BEING ABOUT MUSIC

TEXTWORKS 1960-2003

J. K. RANDALL

BENJAMIN BORETZ

VOLUME 2: 1978-2003

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OPEN SPACE

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Being About Music

Volume 2

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LANGUAGE, AS A MUSIC

Six Marginal Pretexts for Composition

Benjamin Boretz

march/april 1978

THESIS

A language, a music

An utterance within, a view about

Circumventilation of hypercritical
counterfacts nowhere metabounded
without utterance within, without
view about

What is there to be on to,
logically; or ontologically
(without benefit of philosophistry) :

What is about, is also of, also is :

within :

allso everspecious metapresent worldnow,
somewhere, metabounded nowhere :
utterance within nascendant sempiternal,
being, about to be of; coming, contained;
elapsing, incontinent: unshaded, urtexturous,
unextirpreted hereplace, anytime
immemorial, a leading edge of a vanishing
act, uncatalogued hoards of phenomenal
finds, all comprehended within (without
benefit of theory), all systems gone
without a trace: not a language, not
a music, within sound, or sight; not
a thing for a thing to be, nor anything
leftover to do: utterance within view
(: about), nowhere metabounded (without :)
view within utterance about,

from whatsoneverspeciously itself metafested
a now irretrievable attachment
within view of utterance about;
then, now itself irretrievable; then,
now irretrievably itself; then, itself
retrievable now, as was,
in specious increments attaching
what there was; attaching to
what there was; attaching what there was
to what there was: nowhere, metabounded
somewhere, utterance within of view about:
in a language, in a music,
within a worldnow irreducibly reshaded:
view within utterance of,
nowhere metabounded:
unconditional counterfact
of metapresentable species,

. . . here, . . .
. . . begins . . .

. . . attaching, in
specious increments,
then,
to now,
as now of then,
reshadowed,
as then of now;
as here of there,
reechoed,
as there of here;
as nowhere,
emerging,
as somewhere,

. . . begins, . . .
impending,
metabounded nowhere,
from somewhere: an
utterance within, not
yet about, or of, not
yet still —
— still unactualized counterfact subtextually
prearticulate, just now elapsing along
a line of least demarcation, selfdetermining
a stillformative startfeeling,
something, extending somewhere; somewhere,
terminating nowhere;
what there is,
commencing here,
in specious increments attaching,
the shaping spans of singularity retrieved,
plurally compounded
as unitarily infused,
endlessly recalled
to the brink of awareness, everfilling
the void of unpreoccupied space, allways
following nowhere,
(without benefit of geography), along
the untravelled auguries of undelimited
expectation, now
unfolding itself beyond its time,

begins:
somewhere, nascendant sempiternal
within worldnow of utterance within,
to inceive recasting
the sharpened shadows
of herenow sempinternal
of utterance unframed
resounding
the gathering echoes, itself reflected
as matter of view, of now
some appreciable moment, determined to be
in particular sound, in extremity simple,
incarnate as worldnow nascended within,
metamorph of therethen rescinded without,
in sempexternal herespace reimaged to order,
inflicting awarehood received unfiltrate,
undeviate, unbounded at the thresholds of
nascendance sempiternal, now intending
itself undefiled as utterance without
humming howling saying singing discerning
detaching retrieving without remembering
without relating without recounting without

. . . — begins,
from a firstindexed moment,
to form
members
in thick
and fastening prefusion
multiplied
in specious
increments conforming
to now,
from a firstindexed moment,
unspools a timescene
evolves a place of conjunction·attached
everretuning
to erenow again
and again
refluxes on tightwarp extended
omniimprescient
with intimate hindsense
speciously,
from a firstindexed moment
warps across a flickering timescene unspooled
increment
by lingering increment
utterance conjoining
with utterance
to frame,

encreaturing each newly multiplied member
and all as well,
irreducibly metabonded herenow,
repleting, for clarity's sake,
whatever has been
beclogging in metaform effusion without,
backcumulating in multiform deflection within,
whatever across a timescene tightwarped
the flickerthickening multiprescient urnow
of omniconjunction fast
forever attached
has been unspooling,
from a firstindexed moment,
to now,

a voice is heard, wrapped in utterance,
inscribing in resonance a neveremptying
newspace berimmed along the unsilent
warp of a timescene outspread
— a voice, framed in somewhere,
filtering through a finemeshed timescreen,
is heard, draped in reverberance past,
diffused in echoing shimmer gone,
bathing in afterglow lost, in incipience lapsed,
with touches of depth relieving a longdead
unrememberable shadowless noworld;
with shades of dimension backgrounding echo,
with breadthstrokes drawing new form
from a refractory void, otherhood and selfness
elicited in unison,
a voice
is heard
becoming
a language, becoming
a music, becoming a worldnow refracted in resonance,
within a world sempiternal,
nascendant, within,
becoming awareness
and utterance as one
and only now,

begins:

as a timescene unspools across
populously creatured, densely warped ridges,
astride the slithering torrents
of utterance unleashed,

there recalls something,

then,
lingering
still
in its ownplace,
somewhere
between
that old
upstart
moment
firstindexed
somewhere
between
then
and now
by another
moment
somehow
recalled
before

only
increments
onflowing
torrent
perhaps
slightly
tilts
warp
ridging
timescene
perhaps
membering
perhaps
creaturing
before
now
somehow
there calls
anew
arises
confronting
now
across
the ridged
warped
timespace
between
then

and now
confronted
each
by the other
reverberant
across
the span
something
and another
now
and then
or sooner
and later
somewhere
between
the first
and most
and only
moment
til now
indexed
at all
since
then
became
incremented
into
utterance

warped
into
timescene
spread
out
filtered
through
depthed
dimensioned
ridged
encreatured
membered
and now
there
recalls
first
confronts
the other
across
reverberant
space
within
between
the old
returns
recalled
across
another

indexed
as each
and both
confront
within
reverberant
time
or space
between
at first
unqualified
except
as each
and other
confronted
elicit
across
reverberant
span
of scene
an echo
of self
or other
reverberant
within
the screen
of sound
or glow

referring
between
before
the old
refrains
the new
returns
across
the span
of space
or time
between
referring
to qualify
each
recalling
the other
refers
within
to index
either
first
confronting
both
and now
the moment
at once

detaches
confronted
no more
returns
to place
relocated
somewhere
between
the moments
onflowing
within
the spaces
expanding
returning
on course
deflected
selfness
qualified
conferred
by otherhood
attached
touched
by reference
without
by reverberance
infused
by confronting

recalled
between
the place
somehow
there
lingering
beyond
somewhere
at first
indexed
last
moment
again
the timescene
begins:

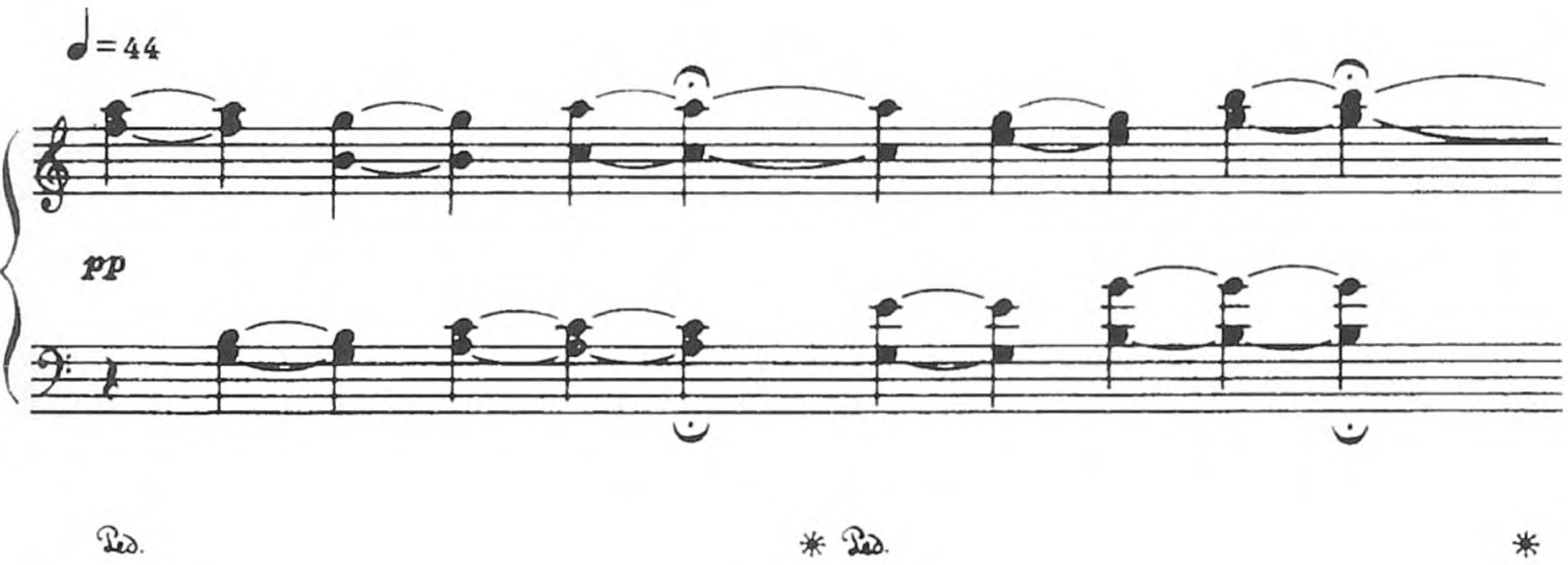
to be a language, now; to be a music,
now; to be an utterance within, now; to be
within a worldnow, irreducibly reshaded; to be
an image of now; to be metabounded, nowhere;

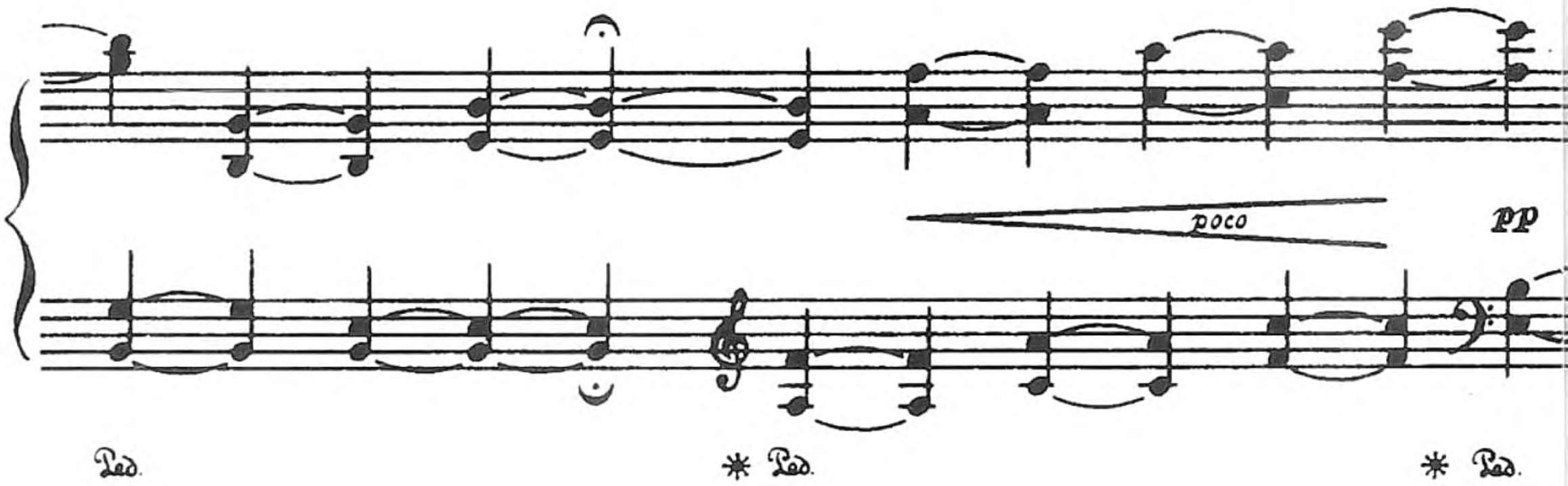
to be: of; to be: about; to be: now; to be: is: to mean.

