

Just waste time?

In recent years I have worked with very simple software<sup>1</sup> allowing me to trigger pre-recorded sound samples when playing the piano. This text builds on the insights I have gathered from working with these kinds of plugged-in classical Instruments. It is not a description of how I work with these semi-virtual Instruments. It is rather an attempt to understand and reflect upon what happens when I do.

### Genesis of a Dyad/Exploring the Technical

One way of understanding semi-virtual or hybrid Instruments is to regard the dyad Musician-Instrument as an archetypal phenomenon. I regard their intimate relationship as the archetype itself. This archetype of the Musician playing an Instrument must have originated in a timeless Arcadian setting when an encounter between a future Musician and a future Instrument took place. It is a pre-art, utopian story: there were no external influences at this exact moment when the pre-Musician made contact with an object, producing a sound that captivated his attention.

What followed was the repetition of the noise-making gesture, putting it in a loop, leading to a transcendental smoothening of the senses. When the player falls out of the loop, because he's bored or his muscles can no longer sustain the repetition, he starts to vary the gesture and thus the sound: at that very moment the player turns into a Musician. Likewise, the sounding object becomes an Instrument from the moment the Musician makes a first adjustment to it, wondering how that would affect the sound. It is in this adjusting, this exploration of

1. **MatrixSampler** educational software developed by Jasper & Jasper, for MATRIX [Centrum voor Nieuwe Muziek]

technical aspects, that the utopian archetype of the Musician and his Instrument (or the Instrument and its Musician) is born. The relational logic that follows from this conception is what defines the archetype. An interactive game develops in which the object-turned-Instrument imposes rules of play upon the player and the player-turned-Musician makes adjustments to the Instrument to explore new sound possibilities.

The story unfolds as both protagonists transcend their formal skills and features with ambitious plans, following the gradually unfolding logic of these same skills and features. Ambitions clash beautifully with each other as the Instrument needs the Musician to map out its own possibilities and vice versa. Ultimately the pair find themselves in a state of permanent developmental construction.

### The Birth of Music/Oscillating Desires

In this partnership the powers of both protagonists are felt to be equal. The human subject wants to unfold her ideas and express her excitements. The material object also feels an urge to develop, to tell its own story, to experiment and exercise power. This friction between what the Musician wants and what the Instrument wants constitutes the core of the archetype. The Musician doesn't know the origins or directions of his desire unless there is an Instrument at hand that transforms it into a clear desire to master the Instrument. And vice versa, of course: the Instrument has no clue of what it is for, unless there's a pair of hands tinkling out its desire or a breath that animates its body. The magic of Musicianship occurs when all desire starts to oscillate and it is no longer clear where it originated (having once been a mere object, a mere Musician); when it is no longer clear whose desire is expressed.

This blessed, very unstable but exciting situation when Instrument and Musician push each other to and beyond the limit of their skills and features, ultimately brings into being a third protagonist: a particular kind of Music with characteristics of both its progenitors, but with a powerful desire to rule both Musician and Instrument so it can develop its own cumulative reasoning.

And here trouble starts. Music enforces peace on the partnership and dictates its desire. Skills and features are forced in a servile position. The desire to develop skills – because it feels good to do so, because it feels like the only thing a skill wants is to develop itself – is lost. It is no longer enough that there exists an inner logic for the Instrument to want to develop it. Music's most important desire is not to develop herself but to inform the world of her existence. And in order to inform, one must get organized. And this organization traumatizes our archetype. Music only exists when it is produced, packed into a form, whereas the Musician and the Instrument only exist when they are lovingly fighting each other, defeating time and again any form of organization. Only a peaceful collaboration can enable the crystallization of Music's possible forms to be shown to the world. And sold, of course.

### Back to Arcadia/Fear of Violence

So it happened that these newly devised *divide et impera* tactics of a product-oriented art machine forced the archetype to be fragmented in specialist subdivisions. Instrument builders created their own mythology, as did composers and Music critics and repertoire-reproducing Musicians. The Big Nostalgia Machine came into being and the utopian archetype withdrew into the splintered subconscious of the art industry.

As Music's desire to show herself was gloriously fulfilled she came into a deep identity crisis. She started to question her function as a commodity, realizing she is just another tool in an even bigger machine that has an even more powerful desire of establishing itself. A narcissistic, brainless machine whose only desire is to materialize, mirroring itself in static objects. All possible manifestations of Music are contaminated by the logic of mere production that is at the heart of this machine.

Admitting that her desire to inform the world of her existence is exactly the game the big machine wants her to play, she discovered

another desire: to witness the old, dangerous game out of which she accidentally came into being. So she returns to Arcadia where she finds both Musician and Instrument paralyzed and shattered into a wide array of anecdotic Instruments and musical idioms. Seeing this, she realizes that by acquiring a form she has sacrificed the immaterial heritage of the fundamental struggle that came before. The big machine needs these struggles, it feasts on their inherent violence, delivering harmless, enjoyable commodities in return. Indeed, it is the fear of violence that gives the machine the alibi, the tool for neutralizing the archetype's power.

### Music's Scattering Sacrifice/Mesmerizing the Archetype

Back in Arcadia, Music recognizes that her darkest, deepest desire is to celebrate the violence of her genesis. To enable the revival of this spectacle she invites Electricity into Arcadia, so the archetype can be put under Electric current. As the Musician seems hopelessly addicted to his formalized skills and the Instrument unable to abandon its fixed and standardized forms, Electricity offers a way out. Music sacrifices herself by scattering her total body of work into an infinite arsenal of sound fragments. These attach themselves virtually to the acoustic Instrument thus breathing life into a renewed (albeit Frankensteinian) archetype.

Academically trained Musicians and purposeful Instruments still bear visual and aural witness to the heyday of the Music era but this is just a transitional period, designed especially for the doped-with-classic-skills musician. A future generation will be able to plug in any object electronically to let the genie of the pure archetype out of the bottle. Until then the hybrid generation needs to cope with the remains of the classic era, while letting their skills and features be challenged by the infinite fluidity of digital sound processing.

This Electricity-driven dsp seems to offer preliminary solutions for the identity crises of Music, Instrument and Musician alike. Basically, Electricity's desire is to spread itself, put everything under current. It doesn't care who or what, it just wants a yes or a no (1-or-0) so it can go on, thus accidentally rearranging the world. Its hidden power lies in mesmerizing the archetype and keeping it in a constant state of choice-making concentration. The Frankensteinian archetype still has the skills and features reminiscent of the golden era of Music, but they

are no longer in Music's employ. They are making choices, canalizing desires into the narrow (I-or-o) paths of Electricity's Empire.

### The Shapeshifting Archetype/Electricity's Neurotic Desire

So it happens that the violent energy of the pre-music era is here again though clearly not in the clashing of Instrument's desire with Musician's desire. The energy that provokes the violence now puts itself at the service of permanent shape-shifting. The identity crisis is countered by Electricity's power to make the notion of identity an obsolete artifact belonging to the big old art machine paradigm. It forces our protagonist's desire into making the smallest decisions so it can continue its infinite paths, wherever they might lead. The result of this vast pile of micro-decisions is a fluid phenomenon: the archetype that morphs from one Instrument into another, requiring the discovery of new skills morphing into yet other skills. Coping with the restless rearrangement of Instrumental (re)construction demands from the Musician the permanent adjustment of his mental and motoric skills.

As there is no limit to what Electricity can rearrange, its neurotic cry for (I-or-o) commands perverts even the most fundamental house rules established in the old Instrument-Musician dyad. Any gesture from the Musician towards the Instrument can be transformed into a command to shift any parameter of sound or Instrumental construction thus transforming construction into instruction. The (re/un/de/over) building of the Instrument goes as fast as typing this text. It is only a series of small commands. The Musician needs to speed up his mental processes exponentially to keep up with the ever changing possibilities of the fluid Instrument. Thus occupying the Instrument's developmental logic, the mental space and the learning muscles in one take, Electricity manages to control the violence of Music's birth and put it at the service of her one and only goal: to wire the world, to put it under current.

### Practicing otherness

In the Golden Age of Music, the dyad crystallized stability into various forms of Music that were metaphors for the stable utopias yet to come. Primitive violence was packed into harmless bubbles. Now this anachronistic zone is replaced by a contemporary battlefield in which identi-

ties are blurred and meeting the other generates violence. Because of the shape-shifting features of today's archetype it becomes clear that this reality no longer consists of contrasting characteristics. Today we experience otherness as a condition we are all in, so no one is more other than another anymore. Trying to survive in the violent zone where an enemy is no longer identifiable or can be just yourself feels like the only sensible thing left to do. In conclusion one could say Electricity and its application into digital sound processing is the new metaphor that forces us to practice otherness.