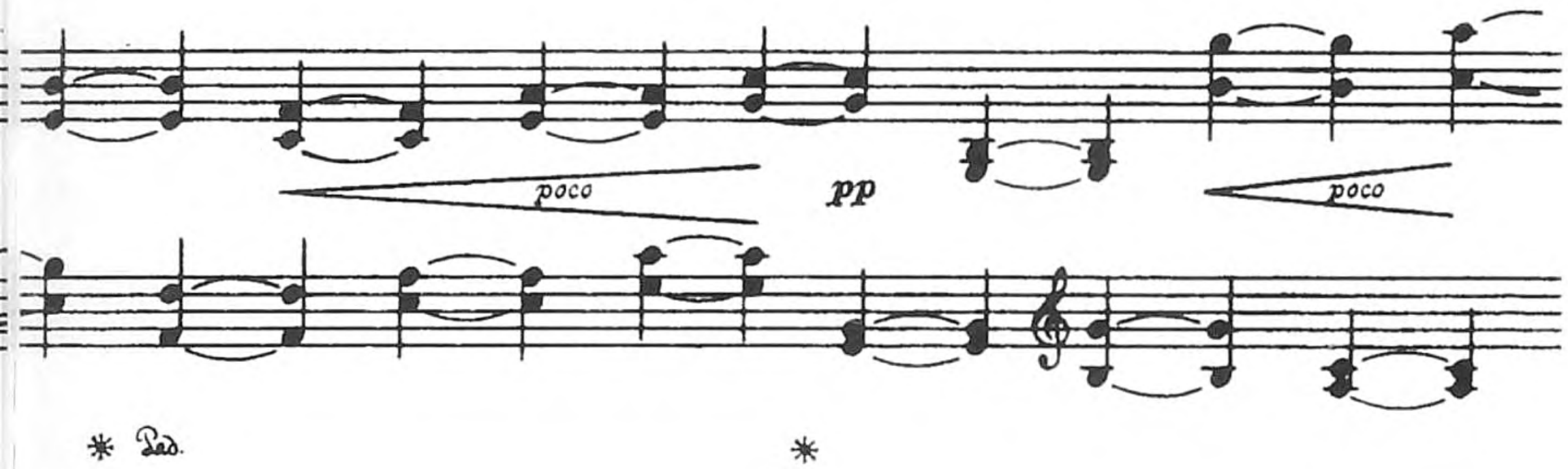
II

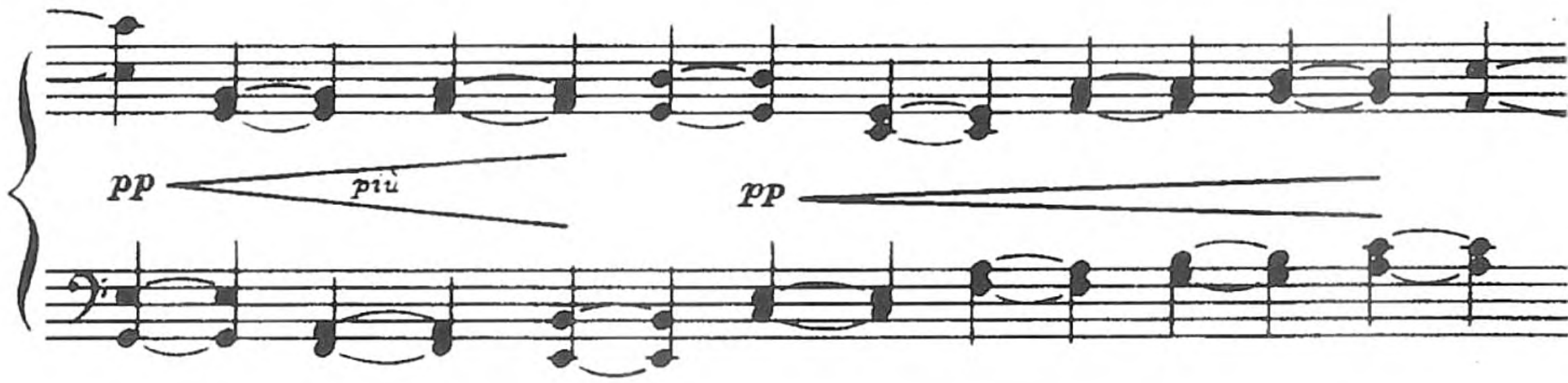
ARGUMENT

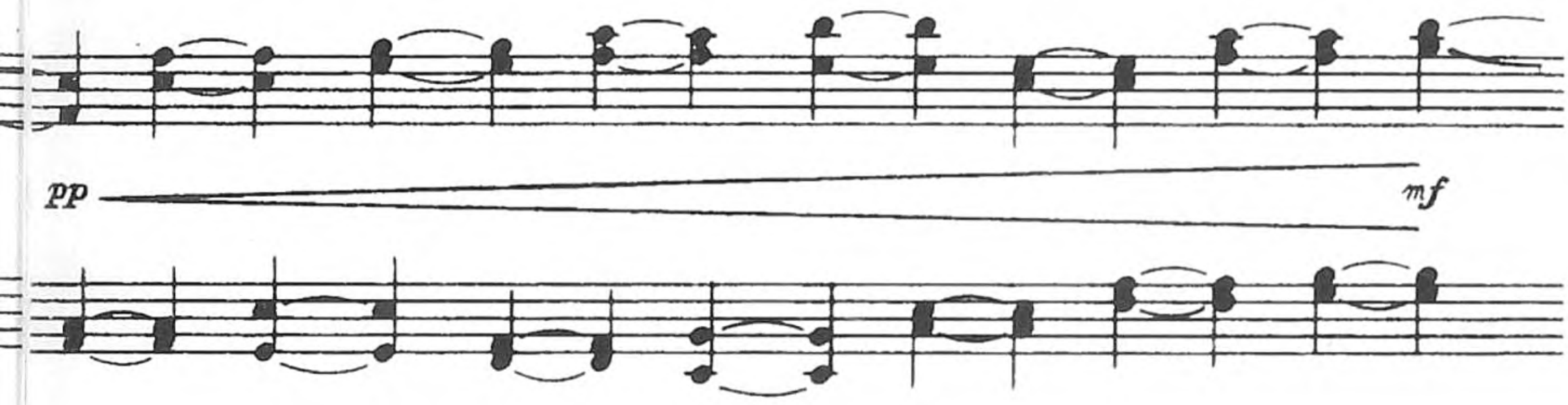
[for piano]

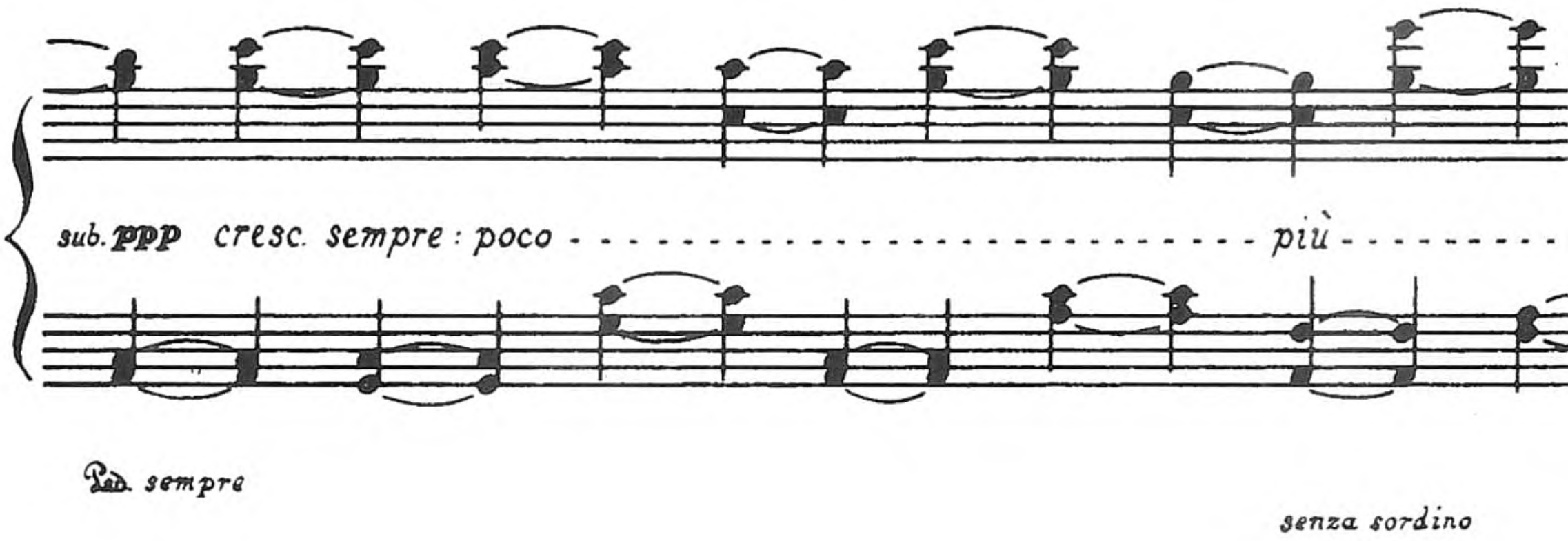

♩= 44
pp
Ped.
* Ped.
*

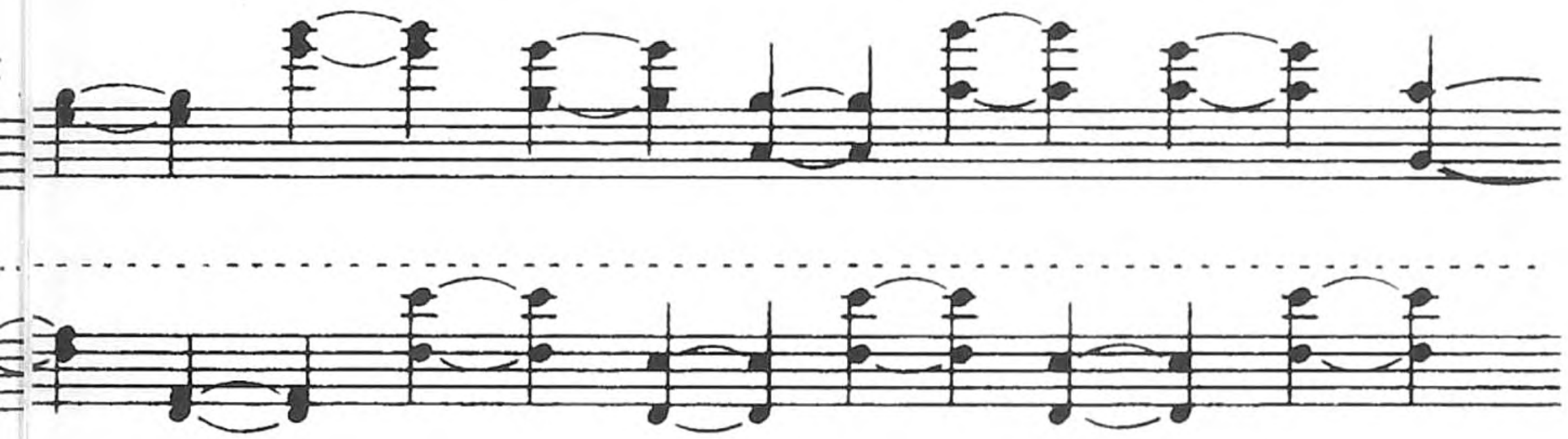

poco
pp
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

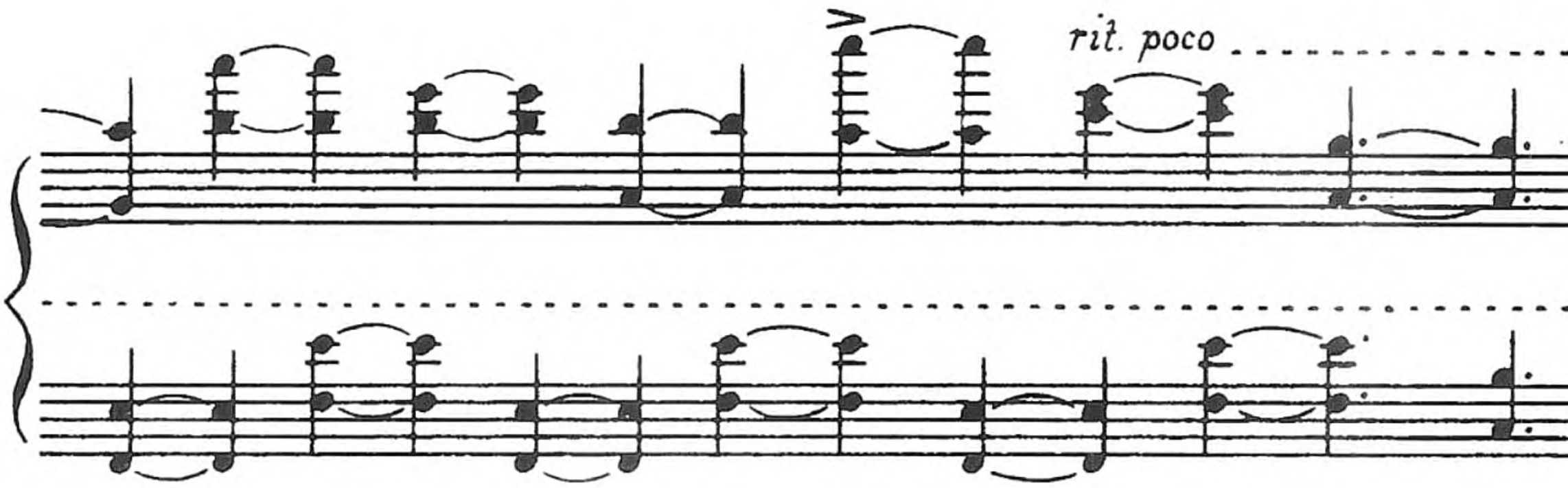

poco
pp
poco
Ped.