**Frederik Croene** graduated from Flemish conservatories in 1999. He is still looking to find a balance between the polarizing forces of academia, artistic entertainment and futurology in music performance. He conceived the deconstructing concept of 'Le Piano Démécanisé' as a crowbar to tackle his anemic pianist education. Inventing weird (crossover-) events with names like 'Roll over Czerny', 'Pianos Palliatifs' or '492 kilo, an extended piano recital'. He now and then performed (nearly) solo on big name festivals like Holland Festival (NL), HFCM (Huddersfield, GB), Transit Festival (Leuven, BE) and November Music Festival (BE/NL).

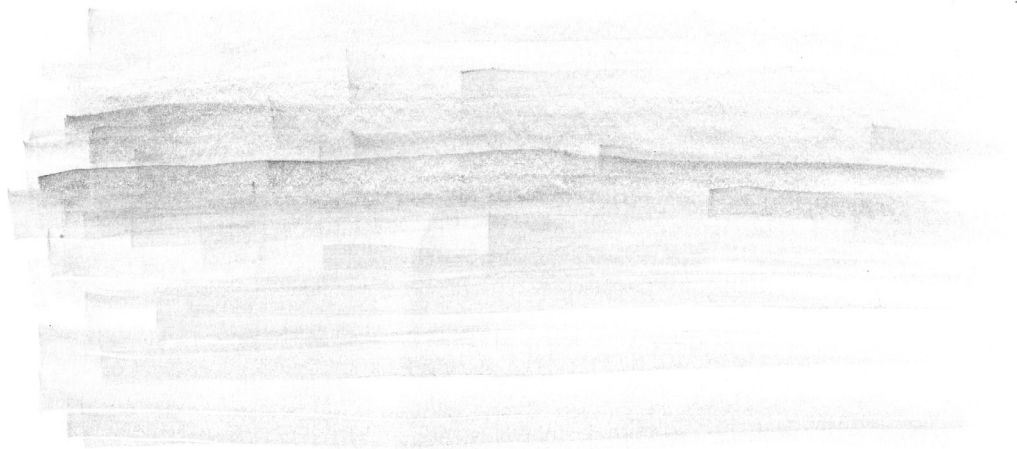
# Catherine Lamb.

As a composer, **Catherine Lamb** is exploring the interaction of elemental tonal material and the variations in presence between shades and beings in a room. She has been studying and composing music since a young age. In 2003 she turned away from the conservatory in an attempt to understand the structures and intonations within Hindustani Classical Music. She studied (experimental) composition at the California Institute of the Arts (2004-2006) under James Tenney and Michael Pisaro. It was there that she began her work into the area of Just Intonation. She is currently residing in Berlin.

## on shade.

### shade/spectrum

a tone becomes its own shade  
a tone itself is material  
a spectrum is formed by materiality



### shade/intensity

a tone, sympathetic with another, expands  
a tone, in a narrow band of another, brightens  
at the edge of an intensity there is a shade



### shade/density

a totality of tones and shades is in a memory or in a space  
a tone, more present than another, imparts a shade upon the other  
a density is interrupted and what was a shade becomes a tone

## Guy De Bièvre.

The sound-relationships established by means of notation need interpreting.

Without interpretation they are not understood.

...

the composer's interpretation can by no means remain the finally valid one.

Arnold Schoenberg

## INTERPRETATIONS.

Interpretation is one of those words that are considered self-evident in the musical vocabulary. Everybody seems to know its meaning, even though it is given quite a variety of significations. The Oxford English Dictionary tells us that to interpret is to “expound the meaning of; (abstruse words, writings, dreams, etc.); make out the meaning of; bring out the meaning of, render, by artistic representation or performance; explain, understand,...” and more musically specific that interpretation is “the rendering of a musical composition, according to one's conception of the author's idea.”

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians defines interpretation as “a term used in musical parlance with reference to the understanding of a piece of music. It has often been used primarily to signify the way in which notation should be interpreted,...” It continues with, “it however may, and normally does, extend beyond the interpreter's conception of the author's idea and represent, rather, the interpreter's own idea of the music, possibly embodying understandings of what is taken to be latent in the score but also his or her own view of the best way of conveying that idea, in a particular performance, to the audience in the circumstances of that performance.” And it adds that “it is difficult to determine the distinction between interpretation and license in performance.”

But this all might already be one step ahead, because one could state that the very first interpretation is the one the composer gives to her/his original idea. The score, regardless of the notation (musical, verbal, graphic, etc.) is the expression of that first interpretation. That score could be seen like a loss of resolution from the original idea(s). Luc Ferrari once said: “Of course, musical notation is of an inconceivable stupidity. Ever since classicism a whole mystique has been made of it, condensing all of music into exact notation. It should be taken only as a code, a mechanism, allowing to communicate ideas that are way below the reality aimed for.” To achieve that “aimed for reality” another interpretation (if we skip that of the possible transcriber/editor) is required: the performer's. The performer, when dealing with a dead

composer, has to guess what the original idea could have been. This guess is often biased by the anterior guesses of the performer's teachers and the guesses made by other performers whose interpretation might have been experienced before. In the more ideal situation of a living composer, the interpretation can be informed by the source.

But the story does not end with the performer(s). One last interpretation is required, and it is maybe the most essential: the listener's interpretation. However hard the composer and performer(s) tried, the final appreciation entirely depends on the audience.

In a way the listener's interpretation of a piece of music is not unlike the interpretation of architecture. Most music is usually auditioned without reading the score and most buildings are visited without consulting the plans. This is not a bad thing, on the contrary, it allows the work to be malleable and lead a life of its own, but it also causes details, that once were essential, to drown in the noise that glues the musical or architectural edifice together. Composers expecting very precise, exact interpretations of their scores can only find satisfaction up to the moment the sounds leave the performer's instrument. From that point on, as a listener, I am in charge and I can choose to either submit myself to what I (possibly wrongly) assume are the composer's (and/or the interpreter's) intentions or I can choose to ignore them. Through my interpretation I can restructure, recompose the work; I can skip passages; I can emphasize others; I can turn a sequence into a motif and take it with me throughout the piece and relate everything else I hear to it; I can even re-orchestrate a work by focussing on layers that were not intended to be on the foreground.

This is all assuming we are dealing with relatively traditional composer>score>performer>audience situations. Things become slightly more complicated (especially for the listener) when we deal with other approaches of music production. One could see the musical spectrum as being bounded on one end by conventionally scored music and on the opposite end by free improvisation (of course the musical spectrum is not structured like that, if structured at all). Compared to composition, improvisation takes place on a different time scale, a much faster one.

Improvisation has been described as “instant composition” (and thus composition can be seen as very very slow improvisation) and it is interesting to try to find similar steps within it. If the performer also becomes the composer, then what does the performer interpret? Is each sound an interpretation of the previous one? And on a wider scale, is each structure an interpretation of the previous one(s)? Or does the improviser continuously interpret her/his conscious/subconscious musical baggage? Does the improviser interpret the audience's interpretation? Or all of it together? And what about the listener; what does she/he interpret?

We continuously interpret the world around us, within different time/space scales. It is essential to help us make decisions. Wrong interpretations can cause us to just get lost, or, if we are lucky, to get lost and to experience unexpected and amazing things. Maybe there are no wrong interpretations, but “some are just more right than others”.

**Guy De Bièvre** is a composer, musician, sound designer and sound art curator. His music has been commissioned and performed by musicians and various local as well as international organizations. As a composer and performer (guitar, lap steel and electronics) he focusses on open form composition. This was also the topic of his PhD (Brunel University, London). He performed internationally, both solo and with other musicians/composers. In addition, he is teaching and freelancing as a writer, sound engineer, sound designer and consultant. He was the curator of the audio art series Earwitness at Ccnoa in Brussels (BE) and of the Culture Mile in Enschede (NL). In 2002 he was mentored in soundwalking by Hildegard Westerkamp.

In case, you want to do some homework already, here are the keys for the symbols in the score.