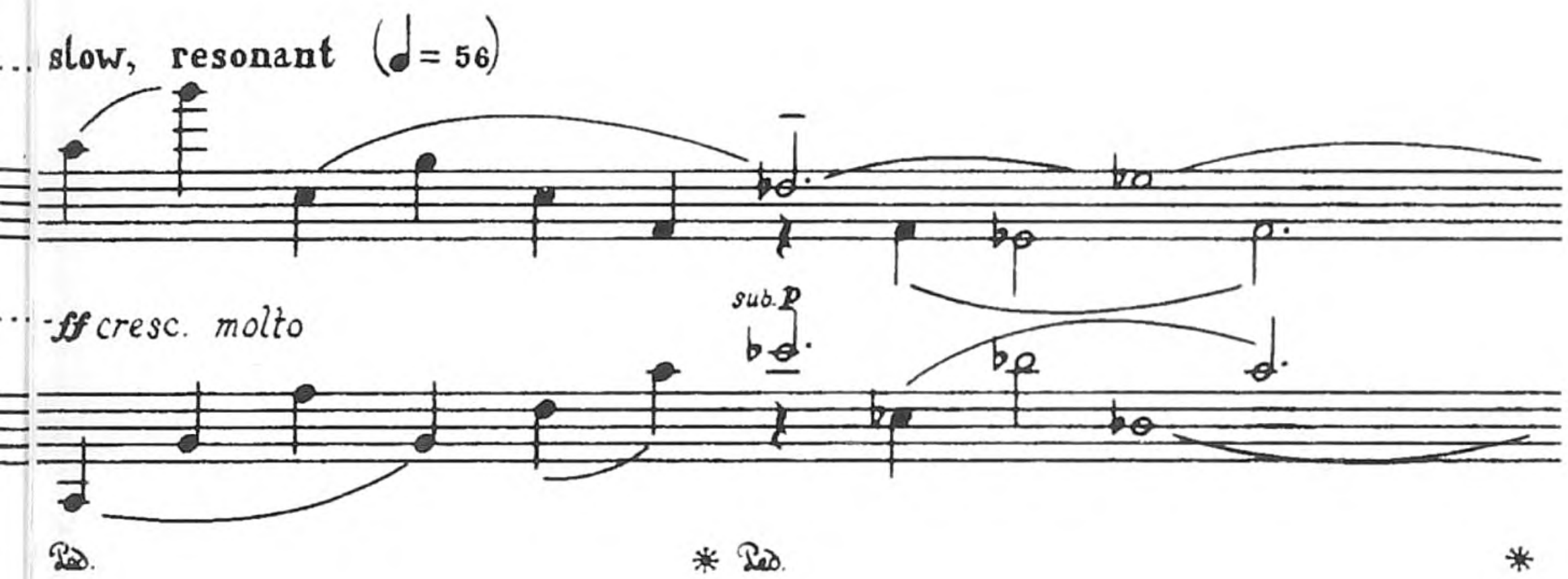

pp
più
pp

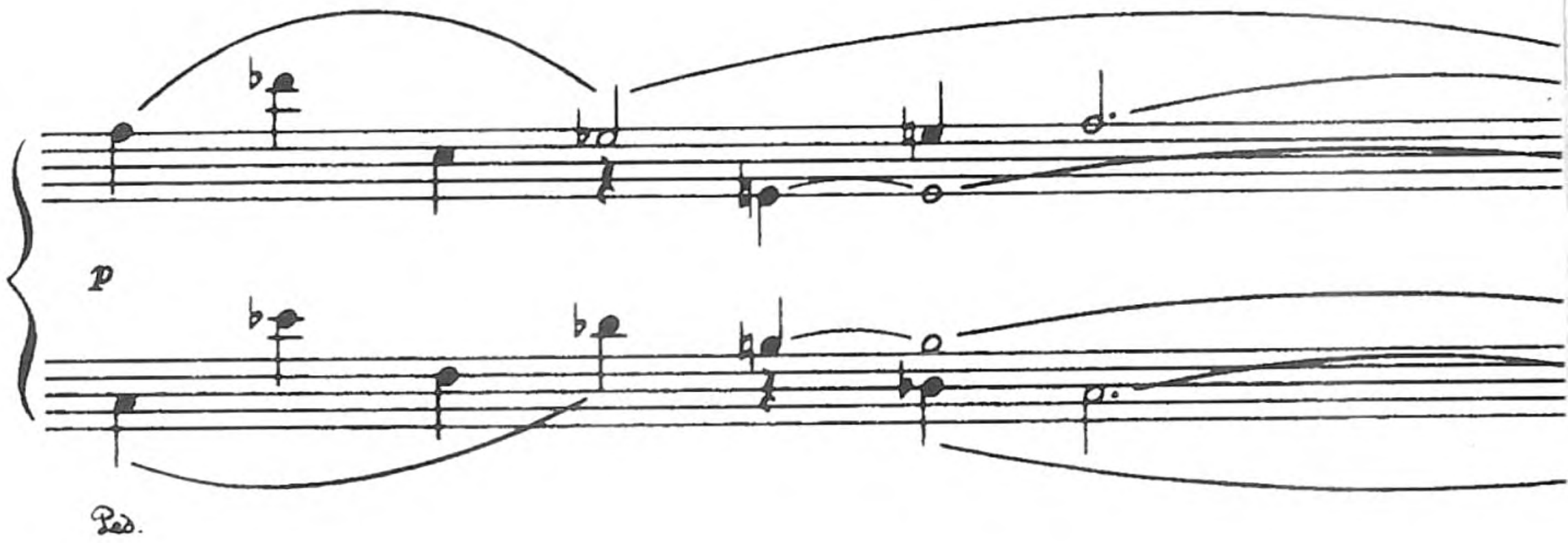

pp
mf

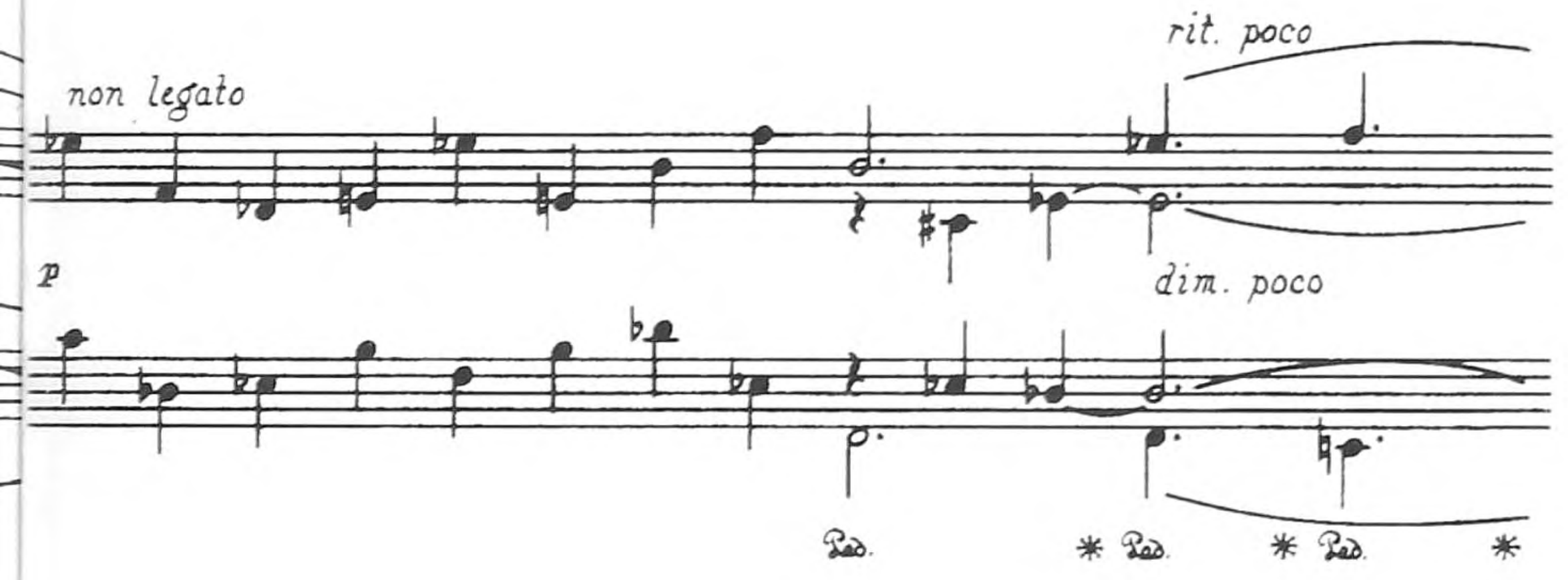

sub. ppp cresc. sempre : poco - più - - - - - - - - -
Ped. sempre
senza sordino

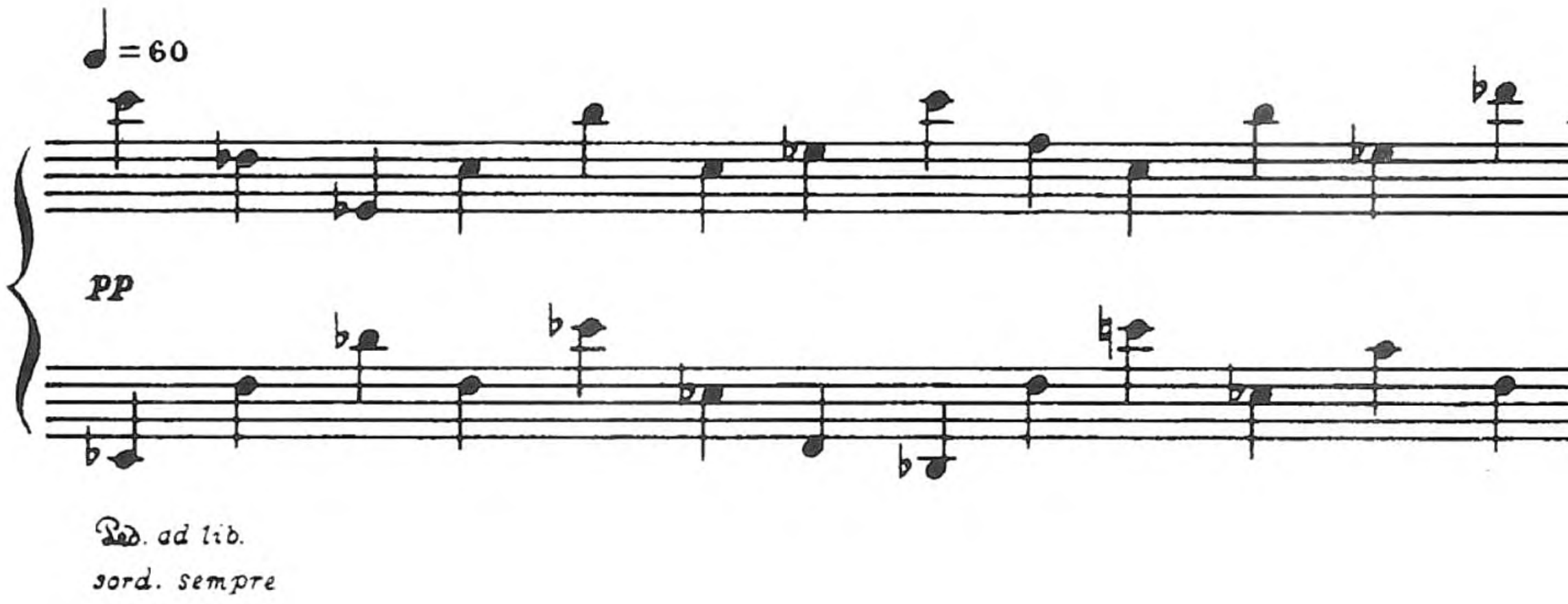


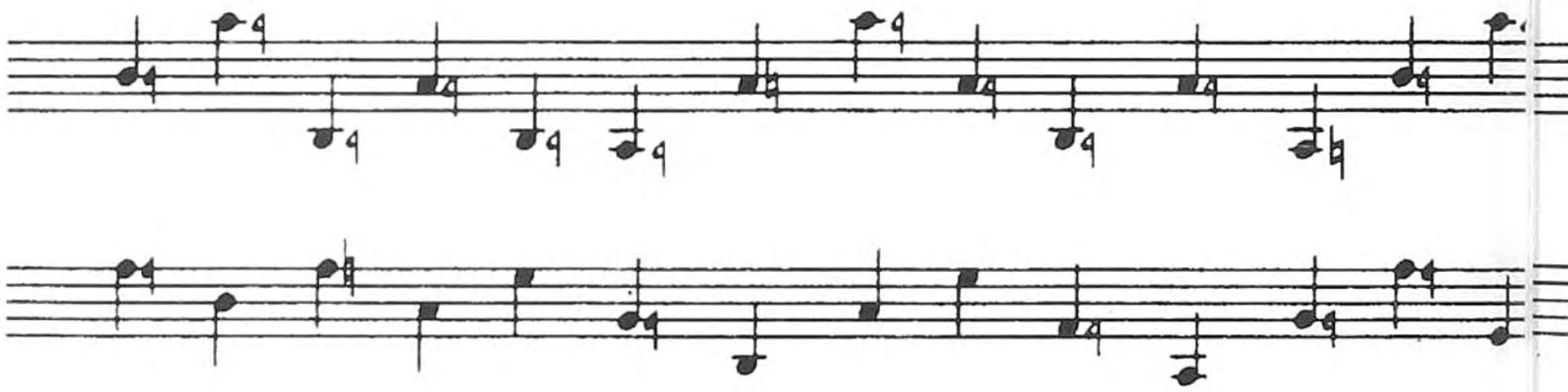

rit. poco

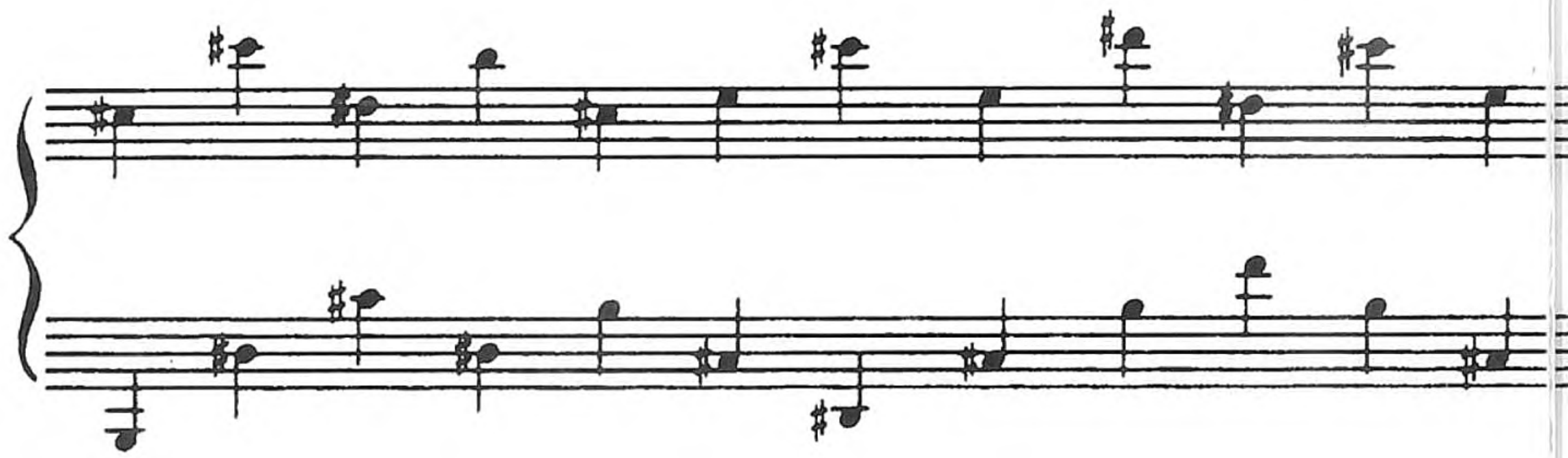

slow, resonant (♩= 56)
ff cresc. molto
sub. p
Ped.
Ped.

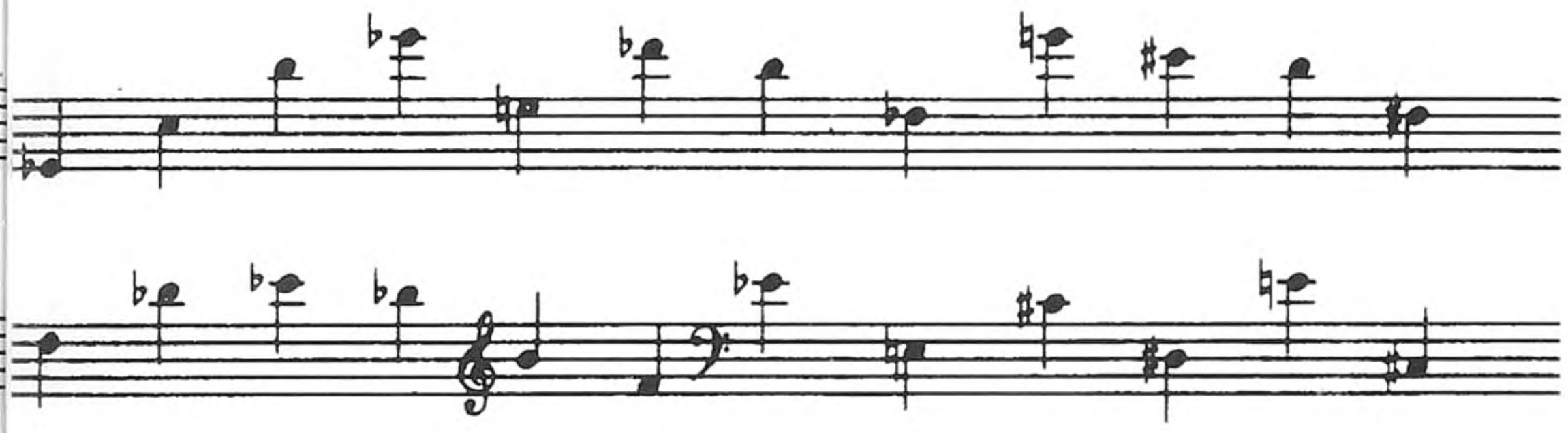

p
Ped.

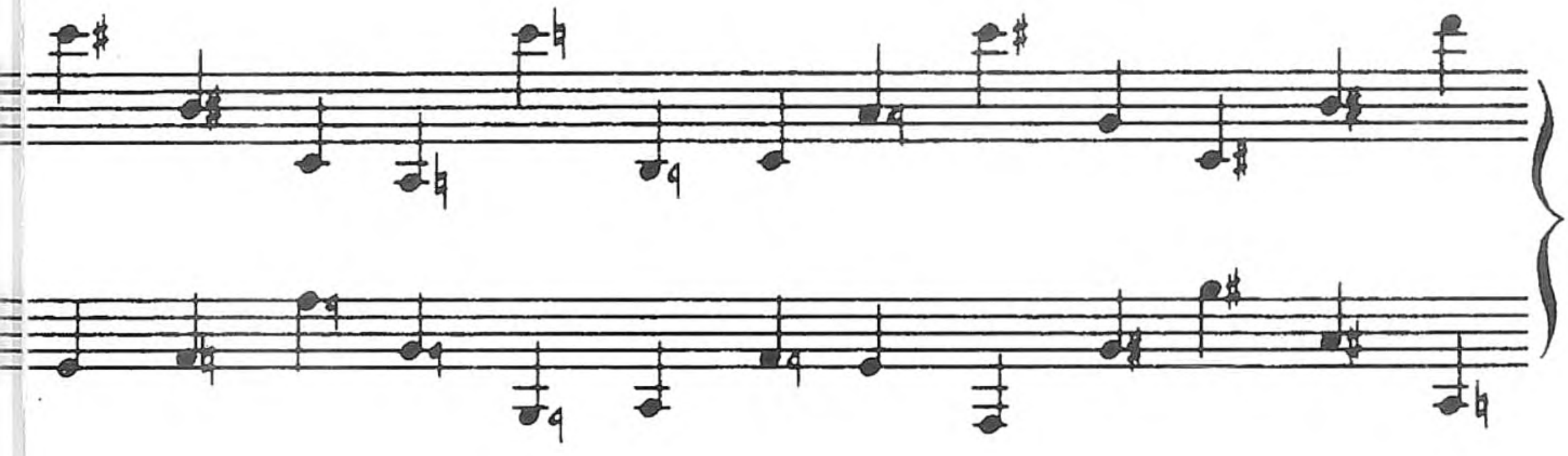

non legato
rit. poco
p
dim. poco
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