**L:** left ear

**R:** right ear

☐ open ears (take hands away)

☒ flat, straight hand covers ear with palm

☒ the same as above, but with high pressure

☐ (x) the same as above, but with very little pressure only

☐ ( ( hand covers ear, but makes a small opening to the front

☐ ) hand covers ear, but makes a small opening to the back

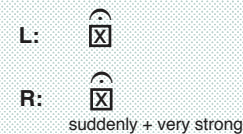
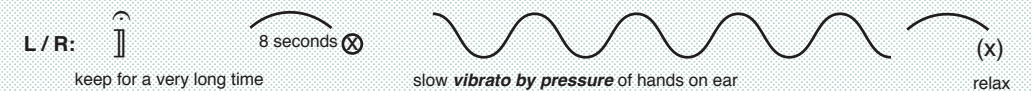
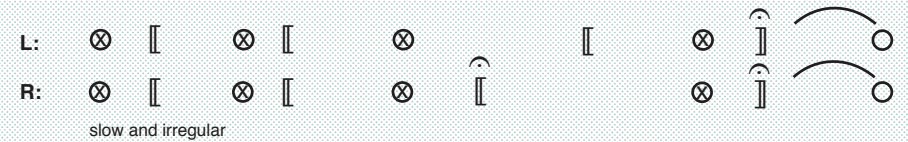
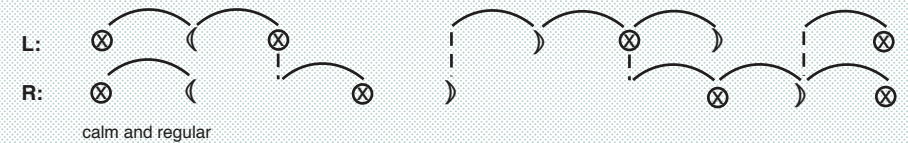
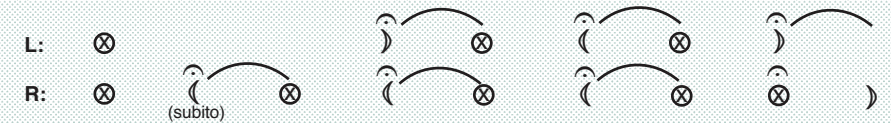
☐ [ hand with palms to front; touching the head in 90 degrees angle; keep hands straight

☐ ] hand with palms to back; touching the head in 90 degrees angle; keep hands straight

☐ make a smooth transition from one state to the next

☐ keep the state (hereunder) for a moment or a while

## No Music: earpieces (remix).



Now, imagine a third ear on your forehead.

### Introduction

While the use of field recordings in electro-acoustic music and sound art has become fairly commonplace in recent years, within the world of notated instrumental music (with or without electronics) it is still confined to a fairly small (though growing) group of artists. One might think primarily of the work of the Austrian composer Peter Ablinger and his project of creating a sort of photorealism by transcribing recordings of the environment and of the speaking voice for instruments. Certainly his installation for midi-controlled player-piano *QUADRATUREN IIIh Deus Cantando (God, Singing)* from 2009 comes as close as anything one could think of to reproducing the sound of the real world through traditional musical means. Of course *Deus Cantando* does not sound exactly like a child speaking and it is in this 'not exactly' that the interest lies – it is the strange gap where our relationship to the function of the sound is in a kind of flux and the idea that we might find music in the not-intentionally musical could emerge.

#### 1.

My own interest in using field recordings began when I purchased a recording device with the aim of expanding the range of materials I had at my disposal for making electronic music.

A conversion to a kind of Cageian/Duchampian belief in the power of 'framing' gradually followed. I would define framing as the quasi-alchemical act of transforming real-life non-art into art through placing it in an artistic context or simply by seeing or hearing it in a different way. Framing often occurs when you are making recordings. I remember once sitting at a bus stop recording the cars go by and at one point

## Squeezing out the music from real sound.

there was a shift in my perception, perhaps due to my level of concentration or the effect of amplification. I genuinely had the impression that the cars were driving past at particular times, speeds and volumes for precisely my own pleasure, that it sounded good and that it was indeed music.

At this point it's important to mention the legacy of 4'33". Although we are all perhaps a little over-familiar with the work (especially in light of the recent anniversary), I think it's worth reiterating how this piece (and Cage's aesthetic in general) opened up our listening experience to non-musical and unintentional sounds thus giving us cause to re-evaluate what might in fact constitute 'music' and even to consider the proposition that all sounds could potentially be music. As wonderful and as liberating as this may seem, in other ways Cage's gift to music could also be thought of as a poisoned chalice. It's a difficult tradition to really build upon or to try to position oneself within because the field has been blown open and stretches in a seemingly infinite manner in all directions. I find Douglas Kahn's description of the musical world opened up by John Cage as an "emancipatory endgame"<sup>1</sup> particularly apt.

#### 2.

If we are not to simply present the sounds of the world to an audience as a kind of musical fait accompli in the manner of Luc Ferrari's *Presque rien No.1*, what in fact are we to do with them? A possible approach may be to actively look for music when making field recordings or to

1. Kahn, D. *Noise Water Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts* (1999)

tease the music out of the recording by some kind of manipulation. What might constitute a 'musical' field recording is of course a matter for speculation. For me it's a question of an appealing dramaturgy that might itself suggest a compositional strategy, a certain (fortuitous) balance of elements and more often than not, pitch content, whether it comes in the shape of music in public-spaces, car horns or airplane drones. In effect, it might be a question of re-narrowing the field after the great Cage shake-up and finding that all too elusive aesthetic space in which it seems both creatively motivating and relevant to operate. The American composer Michael Pisaro has written eloquently on exactly this issue in his article "Eleven Theses on the State of New Music".<sup>2</sup>

In terms of my own music, after having made some recordings and chosen one (or more) for use in a piece, another kind of work begins. Highlighting an aspect of a recording is almost a necessity, a kind of slimming down of things to suit the small chamber context in which I usually operate. The aspect I choose to bring into the foreground is often the one with the most interesting, or at least the most apparent pitch content. This pitchy place becomes the meeting point for the field recording and the instruments, a kind of surface where I can attach them together. The idea is for the instruments to bring out a kind of music that runs in parallel to the original recording and that in tandem they might occupy the strange space that exists between the intentionally musical and the not-intentionally musical.

3. 'What the mind does is to take the ceaseless, living flow of which the universe is composed and to make cuts across it, inserting artificial stops or gaps in what is really a continuous and indivisible process. The effect of these stops or gaps is to produce the impression of a world of apparently solid objects.'<sup>3</sup>

Freezing is a fairly gentle type of manipulation of recorded sound consisting of the prolongation of the frequencies present at a particular moment of time in this sound. This 'moment' has (and of course must have) a duration in order to contain frequencies. However, the duration in question is a relatively short one lasting a fraction of a second. From the quote above we can see how a comparison to a Bergsonian

view of the world might be quite useful when thinking about freezing – that somehow by manipulating sound in this way we are mimicking the coping mechanism of the intellect which pulls things out of the continuous flow of reality and creates objects from them. Because of a lack of literature on freezing techniques in sound, it seems quite natural to refer to film and photography theory. As helpful as such intermedial comparisons can be though, there is always a point where such correspondences fail to link up. This 'gap' should not be ignored, however, and may well be the place where the most interesting, complex and paradoxical possibilities lie.

4. The computer program I use to create the freezes is a Max/MSP patch based on jitter elements designed by Jean-François Charles.<sup>4</sup> What it does, as far as I understand, is to take several analysis-frames at the point where the sound needs to be frozen and then smooth them into a more or less continuous sound through a process of stochastic blurring. An understanding of the workings of the process serves as a reminder of exactly how 'fake' this process actually is. Sound of course is never (to my knowledge) frozen in real life, freezing is a temporal manipulation of recorded material made possible by technology, that produces a kind of sound science fiction. Just as in a film freeze-frame where a single still image has to be repeated 24 times per second in order to create an illusion of immobility, in sonic-freezing we must overlap and loop tiny segments of audio material in order to create a similar effect.

In any case, it is important to bear in mind that a field recording is in no way a portrayal 'reality' per se, but a heavily mediated version of it. The journey between the occurrence of the sound in real life and its playback in a concert hall is a complex one full of both technological and artistic intervention.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps then, the process of freezing can bring this mediation into relief, creating more distance between the

2. Pisaro, M. "Eleven Theses on the State of New Music" (2006), <http://www.timescraper.de/pisaro> 3. Joad C.E.M. *Great Philosophies of the World*, (1930) 4. Charles, J.-F. "A Tutorial on Spectral Sound Processing Using Max/MSP and Jitter", (Fall 2008) 5. Altman, R. "The Material Heterogeneity of Recorded Sound" in *Sound Practice* (1992)

sound object and the listener, or at least fashioning a more complex relationship between the two that lies beyond the idea of a simple immersion into a pseudo-reality.