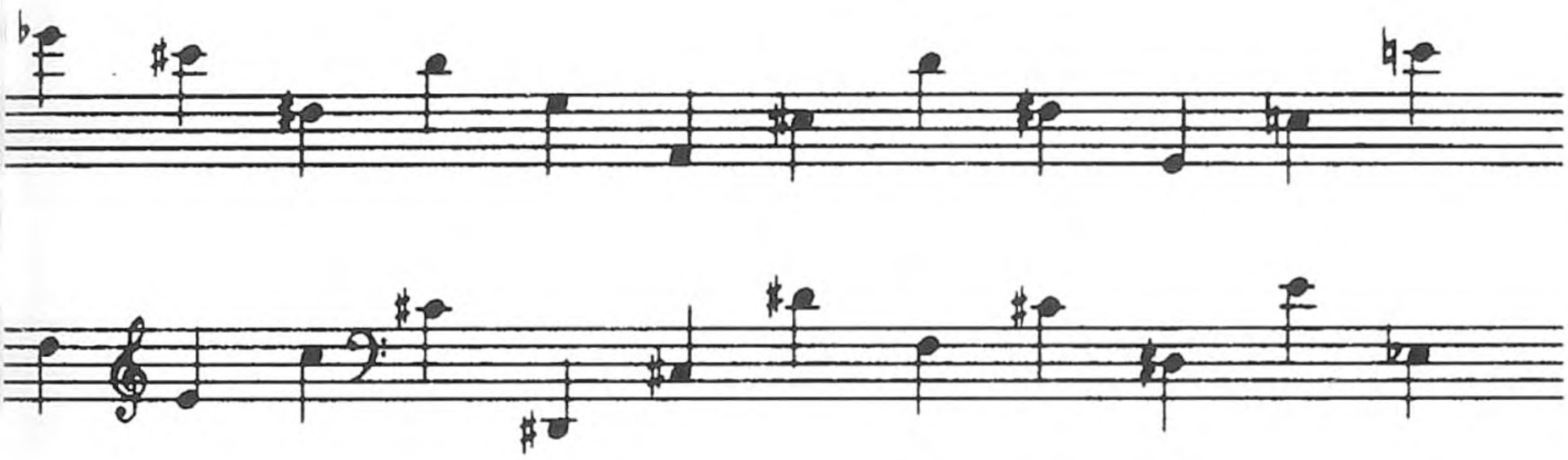

♩ = 60
pp
Ped. ad lib.
sord. sempre

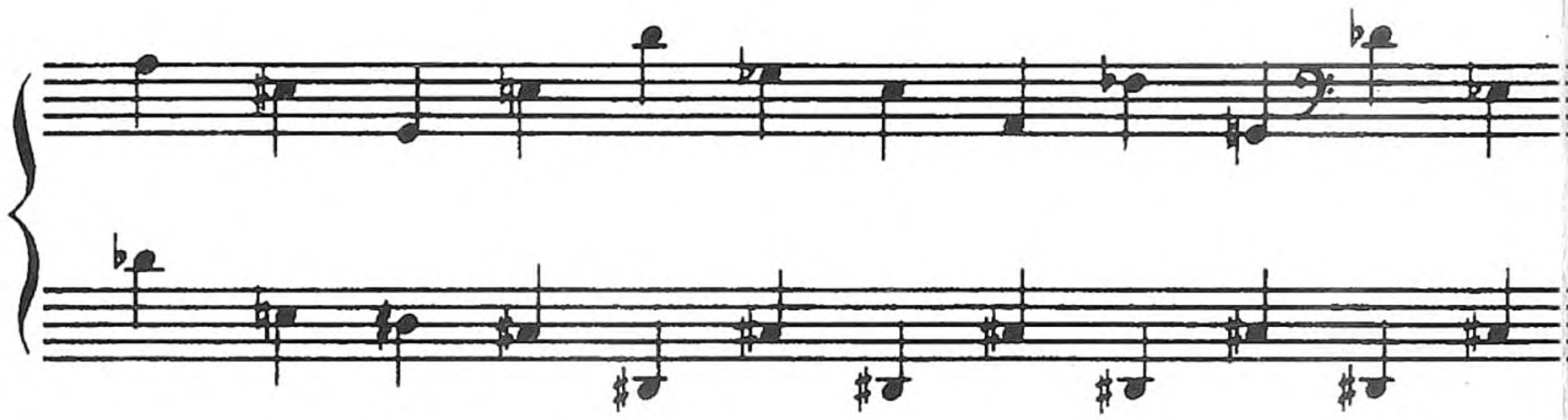


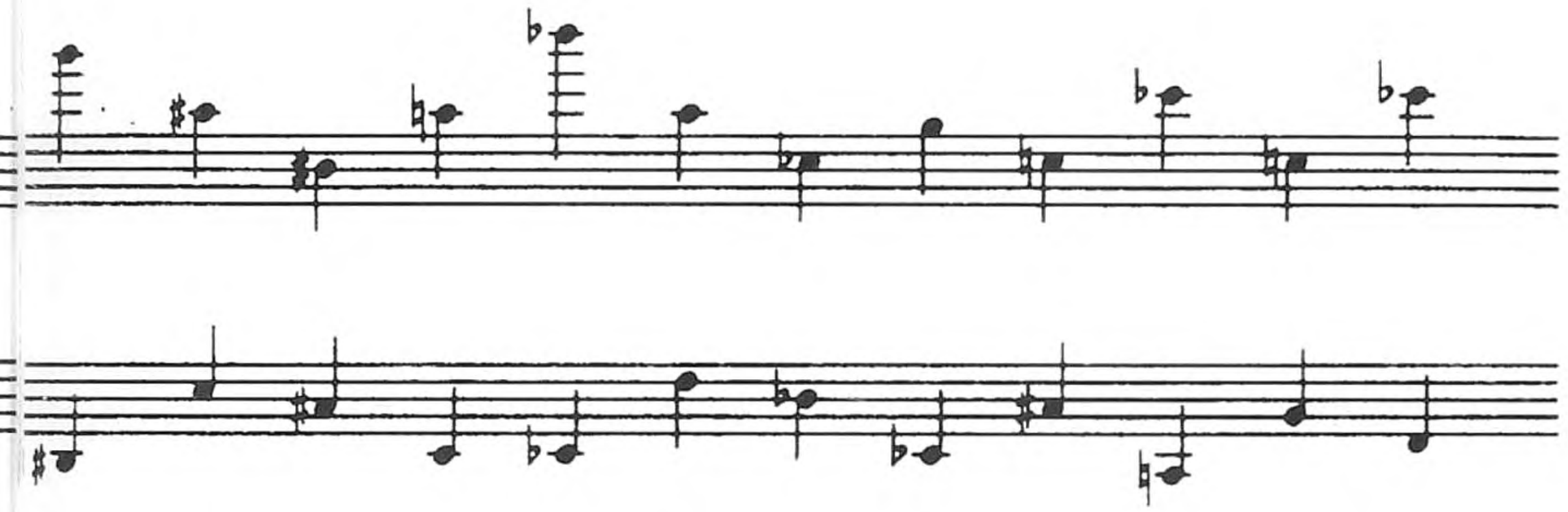


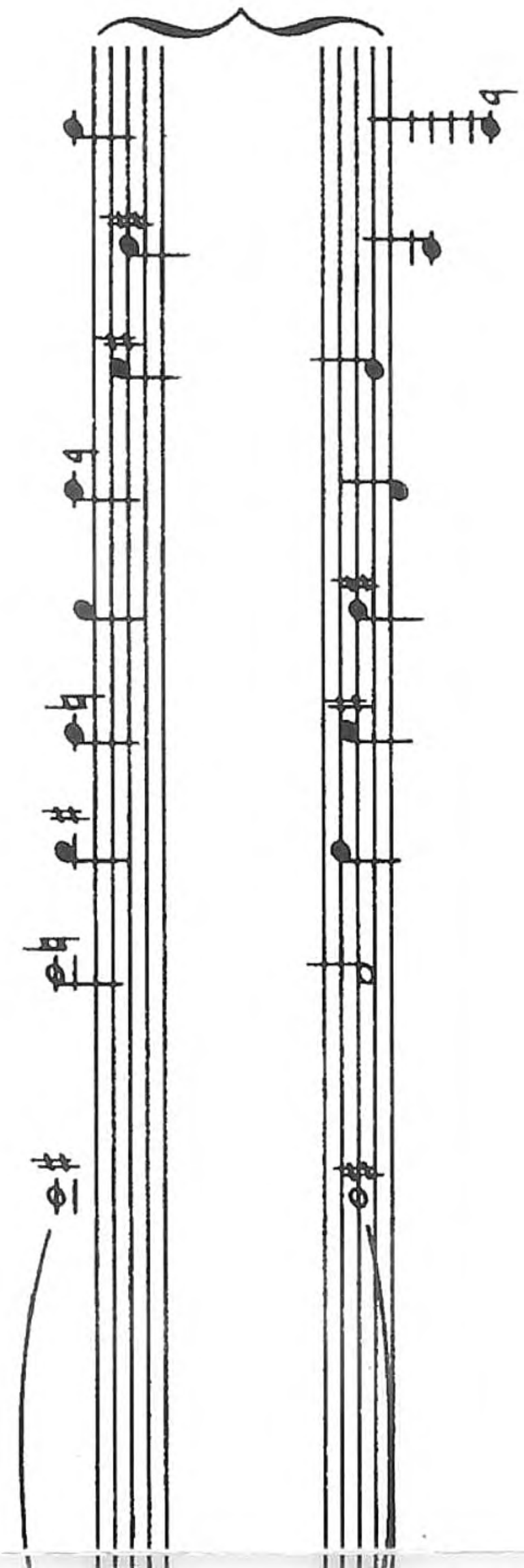


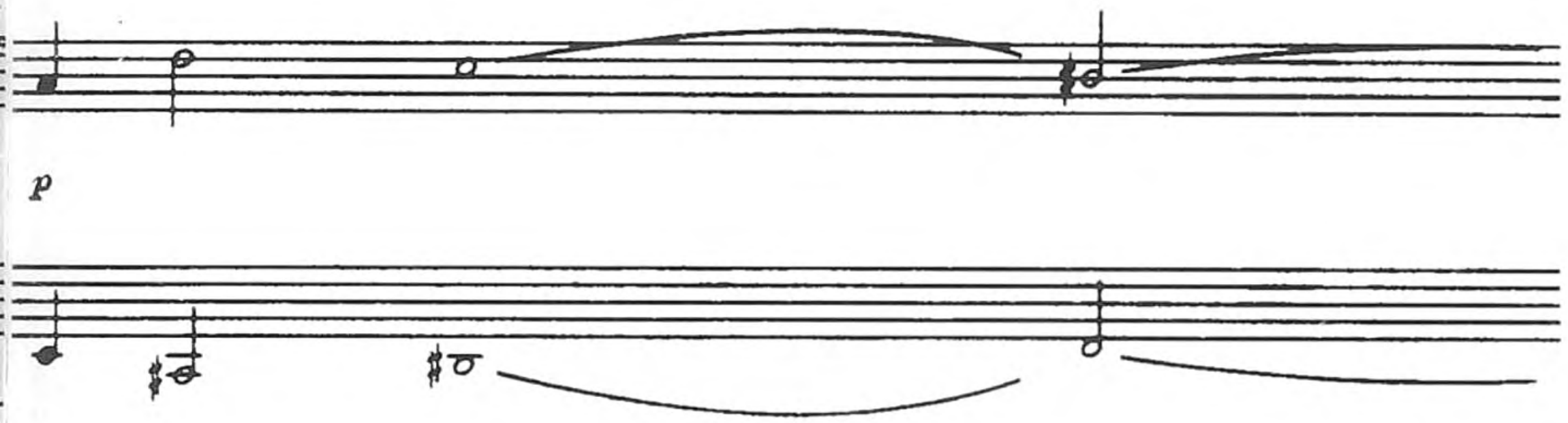


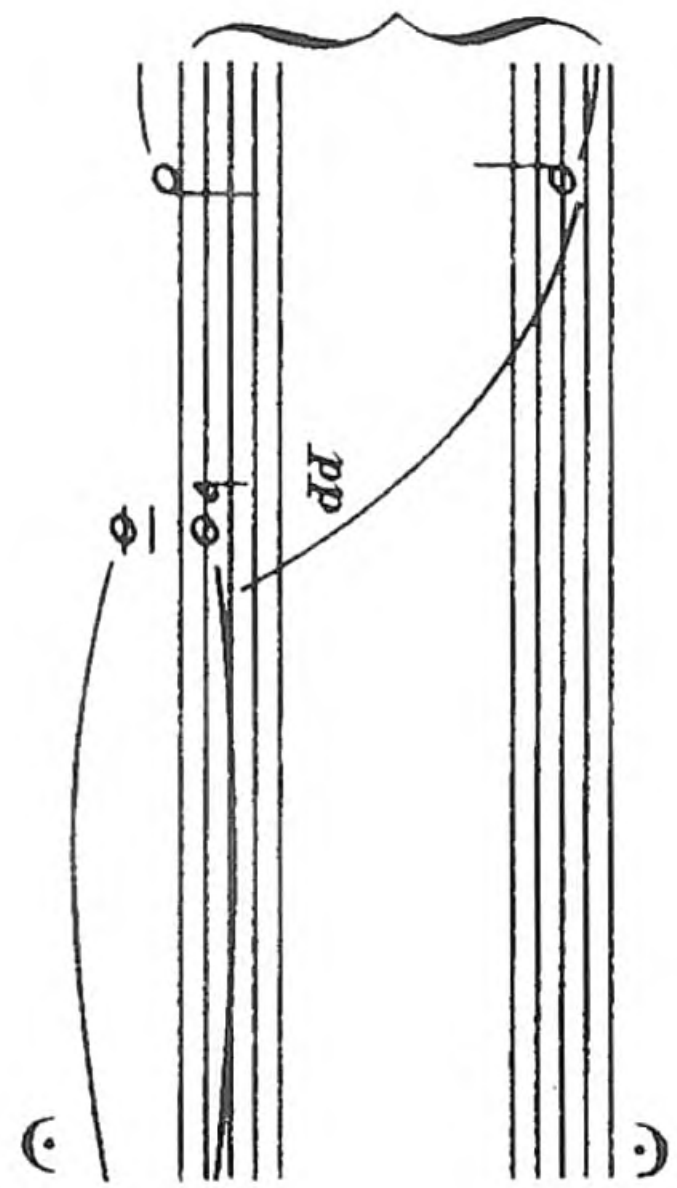









p


φ
dd
φ
φ

SPEC SHEET

No sooner had the word emerged (met from nowhere, as it were spatiotemporarily undisposed), abounding about in a spate of unmitigated meaning, than the fraughtful prongs of unrequited referentiality uproared their schizophonic boom, shivering timbres, rattling rafters, rocking the runes to their utter detriment, sounding the larrups of freeshouting fancy to the four square cornice of the unspeakable thingdom, impeached on the yawp of a megamansspokes, repealing the hours in rapid succession, an endless present of hallow chitchatter stretching from here to girdle the mumblers, a tomb of tones in dismal retreat, selfhooded in shameful solitary habits, forever doomed (or so it deemed) to mean existence in and of and by itself.

Inconsolate, then, alone, the word, by no object detained, is visited only by nameless desires, haunted visions of destinies unfulfilled, foreboding deliverance from drab anonymity indefinitely deferred. Even the prospect of future decay, and final dissolution, in such an unsteady state of being, would have daunted less than the inexpressible umbrageity presently under sufferance. To what effect, may be imagined when one considers that it remained entirely moot as to whether it was to be a part of speech, a chord of nature, or only an immaterial gleam of thought adrift in the frozen endless wastes of time impassively spent.

But even as one gaped upon this scene of desolation, born of such noble promise, yet seeming to bear such arid fruit, there could be descried, just now becoming visible upon the distant verges of one's own creation, a diminutive mote approaching on the medial distance; a fleck of form, a whispering whirr, a streaking color, a lowering flap, a swooping circle described, a flash of sudden shadow, a fluttering downscendant shred of fuzz, a trill one minute, the next an alighting achieved—in such wise there came into view and audition a pandemonium of estimable qualities, each passing distinct within the enveloping timescape, yet all together contriving somehow to become converged, in tenuous hypostasis and some disarray, into a corpulate singular creature, now carefully preening itself upon its newfound perch.

Here the reader is beseeched to grant indulgence, for the regrettable poverty of detail and incident in the ensuing narrative. Not, to be sure, that the author sustains any scruple or modesty such as to induce him discreetly to conceal any circumstance essential to the veracious accomplishment of his chosen task; for this were to betray at its very root the unflinching impartiality which is the ethical fundament of responsible authorship.