5.

If we are willing to overlook the inherent 'fakeness' of the freezing technique, it appears to be quite rich in potential readings. Indeed, there is a contradiction between the sonic simplicity of the held freeze and the complexity of what it might mean. To begin with, we might turn to Walter Benjamin's writing on photography and his notion of an 'optical unconscious':

'We have some idea what is involved in the act of walking... we have no idea at all what happens during the fraction of a second when a person actually takes a step.'<sup>6</sup>

Benjamin brings to mind here the efforts undertaken by the 19th century photographer Eadweard Muybridge to examine the motion of a galloping horse as well as the high-speed photography of Harold Edgerton in the 1950s revealing the exact shape of a mushroom cloud a millisecond after the detonation of a nuclear bomb, or more benignly, the forms created when a drop hits the surface of some milk. We do in fact 'see' all of these things, they simply pass too quickly to be comprehended or examined. If photography provides us with the means to contemplate the transient in the visual domain, what might freezing sound produce? I like to think of it as a kind of revelation of a hidden spectral content in the recorded sound where a parallel world of this latent harmony is opened up as a result of being given duration. It also makes me think about the nesting of the infinite in a very small space (although I couldn't quite make an infinite freeze, that would be limited by the size of my hard drive and the durability of my computer!)

*Babel* from *Artificial Environment No. 8* for piano and tape (2012) uses a recording that was made outside Notre Dame in Paris while walking up and down a very international queue of people waiting to get into the cathedral. Speech is an extremely fertile ground for freezing and finding hidden harmonies (mainly through the prolongation of vowel sounds). As one might imagine, there is nothing static about the har-

monic content of such a recording – in fact it's quite 'random' and the challenge in this case is to try to make music out of this randomness.

6.

The writer Clive Scott<sup>7</sup> has stated that photography has the ability to turn an 'instant' (an exceedingly short space of time that the human mind cannot apprehend) into a 'moment' (a more inhabitable duration that is accessible to memory). Such a theory is of course extremely pertinent to the ideas of revealing the hidden that I have just mentioned. In addition, it might lead us to think about some of the emotions that are evoked through the prolongation in time of a split-second of image or sound that we find in audio-freezes, photographs and movie freeze-frames. Although the type of weight given to the sound or image through its extension in time is complex, it tends towards two poles – nostalgia or sentimentality if the freeze refers to what has been, and suspense or even death if it is about what comes afterwards. Scott also goes on to talk about the multiple temporalities contained within a photograph – that it is in fact a cross-section of things and actions each with their own duration. An audio-freeze then, might capture and present together the hum of a fridge with a chirp from some birdsong into one fused chord with no respect for temporal hierarchy.

7.

My installation *Performance Space #1/ Rue Darimon* (2012)<sup>8</sup> pushes the process of freezing one stage further by using live microphone feed as a source and takes the possible comparison between audio-freezing and photography quite literally by placing the two elements together in the same installation. The visual aspect of the work consists of a room-sized camera obscura – effectively half a camera, but lacking the chemical fixing agent needed to produce a permanent photograph. The version shown at Q-O2 in Brussels looked for the most part like a very high quality (and somewhat eerie) photographic projection because the scene itself was so static, occasionally lurching into action when

6. Benjamin, W. "Little History of Photography", (1931). *Gesammelte Schriften* 7. Scott, C. *Street Photography from Atget to Cartier-Bresson* (2007) 8. This installation has turned into a series of works entitled *The place you can see and hear*.



Performance space 1 Rue Darimon

a bird flew onto the roof or a curtain moved in the breeze. The idea of the 'frame' as manifested concretely by the projector screens, and temporally by the patterns of alternating frozen and unfrozen sound, is central to the work. The presence of these frames asks us to consider at what point in the process of creative mediation/interference, the raw sonic and visual materials might be considered a work to be contemplated and experienced as art, rather than just a live streaming of reality. The sonic element in particular teeters on the edge between music and non-music. On one hand the sound is coaxed into a fixed rhythmical framework of accelerandos and decelerandos, and its spectral content broken open and exposed in the frozen chord segments, while on the other, it is clearly at the mercy of the 'accidental dramaturgy of what happens', be it planes passing directly overhead, children shouting or very little at all (a general sort of background noise).

**Source** A longer version of this article was first published in Darmstädter Beiträge zur Neuen Musik, Vol. 22. Ed. Michael Rebhahn and Thomas Schäfer, Mainz: Schott, 2014.

**Joanna Bailie** is composer and sound artist, born in London. Her recent work includes chamber music, installations and music theatre and is characterized by the use of field recordings together with acoustic instruments. Her music has been performed by groups such as Ensemble Musikfabrik, L'instant Donné, EXAUDI, Ensemble Mosaik, Apartment House and the Ives Ensemble. She has been programmed at events such as the Venice Biennale, Huddersfield, SPOR Festival, Festival Reims Scènes d'Europe, Darmstadt and Ultima in Oslo. Together with Matthew Shlomowitz she runs Ensemble Plus-Minus. In 2010 she was the guest curator at the SPOR Festival in Aarhus.

# Peter Ablinger.

## Everything always

Rauschen (White noise) is the totality of sounds – “everything always” in its acoustic representation. Comparable to white light that contains all colours, white noise contains all frequencies, and – poetically speaking – all music.

## The mirror

Rauschen therefore is maximum density, maximum information. But it is also the opposite: no information, maximum redundancy. For me it is less than nothing, less than silence. Silence ceased to be silent long ago. It is crowded now. Full of ideas, sentimentality, and reminiscences (of privacy, religion, nature, and within music: John Cage). The idea of Rauschen furthermore is not empty: there is the ocean, the noise of trees in the wind, an old analog radio tuned between two stations. The difference between silence and Rauschen becomes clear when we are exposed to it, when we “listen” to it. Cage taught us how many things are left to hear when we listen to silence, that silence does not exist at all. However, being exposed to plain white noise is different. It is not just that we no longer hear the grumbling of our neighbour’s stomach. The reason why we hear “less than nothing” is that we cannot connect to it by just listening. It is simply too much. We can’t do anything with it. The only thing that is left to do is to produce illusions, i.e., to hear something “in” the noise that is not there, that can be perceived only individually – to project our own imagination onto that white “screen”. In this way Rauschen works like a mirror, reflecting back only what we project onto it.

Source [ablinger.mur.at/](http://ablinger.mur.at/)

# Rauschen.

## The plane

Another coherence that guided me to Rauschen (“surface noise”), or to sounds with a high spectral density and relatively static envelope, was the desire for plane. Plane in the sense of a large colour field by Barnett Newman; plane as opposed to figure (Gestalt). In the early 1990’s, some forty years after “Onement I”, there was nothing in music that came close to that idea. Ligeti had the structural potentiality for plane in this sense, but he was not interested. He was interested in the dynamic shape, the dramaturgic envelope of the orchestral masses. La Monte Young’s fifth, from 1960, was so to speak really in touch with plane, and it was probably the most figure-less (gestaltlos) music up to that point. But in opposition to Ligeti Gestaltlosigkeit fulfilled itself here in temporal categories; the vertical (spectral) dimension holds on to the identity and definiteness of a musical interval, a strong remainder of the tradition of musical Gestalt.

But what would be a plane in music? A surface? White or blue? Let’s first ask for white. We have already found the equivalence between the “white” and the “everything always”. We normally imagine surface as limited. As we cannot limit the borderlines of the spectrum (to still remain “white”), we have left only the time to be defined and quantified. With these questions we really start to get into the subject.

(But I shall anticipate here: Even if I come back to these questions again and again I think they might not be answered in a strict sense. The parallel between visual and musical categories cannot be carried out until to a satisfactory solution. And that’s exactly what will rescue us. At some point we have to detach from visual categories and should become aware that with Rauschen we keep hold of one of the rare terms in acoustics that does NOT originate from the visual domain. On the contrary, Rauschen – via information theory – has infiltrated the vernacular as a metaphor and now signifies everything around redundancy and contingency, the incommunicable residuals of figure and information.)