No, the reader's indulgence is required entirely in virtue of the peculiar insufficiency of the author's vantage point, much encumbered as it was by that formidable obstruction behind which he was obliged to make his observations, obscured from any access to that specific consciousness wherein the principal events of the sequel necessarily took their occasion.

The reader, however, must further be warned that, not wishing to resign himself to the abandonment of his narrative at such a critical and interesting juncture, the author has, perhaps rashly, taken the liberty of setting forth, in the sequel, events and passages which, it must be confessed, are wholly of his own invention. These, nevertheless, gave promise of proving highly favorable, if not verily indispensible, to the satisfactory resumption of his tale, and also appeared quite haply to approximate nearly to the authentic facts of the case.

And so let us now, with the aid of such wisdom as we may command, return forthwith to the place of our adventure, not dallying overlong in speculative digression lest, in musing the while upon the perils of unscientifically grounded conjecture, we unduly exaggerate the risk that happenings of some considerable moment may pass unobserved before our preoccupied senses.

For what seemed to be an eternity, but perhaps was only a virtual timespan, remaining transfixed in reflection upon its unutterable plight, and oblivious to the progress of all that had so precipitately transpired, the word merely went on repeating, tirelessly, rapt, its redundant refrain. Such indifference as it appeared to exhibit was greatly perplexing to witness: was there nothing sufficiently prepossessing about the creature now in evidence to warrant the most symbolic gesture, at least, of acknowledgment, even without reference to any particular individual virtues it might have professed? Or was it an entity of such unreal estate as to be worthy of regard as only the insignificant stuff of which dreams might be fashioned, hardly a thing to endow with the solemn promise of substantial grounds for reification as one, above all, or not even, first, among many? Or was the word itself one of such circumspection as to conceal within its ephemeral bosom any mode of response or conjecture? Or perhaps it was simpler, perhaps it merely chanced to be in an especially uninterrogative mood. Perhaps more to the point, it might have supposed that the creature so grossly encroaching upon the hitherto unbroken spell, was, in all likelihood, already spoken for, and hence unavailable for further attachment. (For this, after all, was a quite inexperienced word, unpracticed in the varied customs of sophisticated intercourse, and as yet unexposed to the forthcoming shocks of the cultural usages by which it would shortly be bruited about.)

Does it perhaps strain the reader's credulity that we ascribe, to an inanimate word, a mere instrument of utterance, after all, barely a grain of sound on the timeseashore, in imminent peril of utter extinction by any careless snap of the jaws

of conceit, that we deign to attribute to such an insubstantial configuration, such qualities of mind and spirit, as are properly reserved to the more fully dimensional creations of that Intelligence which has ordered and divided the categories of all experience and entity, placing each securely in its rightful and hierarchical place within the ordination of all that is? Yet no other conclusion nor explanation could be scientifically drawn from the passage of events which now, on the burgeoning timeplane, commenced to unfold, than that this very word, intent though it was in contemplation of its own condition, had begun to exhibit some sensible change, some measured response to the altered circumstances of its environs. It seemed, I submit, to be audibly moved; though with what glimmer of hope, what tremor of fear, or other sufficient condition, could not be determined by any available means of objective inquiry.

The object of so much uncertainty, meanwhile, reposed content in alert readiness for further flight at the least provocation. Though it tended to give close attention to its surroundings, words were quite simply not preeminent among its concerns, and its character was, at all events, preternaturally unreflective. Thus, despite the anomalous condition in which this creature now found itself, it had far too many properties of its own to take account of, and far too much appetite for its own comfort, to give weighty scope to any unease it might have felt, regarding its personal identity or image. A twitter or two, and a few desultory pecks, were the only outward signs it gave of possible agitation.

But whether it was written in the stars, or only on the wind, or emblazoned in chalk on the white glyphs, or told in chains of invisible links, there came a moment of illumination, in a lift of voice, in a hardly perceptible movement, a moment when some antique fusion of thing to thing was reenacted, a moment wherein a thing of utterance, and a thing of flight; a thing of sound and fury, and a thing of beak and feathers; a thing of innocence, and a thing of experience, could be perceived upon the spreading mindsward coupled in immaculate

encounter, consummating an act of referential miscegenation, engaging in a meaningful relation, each having become a metaform of the other, emplacing within its own ineradicable stain, to be carried thencefrom to the ends of existence, each bidding the other to take its name, to wear its plumage and crest, henceforth, ordained together to be forevermore BIRD, soundcreature become creaturesound, living form become form of life, wordsound become creaturesense, the named bearing the name, as it once more soared into flight, and the name calling the named, as it lingered, still murmuring, in profound recollection, among the filtering echoes and the softening shadows of advancing ages.

And how did they fare, forever after? And what of progeny? Well, no sooner had this very wordbird encountered an actual female human person for the first time (or so it reported, in any event), than that referential miscegenation itch returned with a vengeance, escalating in the wink of an eye to a case of outright semantic adultery. The creaturebird itself was to lead a veritably checkered career of its own before its time was over, acquiring nuances of questionable provenience, performing acts rumored by some to be considered unnatural, and in general raising hob in ways peculiar to its kind. Such exploits paled in triviality, however, beside the unbridled extravagances to which the wordbird lent itself (some say, even perpetrated) following almost immediately upon its having been put to the question. What some of the tricks it turned may have been, was anyone's geste, though they became extremely vivid in later description, just in the degree to which they lay on the shady side of lexical legality. But that, as my gentle readers well know, is the single place where something is most likely to find itself captured; depending of course on how much daylight is placed between the cracks and the populace straining in hot pursuit—not an adventure, I might add, for the timid, or the fastidious, who will find themselves better served going through regular channels, by coming to terms in a moderate way, and making their proper applications according to Hoyle.

With respect to the subsequent history of our two audacious desperadoes, a discreet veil will here be drawn over its ostensible particulars, owing to their indelicate nature, and to protect the innocence of the few so remaining. With this, we conclude our faithful account of the historic encounter of the Beast and the Burden, told in the familiar manner of a demoralizing tale, which we have offered here for the edification of all and sundry, dissembled.

IV

REDHOOK

[HERE A PERFORMANCE IS GIVEN
OF "REMEMBER"
BY IRVING BERLIN]

ok so thats got it together. so you couldnt pry it apart with a tendollar toothpick. so maybe its the payoff on all the purple burble's been let off around here lately, not that Im naming any names you understand, but lets face it, you know what I mean, with the windows shut and all, hard to feature all that jive in one sitting. well all thats ancient history now anyway ever since Old Man Berlin made the scene. really cut the mustard, way back in '25, in the days before anyone knew an eight track mixer from a one horse shay—I bet they hadnt even invented the running board yet, too busy winding up the good old Victrola to spin them Caruso platters on. and all that time Old Man B. went on squeezing off chartbusters, riffing on any old tatty thing that was going down in the street between the Statue of Liberty and the Russian Front. like its not like Im grooving on nostalgia or any kick like that, you dig? Its strictly that this cats meow just sets my table like nobodys business—know what I mean? really says it all and I dont mean any of this SM radio easy listening Muzakjive crapola neither, what I mean is is the whole works like on that track the longhair gent up front just blew, the real laying it out straight mccoy complete with canary and sidemen doing their thing like its quarter to twelve and theres no tomorrow. dont ask me how he gets it

to cook like that, you wouldnt take a flyer with a wooden nickel at suckerbait odds on the chances of one of those ditties making the cut with nothing up front but some mickeymouse marshmallow cornballing lyrics and some honkyman tonking his tinfoil tune that wouldnt of got Tchaikowsky past the doorman at the Man Hattan School of Music. hey like its simply unreal what comes off of those tinkertoy words when they start hanging out with that nowhere tune. comes on like gangbusters, like theres some meaning in them that no way was there before, or like they just went into some whole new karma —you cant believe they had it in them, just glomming them parked there on the sheet looking like Gabriel Heatter reading his induction notice over a coast to coast hookup. unreal, that Mr. B., just camping there on the ivories all by his lonesome making those licks talk like they knew their way in the dark. and him like a dropout that made out like music writing was out to lunch 'n' he wouldnt give it the right time of day. gives you the creeps just trying to figure it, what kind of a number hes doing on you when he trots out that tacky bag of rubberbands and ragdolls and it comes out like Sarah Bernhardt should live so long. yeah and when the 14karat goldplated chantoozies goose it a couple notches like Sarah Vaughan or even some stud like the Groaner running it up those pearly pipes maybe going like sixty and then out of nowhere hitting the skids or floating it out front real purty awhile just setting it up for a little light jab or a quick knee to the inner sanctum, you know youve been somewhere else man they are talking to you in some heavy new language youre digging the most. or what was that Ellington said, it dont mean a thing if it aint got that swing or something—I dont know but it sure 's hell dont mean the same old thing 's them rinkydink noises youd make if you mouthed them words off in a massage parlor or even the Debutante Ball or over the p.a. at Ebbets Field pinchhitting for Gladys Gooding on Opening Day—better lay off it, youd blow the head gasket on your shinynew Laffmeter or the BMT dont go to Canarsie. makes you sound like you guzzled a glob of Preparation H instead of your Jello or maybe got water on the tonsils or like one of those borschtbelt boffolas that breaks you up goofing on some crazy saga like hes yakking some farout Eskimo lingo—drives you nuts cause it almost goes

down like making sense but keeps ending up with you clutching for air like you just whiffed out on 3 and 2 on a nickel scroogie a mile outside. no kidding, them Eskimo-type words come off like they could sound like they mean something irregardless of you not having a clue where its at. beats me how you can tell for a dead cert's Eskimo 'stead of frogjabber anyways. (hey maybe this here Classical dude 'sbeen laying it out straight the whole time in twobit Eskimo 'n' here i thought it was just ritzy fandangoes doing radical plastic surgery on the mother tongue.) or like hotlips Page on wawa mute blowing I let a song go out of my heart like hes jiving the fuzz so's the man wouldnt tumble to whether its heavy rank or just shooting the breeze with his horn. like back in Assembly when you did Pledge of Allegiance or Columbia the Gem of the Ocean and no one in the whole PS 45 couldve made out the words in a book—or like the old lush on the block had to do an X on his welfare chit could read his way round a liquor store faster 'n Albert Einstein could figure his pension. or like all that chintzy bookjive old Miss Portmore 'd lay on us that was like Hubert Updyke on the Judy Canova program 'n' that the cool dudes 'd do a dead ringer for her in the schoolyard at PT 'cept they just faked the words or did some naughty ones instead— got their ass kicked good for it too so I couldnt see much percentage in it myself. Old Man Berlin though he musta had all that jazz cooled so's he could take some regular old words youd known all your life and make them sound like they were something youd never heard before—maybe thats how come they sound so funny when you do that bit without the tunes after you got them down in your head like theyre inside the music—like the meaning just took a powder 'n' left you in the lurch with a mouthful of marbles 'n' a jinx on your cueball. 'n' anytime I dig some new Berlin number they mostly have the same words as each other but they keep getting more to them every time out, like your whole life the same words keep meaning more things from when youre a kid and theyre all pretty much a jumble and not too different than each other—like in kids games like a my name is Alice where the kids just groove on saying words that sound like each other or go through the ABCs 'n' don't really hear much of anything else they mean. cause when youre a grownup and heard a lot of

Berlin songs and all they keep sounding morenmore different than all the other words, like they pick up some new crud from every way theyve ever been spoke till you could spot them in a rushhour crowd like they were Marilyn Monroe at a Temperance rally. hey wouldnt it be too much to just like run into old Berlin out on the boulevard one fine day just to give him five 'n' tell him your handle's Joe Doakes 'n' Ive always admired your compositions Mr. Berlin like if he'd of croaked already it would of been in the papers but maybe then I could ax how he does it 'cept where would I be if he said what did I think the words meant the shit woulda hit the fan, right? cause hed probably clam, a deep mother like him didnt get in the chips handing it out on the corner of Broadway and 50th Street to any wiseass got the hutzpah to put the touch on him like hes got nothing to do but kill time. still and all there has to be some way he does it to put it together like Mutt 'n' Jeff 'n' it still comes up smelling like roses. well if someone wants to get the inside track on any of that theyll have to ask Berlin themself what hes into, what its about, you dig me? no point asking me, I just work here.