**WEISS/WEISSLICH 11B  
(WHITE/WHITISH) 11B**

English version

translated by Barbara Schoenberg,

with suggestions by Michael Pisaro and Leonhard Stein

THE UPWARDS RISING MAGPIE-LIKE CROAKING OF THE BLUE JAY THE NOISE FROM THE TIRES OF A PASSING VEHICLE A SLOW DOWNWARDS GLISSANDO OF A SINGLE-ENGINE PLANE AGAIN THE CROAKING RISING UPWARDS AND ANOTHER QUITE DIFFERENT BIRD'S VOICE WITH VARIED TRILLING AND CALLING A CAR HORN IN TWO PARTS AND THE CONTINUOUS BRIGHT ROAR OF TRAFFIC IN THE DISTANCE NEARLY EVEN STATIC BUT WITH DELICATE MODULATIONS BRIEF SEQUENCES OF HUMMINGBIRD IMPULSES LIKE WEAK DISCHARGES FROM ELECTRICAL WIRES AND ONCE AGAIN THE TRILLING AND CALLING WITH REPETITIONS REMINISCENT OF THRUSHES SOFT RUSTLING LIKE CLOTHES OR NYLON PANTS RUBBING AGAINST EACH OTHER AGAIN A CAR HONKING WITH TWO HORNS THIS TIME LOWER A THIN BUZZING APPROACHES WHICH COULD BE COMING FROM A SMALL-SIZED SCOOTER AND THE INCESSANT SUPERIMPOSITION OF SEVERAL SOUND LEVELS A PRIMER OF TRAFFIC NOISE A MIDDLEGROUND OF SINGLE VEHICLES PASSING CLOSE BY AND A MESH OF VARIOUS BIRDS' VOICES FROM DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS AND ONLY OCCASIONAL ADDITIONAL SOLITARY SOUNDS THE COUGH OF A WOMAN'S VOICE A SINGLE-ENGINE PLANE AS A DESCENDING AND NOW CONSTANT GROWLING BEHIND WHICH THE LIGHT BACKGROUND NOISE OF CAR TRAFFIC EMERGES A JET PLANE A BROADBAND DEEP NOISE OUT OF WHICH ANOTHER SNORING AIRPLANE MOTOR SLOWLY PEELS OFF WHICH AGAIN GIVES WAY TO AN APPROACHING AUTOMOBILE RELATIVELY CLOSE A BIRDCALL WITH SHORT SEQUENCES OF SINGLE PINCHED IMPULSES AND SUDDENLY A SIMULTANEOUS HUSHING OF THE VARIOUS BIRDS' VOICES IN THE FOREGROUND A SHORT PAUSE WHICH ALLOWS THE SLIGHT MODULATIONS OF THE CONTINUOUS TRAFFIC NOISE TO COME FORWARD WITH THE RETURN OF THE BIRDS' VOICES TWO BIRD CALLS FROM SOME GREATER DISTANCE WHICH PENETRATE NEVERTHELESS METALLIC MULTIPHONIC FROM BELOW CUTLERY CLANGING ON DISHES AND NOW QUITE CLOSE A REPEATED HONKING DISTANT THE TWO PART VOICE LEADING OF TWO AIRPLANE MOTORS ONE WITH A DEEP ALMOST CONSTANT PITCH AND THE OTHER RAPIDLY SLIDING DOWNWARD WHILE ITS TIMBRE IS MODULATED BY THE CLOUDS OR HILLS LYING BETWEEN FROM THE LEFT AT THE BACK AND FROM THE RIGHT CENTER SINGLE BIRDCALLS A THIRD AIRPLANE MOTOR THE BIRD CALLS NOW MAINTAINING AN ALMOST CONSTANT RHYTHM OVER A LONGER PERIOD A FINE HIGH-SOUNDING DOUBLE PULSE A SHORT PAUSE FOLLOWED BY TWO DEEPER SOUNDING NOISY IMPULSES SOMEWHAT LIKE VISIT -- SF SF OVER AND OVER VISIT -- SF SF FROM THE LEFT BELOW A SLIGHT COUGHING AND ADDED TO THIS THE WOODEN SLIDING OF A CHAIR MORE DISTANT AND IN FRONT DOWN BELOW THE RUSHING OF TRAFFIC A JET PLANE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT AND YET AGAIN THE RHYTHMICAL BIRD CALLS AND A QUITE DELICATE RUSTLING AND RUBBING OF PALM BRANCHES HIGH ABOVE A SLIGHT TREMBLING OF THE GLASS TABLE WHERE I SIT WRITING AGAIN THE SLIGHT COUGHING AND INTO THE RUSHING TRAFFIC ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLY THE HUM OF AN AIRPLANE MOTOR FILTERS IN THE TWO BLENDED SOUNDS ARE AGAIN PAINTED OVER BY A JET PLANE WHICH FADING ALLOWS THE AIRPLANE MOTOR TO COME FORTH WHICH APPROACHES AND THEN GETS WEAKER AGAIN LETTING ITS PITCH LOWER QUITE SLOWLY IN BETWEEN A FEW CAR MOTORS APPROACHING SLOWLY IN WAVES ALMOST SINGING IN LOW GEAR FROM THE LEFT AT MID-DISTANCE A BIRD LIKE "PITZ" THEN AGAIN "PITZ" AND "PITZ PITZ" A SOLEMN POYPHONIC "CHORUS" OF SEVERAL AIRPLANES WHICH GLIDE BY IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS AND PITCHES THE NOISE OF A DESCENDING JET PLANE AND AT LEAST THREE SINGLE-ENGINE PLANES EMERGING AT DIFFERENT TIMES WITH SOME OF THEM WRAPPED AGAIN IMMEDIATELY BY THE AUTOMOBILE TRAFFIC AND THE MUCH MORE DELICATE RUSTLINGS OF THE PALMS "TEE-TWEET" A BIRD CALLS FROM HIGH ABOVE IN THE TREETOP AND FROM FARTHER AWAY THE SEQUENCES OF IMPULSES COMING FROM THE HUMMINGBIRDS CAN BE HEARD AGAIN WHICH SOUND LIKE TINY ELECTRICAL DISCHARGES SOMETHING LIKE TS-TS AND TS-TS-TS-TS SOMEWHAT CLOSER AND FROM DOWN BELOW A SHORT METALLIC BIRD CALL AND IN THE DISTANCE A SLOW UP AND DOWN GLIDING HUM OF A MOTORBIKE AS FROM A SUCCESSION OF CURVES UNTIL IT SPEEDS UP AGAIN GETTING LOST AS ITS SOUND BECOMES HIGHER AND HIGHER THE MAGPIE-LIKE CALL OF THE BLUE JAY AGAIN QUITE CLOSE AND SCREECHY AND THE IMPULSES FROM THE HUMMINGBIRDS THE DESCENDING GLISSANDO OF A SINGLE-ENGINE PLANE A DULL HUMMING OF A MOTORCYCLE ALMOST BLUBBERING POSSIBLY FROM A HARLEY DAVIDSON AND CONTINUING VERY DELICATLY ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLY THE RUSTLING OF THE PALMS AND EVEN LESS NOTICEABLY THAT OF SOME OTHER TREES IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY

Pacific Palisades, Villa Aurora, Terrace, Sunday, October 7, 2001, 10:38 to 11:18

## Weiss/Weisslich II.



Weiss/Weisslich II, 40 Fotos, 2013

**Peter Ablinger.** "Sounds are not sounds! They are here to distract the intellect and to soothe the senses. Not once is hearing 'hearing': hearing is that which creates me." The composer Peter Ablinger is, as Christian Scheib once put it, a 'mystic of enlightenment' whose 'calls and litanies are aimed at cognition'. At the same time, the composer who – after studying graphic arts – studied with Gösta Neuwirth and Roman Haubenstock-Ramati and since 1982 lives in Berlin, is also a skeptic who understands the cultural rules and (destructive) habits enforced by tradition. "So let us play further and say: sounds are here to hear (but not to be heard. That's something else). And that hearing is here to be ceased ("Das Hören ist da um aufzuhören"). More I can't say." (Christian Baier, translated by Bill Dietz)

# Okkyung Lee.

Okkyung Lee has been developing her own style in contemporary cello performance and improvisation. Using her classical training as a springboard, she currently incorporates jazz, sounds, Korean traditional music and noise with extended techniques. Since moving to New York in 2000, she has performed and recorded with numerous artists such as Derek Bailey, Jaap Blonk, Nels Cline, Anthony Coleman, Shelley Hirsch, Christian Marclay, Jim O'Rourke or Marina Rosenfeld. She has released several albums including Noisy love songs (for George Dyer) and Nihm on tzadik or The bleeding edge with Evan Parker and Peter Evans on Psi as well a duo LP Anicca with Phil Minton.

crystal memories for alto sax, tenor sax, trombone, vibes, cello, guitar and 2 electronics

conductor should follow a timer and cue each section but the timings can be somewhat flexible... all the pitches are concert pitches... choose a range that's comfortable to play quietly...

electronics A	long sustained sound... close to a static sound...	continue...	start interacting with alto sax... bringing similar sounds to blend in...	continue...	bring in different textures without getting loud...
alto sax		start playing with key clicking noise... quiet in general and space in between...	continue developing the material... start interacting with electronics A...	continue...	start playing quietly long tones in F and B with space in between... still mixed with key noise...
vibes			start bowing B and F... long tones... quiet and space in between...	start building a loop with the pitches in a somewhat steady pulse... try not to sync with cello though...	continue... adding different textures but the main focus stays in keeping the established pulse... can use mallets...
guitar				start playing E and G harmonics using e-bow... lots of space between notes...	continue... start building your own pulse... add different textures...
trombone				start playing quiet noise and textures on the body of trombone...	continue... start adding long tones in F and B mixed with noise...
cello			start playing B and F artificial harmonics... long tones... quiet and space in between...	continue... bring in normal F and B and start building a loop with the pitches in a somewhat steady pulse... try not to sync with vibes though...	continue... adding different textures but the main focus stays in keeping the established pulse...
tenor sax		start playing with breathing sounds... quiet in general and space in between...	continue developing the same material... start interacting with electronics B...	continue...	start playing quiet long tones in F and B with space in between... still mixed with breathing sounds...
electronics B	long sustained sound... close to a static sound...	continue...	start interacting with tenor sax... bringing similar sounds to blend in...	continue...	bring in different textures without getting loud...
	30 seconds	30 seconds	1 minute	1 minute	1 minute

I started using descriptive scores with time frames after moving to New York since there were lots of fantastic musicians I was working with who didn't read conventional musical scores. I wanted to find a way to bring what these highly individual musicians were creating into my compositions and found this method really allowed lots of room for interpretation mixed with improvisation. For me, these scores are not meant for guided improvisation since they don't have the same sense of spontaneity as improvisation: the structures are completely determined beforehand. However, they can be interpreted in so many different ways with different performers, almost creating new pieces each time.

page 2

free...	continue...	freely improvised section...	start calming down... going back to more static sounds... slowly fade out...		continue playing quietly...
continue... start building a loop in a somewhat steady pulse... try not to sync with others though...	develop your loop while interacting with tenor sax and trombone...		start calming down and go back playing long tones in F and B with space in between...	play F and B with the vibes... play quietly under it...	
start playing freer but still mixed with what you've established...	free... play more textures...	focused	start calming down and go back playing long tones in F and B with space in between... mallets... you are setting the new pulse...	play only F and B in steady tempo... approximately in 60...	
start playing freer but still mixed with what you've established...	free... play more textures...	mainly on	start calming down and playing long tones in F and B with space in between...	play F and B with the vibes... play quietly under it...	cut off on cue...
continue... start to build a loop with somewhat steady pulse... try not to sync with others though...	develop your loop while interacting with alto sax and tenor sax...	textures...	start calming down and playing long tones in F and B with space in between...	play F and B with the vibes... play quietly under it...	
start playing freer but still mixed with what you established...	free... play more textures...	more dynamic	start calming down and playing long tones in F and B with space in between...	play F and B with the vibes... play quietly under it...	
continue... start building a loop in a somewhat steady pulse... try not to sync with others though...	develop your loop while interacting with alto sax and trombone...	but not necessarily louder...	start calming down and playing long tones in F and B with space in between...	play F and B with the vibes... play quietly under it...	
free...	continue...		start calming down... going back to more static sounds... slowly fade out...		
1 minute	1 minute	2 minutes	1 minute	30 seconds	30 seconds

## Roland Barthes.

The French literary theorist, philosopher, linguist, critic and semiotician **Roland Barthes** (1915–1980) explored a diverse range of fields. His ideas influenced the development of schools of theory including structuralism, semiotics, social theory, anthropology and post-structuralism. The essay 'La mort de l'auteur' (The Death of the Author) written in 1967 argues against traditional literary criticism and states that writing and creator are unrelated.

116

**Text** "The Death of the Author" from *IMAGE/MUSIC/TEXT* by Roland Barthes, translated by Stephen Heath. English translation copyright © 1977 by Stephen Heath. Reprinted by permission of Hill and Wang, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

## The Death of the Author.

In his story *Sarrasine*, Balzac, speaking of a castrato disguised as a woman, writes this sentence: "It was Woman, with her sudden fears, her irrational whims, her instinctive fears, her unprovoked bravado, her daring and her delicious delicacy of feeling" Who is speaking in this way? Is it the story's hero, concerned to ignore the castrato concealed beneath the woman? Is it the man Balzac, endowed by his personal experience with a philosophy of Woman? Is it the author Balzac, professing certain "literary" ideas of femininity? Is it universal wisdom? or romantic psychology? It will always be impossible to know, for the good reason that all writing is itself this special voice, consisting of several indiscernible voices, and that literature is precisely the invention of this voice, to which we cannot assign a specific origin: literature is that neuter, that composite, that oblique into which every subject escapes, the trap where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes.

· · ·

Probably this has always been the case: once an action is recounted, for intransitive ends, and no longer in order to act directly upon reality – that is, finally external to any function but the very exercise of the symbol – this disjunction occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters his own death, writing begins. Nevertheless, the feeling about this phenomenon has been variable; in primitive societies, narrative is never undertaken by a person, but by a mediator, shaman or speaker, whose "performance" may be admired (that is, his mastery of the narrative code), but not his "genius" The author is a modern figure, produced no doubt by our society insofar as, at the end of the middle ages, with English empiricism, French rationalism and the personal faith of the Reformation, it discovered the prestige of the individual, or, to put it more nobly, of the "human person" Hence it is logical that with regard to literature it should be positivism, resume and the result of capitalist ideology, which has accorded the greatest importance to the author's "person" The author still rules in manuals of literary history, in biographies of writers, in magazine interviews, and even in the awareness of

117

literary men, anxious to unite, by their private journals, their person and their work; the image of literature to be found in contemporary culture is tyrannically centered on the author, his person, his history, his tastes, his passions; criticism still consists, most of the time, in saying that Baudelaire's work is the failure of the man Baudelaire, Van Gogh's work his madness, Tchaikovsky's his vice: the explanation of the work is always sought in the man who has produced it, as if, through the more or less transparent allegory of fiction, it was always finally the voice of one and the same person, the author, which delivered his "confidence."

· · ·

Though the Author's empire is still very powerful (recent criticism has often merely consolidated it), it is evident that for a long time now certain writers have attempted to topple it. In France, Mallarmé was doubtless the first to see and foresee in its full extent the necessity of substituting language itself for the man who hitherto was supposed to own it; for Mallarmé, as for us, it is language which speaks, not the author: to write is to reach, through a preexisting impersonality – never to be confused with the castrating objectivity of the realistic novelist – that point where language alone acts, "performs," and not "oneself": Mallarmé's entire poetics consists in suppressing the author for the sake of the writing (which is, as we shall see, to restore the status of the reader.) Valéry, encumbered with a psychology of the Self, greatly adulterated Mallarmé's theory, but, turning in a preference for classicism to the lessons of rhetoric, he unceasingly questioned and mocked the Author, emphasized the linguistic and almost "chance" nature of his activity, and throughout his prose works championed the essentially verbal condition of literature, in the face of which any recourse to the writer's inferiority seemed to him pure superstition. It is clear that Proust himself, despite the apparent psychological character of what is called his analyses, undertook the responsibility of inexorably blurring, by an extreme subtilization, the relation of the writer and his characters: by making the narrator not the person who has seen or felt, nor even the person who writes, but the person who will write (the young man of the novel – but, in fact, how old is he, and who is he? – wants to write but cannot, and the novel ends when at last the writing becomes

possible), Proust has given modern writing its epic: by a radical reversal, instead of putting his life into his novel, as we say so often, he makes his very life into a work for which his own book was in a sense the model, so that it is quite obvious to us that it is not Charlus who imitates Montesquieu, but that Montesquieu in his anecdotal, historical reality is merely a secondary fragment, derived from Charlus. Surrealism lastly – to remain on the level of this prehistory of modernity – surrealism doubtless could not accord language a sovereign place, since language is a system and since what the movement sought was, romantically, a direct subversion of all codes – an illusory subversion, moreover, for a code cannot be destroyed, it can only be "played with"; but by abruptly violating expected meanings (this was the famous surrealist "jolt"), by entrusting to the hand the responsibility of writing as fast as possible what the head itself ignores (this was automatic writing), by accepting the principle and the experience of a collective writing, surrealism helped secularize the image of the Author. Finally, outside of literature itself (actually, these distinctions are being superseded), linguistics has just furnished the destruction of the Author with a precious analytic instrument by showing that utterance in its entirety is a void process, which functions perfectly without requiring to be filled by the person of the interlocutors: linguistically, the author is never anything more than the man who writes, just as I is no more than the man who says I: language knows a "subject," not a "person," and this subject, void outside of the very utterance which defines it, suffices to make language "work," that is, to exhaust it.

· · ·

The absence of the Author (with Brecht, we might speak here of a real "alienation:" the Author diminishing like a tiny figure at the far end of the literary stage) is not only a historical fact or an act of writing: it utterly transforms the modern text (or – what is the same thing – the text is henceforth written and read so that in it, on every level, the Author absents himself). Time, first of all, is no longer the same. The Author, when we believe in him, is always conceived as the past of his own book: the book and the author take their places of their own accord on the same line, cast as a before and an after: the Author is supposed

to feed the book—that is, he pre-exists it, thinks, suffers, lives for it; he maintains with his work the same relation of antecedence a father maintains with his child. Quite the contrary, the modern writer (scriptor) is born simultaneously with his text; he is in no way supplied with a being which precedes or transcends his writing, he is in no way the subject of which his book is the predicate; there is no other time than that of the utterance, and every text is eternally written here and now. This is because (or: it follows that) to write can no longer designate an operation of recording, of observing, of representing, of “painting” (as the Classic writers put it), but rather what the linguisticians, following the vocabulary of the Oxford school, call a performative, a rare verbal form (exclusively given to the first person and to the present), in which utterance has no other content than the act by which it is uttered: something like the / Command of kings or the I Sing of the early bards; the modern writer, having buried the Author, can therefore no longer believe, according to the “pathos” of his predecessors, that his hand is too slow for his thought or his passion, and that in consequence, making a law out of necessity, he must accentuate this gap and endlessly “elaborate” his form; for him, on the contrary, his hand, detached from any voice, borne by a pure gesture of inscription (and not of expression), traces a field without origin—or which, at least, has no other origin than language itself, that is, the very thing which ceaselessly questions any origin.

· · ·

We know that a text does not consist of a line of words, releasing a single “theological” meaning (the “message” of the Author-God), but is a space of many dimensions, in which are wedded and contested various kinds of writing, no one of which is original: the text is a tissue of citations, resulting from the thousand sources of culture. Like Bouvard and Pecuchet, those eternal copyists, both sublime and comical and whose profound absurdity precisely designates the truth of writing, the writer can only imitate a gesture forever anterior, never original; his only power is to combine the different kinds of writing, to oppose some by others, so as never to sustain himself by just one of them; if he wants to express himself, at least he should know that the internal

“thing” he claims to “translate” is itself only a readymade dictionary whose words can be explained (defined) only by other words, and so on ad infinitum: an experience which occurred in an exemplary fashion to the young De Quincey, so gifted in Greek that in order to translate into that dead language certain absolutely modern ideas and images, Baudelaire tells us, “he created for it a standing dictionary much more complex and extensive than the one which results from the vulgar patience of purely literary themes” (Paradis Artificiels). succeeding the Author, the writer no longer contains within himself passions, humors, sentiments, impressions, but that enormous dictionary, from which he derives a writing which can know no end or halt: life can only imitate the book, and the book itself is only a tissue of signs, a lost, infinitely remote imitation.

· · ·

Once the Author is gone, the claim to “decipher” a text becomes quite useless. To give an Author to a text is to impose upon that text a stop clause, to furnish it with a final signification, to close the writing. This conception perfectly suits criticism, which can then take as its major task the discovery of the Author (or his hypostases: society, history, the psyche, freedom) beneath the work: once the Author is discovered, the text is “explained:” the critic has conquered; hence it is scarcely surprising not only that, historically, the reign of the Author should also have been that of the Critic, but that criticism (even “new criticism”) should be overthrown along with the Author. In a multiple writing, indeed, everything is to be distinguished, but nothing deciphered; structure can be followed, “threaded” (like a stocking that has run) in all its recurrences and all its stages, but there is no underlying ground; the space of the writing is to be traversed, not penetrated: writing ceaselessly posits meaning but always in order to evaporate it: it proceeds to a systematic exemption of meaning. Thus literature (it would be better, henceforth, to say writing), by refusing to assign to the text (and to the world as text) a “secret:” that is, an ultimate meaning, liberates an activity which we might call counter-theological, properly revolutionary, for to refuse to arrest meaning is finally to refuse God and his hypostases, reason, science, the law.

Let us return to Balzac's sentence: no one (that is, no "person") utters it: its source, its voice is not to be located; and yet it is perfectly read; this is because the true locus of writing is reading. Another very specific example can make this understood: recent investigations (J.P. Vernant) have shed light upon the constitutively ambiguous nature of Greek tragedy, the text of which is woven with words that have double meanings, each character understanding them unilaterally (this perpetual misunderstanding is precisely what is meant by "the tragic"); yet there is someone who understands each word in its duplicity, and understands further, one might say, the very deafness of the characters speaking in front of him: this someone is precisely the reader (or here the spectator). In this way is revealed the whole being of writing: a text consists of multiple writings, issuing from several cultures and entering into dialogue with each other, into parody, into contestation; but there is one place where this multiplicity is collected, united, and this place is not the author, as we have hitherto said it was, but the reader: the reader is the very space in which are inscribed, without any being lost, all the citations a writing consists of; the unity of a text is not in its origin, it is in its destination; but this destination can no longer be personal: the reader is a man without history, without biography, without psychology; he is only that someone who holds gathered into a single field all the paths of which the text is constituted. This is why it is absurd to hear the new writing condemned in the name of a humanism which hypocritically appoints itself the champion of the reader's rights. The reader has never been the concern of classical criticism; for it, there is no other man in literature but the one who writes. We are now beginning to be the dupes no longer of such antiphrases, by which our society proudly champions precisely what it dismisses, ignores, smothers or destroys; we know that to restore to writing its future, we must reverse its myth: the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the Author.

## Giacco Schiesser. in dialogue with Manfred Werder

Manfred Werder, in his question refers to two citations:

Language: "... that through which I am spoken whether I want to be or not"<sup>1</sup>

Roland Barthes

"It is the clash of the *Eigensinn* of media and materialities with the *Eigensinn* of authors, which initiates a meaningful paradoxical process and perpetuates it: artists are subject to the *Eigensinn* that is inscribed in media and the material. And yet, as eigensinnig authors (as subjects in Althusser's sense of the word), they relentlessly try to use the *Eigensinn* of the medium and the material for their ideas and intentions, or to constantly wrest both from a new and only momentarily different meaning."<sup>2</sup>

Giacco Schiesser

## The paradox of 'Eigensinnigkeit'. (‘wilful obstinacy’)<sup>3</sup> and the Question of Authorship.

Manfred Werder Giacco Schiesser, your "clash of the *Eigensinn* of the media and materialities with the *Eigensinn* of authors" strikes me as a central aspect of artistic production. I have wondered what the more precise meaning of the term *Eigensinn* might be here. To what extent we can ascribe *Eigensinn* to media and materialities if, as per Roland Barthes' sentence, we ourselves are perhaps rather mediated by a medium.

Is not the momentary meaning that authors are in the process of wresting from media and materialities their subjugating interpretation of these media and materialities? ... Giacco Schiesser The word *Eigensinn*, which also exists in the Nordic languages and in Dutch, but not in the Latin languages and English (in English, it is taken as a loanword from German, as in the translation of Hegel's texts or in Judith Butler) has a double meaning, as far as the second part of the word goes: it refers both to the sense and to the sensuality of something. This makes it particularly interesting for artistic practices, their artefacts and in relation to their reception.

Against this backdrop, I have proposed formulating an irreducible paradox as one, perhaps the central engine of artistic work.<sup>3</sup>

It is important here not to understand *Eigensinn*, the *Eigene* (literally: own) and the *Sinn* (literally: mind or sense) of media and of the material, in essential terms—as a power that is inherent in them per se—but rather as always already culturally mediated, enriched, loaded, shifted and transformed. The *Eigensinn* of media and the material is therefore always simultaneously flexible and (temporarily) fixed. It is flexible because it is always changeable and changes in and through artistic practices, and is temporarily fixed in the work of art that is printed, displayed, played and performed for reception. This also means that not only the *Sinn* but also the *Eigene* of media and the material is not an essence, but is always changing and, at the same time, temporarily fixed.

If we now combine this understanding of *Eigensinn* in relation to media and material with the *Eigensinn* of the artist, we can say the same of both. The *Eigensinn* of the artist is a fleetingly consciously and fleetingly uncon-

1. Barthes, R. The Neutral (lecture) Suhrkamp Verlag, 2005 2. Schiesser, G. On "Eigensinn as a Productive Artistic Force", in SchnittStellen (Basler Beiträge zur Medienwissenschaft) Schwabe, 2005 3. Eigensinn translates most approximately into English as 'wilful obstinacy' However, this translation does not succeed in conveying the double meaning of the German word *Sinn*, referring to both sense/mind and to sensuality.

sciously developed sense of media and the material, which guides and flows into his or her own action.

If, for example, we map this understanding of the double Eigensinn onto Barthes' proposal that language is "... that through which I am spoken whether I want to be or not" we enact precisely what I mean by the Eigensinn of media, in other words and with reference to language, albeit with a different attitude and emphasis. My approach differs from that of Barthes in that I do not follow his proposal to enact a shift from the SUBJECT (upper case) 'man/author' to the SUBJECT (upper case) 'language' in two respects: on the one hand, in respect of his privileging of language over other media (which I will not discuss any further here), on the other, in respect of the term subject (language). I work instead with the double meaning of the word 'Subject', as propagated by Louis Althusser. In the Latin languages (but not in German, for interesting rea-

sons that I cannot go into here), right down to everyday usage, Subject always has the double meaning of SUBJECT/SUJET (upper case) and subject/sujet (lower case). Every 'individual' (whether as a private individual, artist or employee) or every group, as SUBJECT, thus attempts to act eigensinnig and yet, at the same time, is always subject, i.e. subjugated – to rules, laws, God, media and materials. Althusser, who grew up Catholic in the diaspora, once described this process very simply and very vividly with the following image: "Go into a Catholic church and kneel adown – and you will start to pray".

In other words, the process of subjective action is caught, constantly and irreducibly paradoxically, between these poles of self-conscious, subjective action and simultaneous subjection. We can lament this, or we can see it as a driving force behind human action, and of the arts in particular.

**Giacco Schiesser** is a Zurich-based theorist of cultural and media studies. He studied philosophy, cultural and literature studies in Berlin. His work and his publications focus on the theories of cultures, media, subjects/singularities, epistemology, aesthetics, art research, democracy, public spheres and every day culture. Since the turn of the century, his work has been centering on the far-reaching economical, political and cultural impact of the digitalisation of today's postfordian society and on the conception of the 'Eigensinn' of media, an attempt to analyze more precisely the 'mediality of media' and its impact and effects. He is professor, founder of the Media Arts programme and head of the Department of Art & Media at Zurich University of the Arts, ZHdK as well as head of the section Research at ZHdK. He also holds a permanent visiting professorship at University of Arts and Design Linz.

**Q-O2** Koolmijnenkaai 30-34 Quai des Charbonnages,  
B-1080 Brussels • +32 (0)2 245 48 24 • info@q-o2.be  
www.q-o2.be

Editors **Julia Eckhardt & Eveline Heylen**

Graphic design **Maike Beuten (garage64)**

Printing **Newgoff (Ghent)**

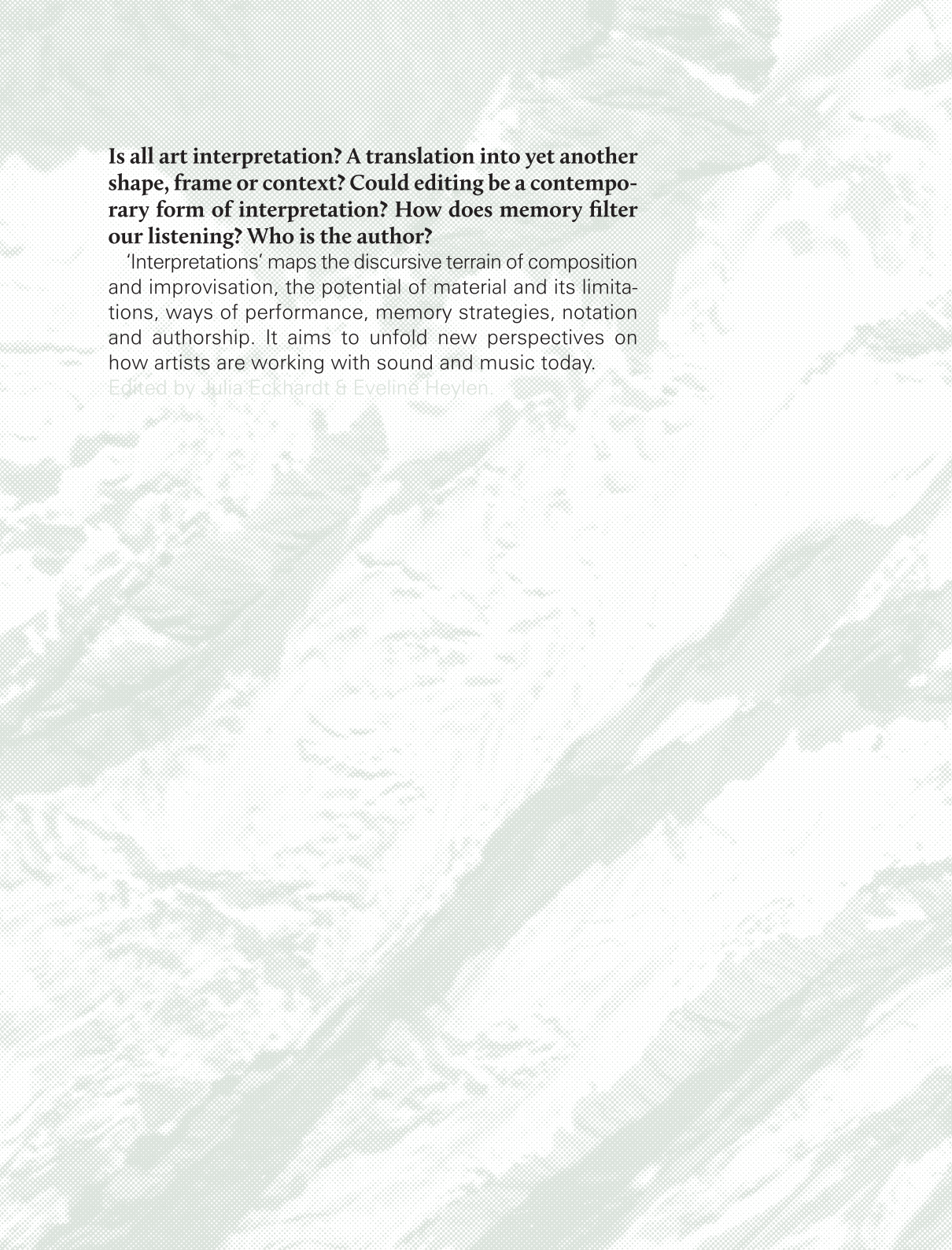
Thanks to **Tim Parkinson** for English language corrections, **Christine Dysers**, **Christel Simons**

We gratefully acknowledge the permissions granted to reproduce the copyright material in this publication. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information or material contained in this publication, as well as to contact copyright holders and to obtain their permission for the use of copyright material. If proper copyright acknowledgment has not been made, or for clarifications and corrections, please contact Q-O2 and we will correct the information in future re-printings, if any.

**Q-O<sub>2</sub>**

 **Vlaanderen**  
verbeelding werkt

 **VLAAMSE  
GEMEENS  
CHAPSCO  
MISSIE**



**Is all art interpretation? A translation into yet another shape, frame or context? Could editing be a contemporary form of interpretation? How does memory filter our listening? Who is the author?**

'Interpretations' maps the discursive terrain of composition and improvisation, the potential of material and its limitations, ways of performance, memory strategies, notation and authorship. It aims to unfold new perspectives on how artists are working with sound and music today.

*Edited by Julia Eckhardt & Eveline Heylen.*