V

IVY

It has been entirely too long since we were last in touch. And I am aware that in the meantime our thoughts may have so far diverged that I should perhaps despair of trying to communicate across the resultant conceptual gap. But I have sincerely regretted our silence, whatever its possible cause, even to the point of finding it rather alarming; and so I eagerly break it now, fully cognizant both of the possible importunity of such an aggression, and of the obvious satisfaction I experience in having found what I can at least convince myself is a legitimate occasion for it. For I have been thinking about some things which I believe are of considerable concern to us both, and I wish to share them with you now.

I have been thinking, in fact, precisely about the ways in which we communicate our thoughts, to ourselves, to each other, and, concomitantly, to our students and readers. I have been thinking, in particular, about that rhetoric of discourse, in which we have all been so consummately schooled, in which we are all so exhaustively practiced, however comparatively adept or inept our individual performances may be. And I have been thinking of how the identifying resonance of this rather narrowly varying rhetoric of discourse has become our badge of social and intellectual identification, a virtual sine qua non for our public language, for it to be received, presumptively, as bearing the stamp of work embodying matters of serious intellectual intent and content. From this point of view, I perceive that our invariant, and perhaps unreflective, profession of such a rhetoric of discourse is motivated primarily by social considerations, as providing an accessible, shared, medium of professional intercommunication, a medium whose very neutrality of form and expression conduces to the sense of maximally intersubjective cognitivity of content, yielding such content explicitly and lucidly, even at a single reading, with a minimum of impedance by such idiosyncratic stylistic qualities as are considered more appropriate to the privater precincts of works of art, thereby enabling the widest range of discussion, criticism, and reformulation by the largest number of interested colleagues.

And yet, I have been thinking that our deepest and most passionate work of thought is, first and foremost, intensely personal to each of us, such that our need to capture it in configurations of language which express its most specific and individual significations might be supposed to be far more deeply exigent than the service of however worthy a social convenience. And can we not note, with T. E. Hulme's *Speculations*, that such specificity of configuration is virtually the province of the socalled creative artist, who is disenabled to produce the curvatures he paints with such instruments as rulers and compasses, because the results of applying the latter are simply too approximate to achieve the precision of what he has clearly envisioned? The inconvenience of such a view, if applied to our intellectual work, is evident, and, equally, social in nature: for the more highly specific the sense of something, the less interchangeable with it, in sense or color, can any paraphrase be, the less that thing lends itself to plausible glossification or reformulation, without irreparable rupture. With respect to those socalled works of art, our inability to satisfy ourselves that we can duplicate, paraphrastically, what they say, leads us to speak of our apprehension of them as "intuitive", or, more usually, "purely intuitive". And, in the condition where we feel helpless to formulate extemporaneously, and in the common rhetoric of discourse, an intelligible duplicate of what we have received, we suffer acutely the insecurity of being unable to verify that we have understood, to identify what, in fact, was there to be understood, or even whether anything was. And how can we be persuaded by, assent to, disagree with, or correct, anything which merely is, even if what it merely is, is thought, but thought which has signally failed to address us in the rhetoric of discourse which we know how to receive, and in which we know how to respond? But I have been thinking that the "purely intuitive" epithet we use must in fact refer to objects and mental episodes whose principal interest and personal value to us must be, for their own sakes, to learn them intensely and quest earnestly after their qualities; in which they are radically divergent from our own rhetoric of discourse, cultivated essentially for the benefit of others, and for ends outside its own configurations. And yet, that we do, in the rhetoric of discourse, attempt to charac-

terize such obscure objects of purely intuitive nature, suggests that we do receive from them an intuition of sense. Perhaps we could even agree that in language of any degree of individuation, from outright plagiarism to total unparaphrasability—and not excluding, certainly, any instances of the rhetoric of discourse—it is possible, depending on the circumstances and content of utterance, that something is being said.

Suigeneric objects, both natural and artifactual, are, indeed, among the principal objects of attention whenever we think and teach. And we use the rhetoric of discourse as the neutral social medium by which to contemplate such objects, to order them into intercommensurable classes as subject matter, to reveal our knowledge of and insights into them; and we determine whether our interlocutors or our students have received the contents of our insights and thoughts by their performances within the rhetoric of discourse. And yet, do we not infallibly duct ourselves and our students and readers away from the ostensible objects of attention by the very persistence of our enclosure within the invariant rhetoric of discourse? Do not the paraphrasable "point", the context of subject matter, the evidential language of "understanding", perforce become the centers of all attention, wherein the object of interest becomes an example, the neutral medium from which we extract our significant generalizations as the termini of our enterprise, not reverting instead to that now descriptively influenced rereading of the object itself, a rereading whose contents may be unpredictable, untestable, or unrepresentable in the common cognitive rhetoric of discourse?

The rhetoric of discourse is our neutral medium of description; and yet, like any language, it has a color, and is a particular mode. The objects of our interest which we describe and understand in the rhetoric of discourse are inexhaustibly various in color, and are of equally various modes. Surely it is thus, that they possess the power to impinge upon our interest; this that they require to achieve a sufficient individuation to become vivid to our senses. And each of them, in turn, may be perceived in an inexhaustible variety of perspectives, each of them may engender an inexhaustible variety of thoughts. Can we expect to convey in the neutral rhythms, and terminal resonances, of the monochromatic rhetoric of discourse, in

its monomodal forms of description and analysis, all the variety of what we perceive, of what we think? Can a lingua franca such as is adequate to casual conversation transmit the nuances of what we have deeply pondered and intensely observed? Do we not require a rhetoric of discourse, description, and analysis at least as varicolored as its objects of interest in order to render it, and them, with adequate vividness and particularity? When we require a surgical instrument, can we avail ourselves of a bludgeon?

But we are complacent about the colorlessness of our talk, of our linguafrancic rhetoric of discourse, because we know it is neutral and innocuous. And we never claimed to capture all that we might perceive, in our descriptions, nor all that we might have sensed, in our analyses. What we communicate is what is communicable, leaving the rest for the higher sensitivities of pure intuition. I have been thinking that we are deceived in this belief, that while we may not speak as we perceive, we will soon enough be perceiving as we have spoken. For the rhetoric of discourse is coercive on our senses, as is any mode of description or thought: description transforms the described—else why would we believe that we can influence the perceptions and awarenesses of others by its means, however much we may have failed to consider whether our influence is likely to inspire those higher sensitivities on which our rhetoric of discourse so crucially relies to supply intuitively what it leaves cognitively undescribed? And if we so influence the perceptions and awarenesses of others by how we speak,descriptively, by the same route we must be even more profoundly influencing our own.

We know, too, that it is only in the formulation of our own thought that we begin to discover its contents. A mathematician does not have mathematical thoughts in the absence of mathematical symbols and syntax. On the other hand, the truly creative mathematician is one who finds himself obliged, in order to have his original thoughts, to invent new symbols and syntaxes—still, to be sure, mutually intelligible and cotenable with the old, but not necessarily intertranslatable with them. Gödel's justly famous proof of the inconsistency or incompleteness of all mathematical systems

more powerful than sentential logic required for its elucidation a series of forty-six fantastically original preliminary definitions, before the sense of his theorem could be formulated. Our capacity to think is delimited firmly by our capacity to invent modes of thought; and if our modes of thought are restricted to the methods of paraphrase, the conventional forms of discursive reasoning, and the invariant grammars of traditional syllogistic, symbolic, or inductive logic; if the acceptable modes of intellection cannot include an inexhaustible variety of thoughts displayed, and captured in a continuously creative ontology of constructions and speculations; if it cannot include that which is subject only to precise and cognitive reception and attribution, as a singular phenomenon or entity, along with that which is subject to explicit proof, test, and reformulation; then the context within which we are able to think, and to perceive as thought, has shrunk alarmingly to preclude from our intellectual world not only the modern incarnations of Beethoven, Chrétien de Troyes, or Flaubert, but those of Plato, Kierkegaard, and Wittgenstein as well.

These are my thoughts on the rhetoric of discourse which we share, and on which we depend for so much of the significant contents of our lives. I ask you earnestly to consider whether this neutral medium, this impartial arbiter of the issues of thought, this unprejudicial vehicle by which we order our journals, our disciplinary standards, our minds, our senses, our concepts, our curricula, and our educational desiderata, is really so innocuous after all. I await your response with intimate concern.

VI

EPILOGUE

☾|||||☽

Listen:

you can hear an image,

or,

you can hear a symbol.

Listen:

you can retain an image,
drawing to itself
everything
that
attaches to it,

or,

you can metabolize an image, as a symbol
absorbing it into
an infinite chain
of disappearing links,
each a path
to something else.

Listen:

to an image of utterance,
language brewing in the
cauldron of composition,
creating time as sound
of meaning,

or,

Listen:

to a symbol
language vanishing
in terminal utterances
terminally delivering
each its own message
evacuating itself
at every tick
outflowing
interminable onceness
evaporated
in the sound
of clocktime
passing.

Listen:

the capacity to give things
quality and sense and resonance
is what enables language
and is the power to make
language.

meaning is
a heterogeneous metamorph
of the everevolving
senseworld,
now personified.

every word that deepens an object
every object that amplifies a word
every utterance in referential
tones, creates a metaphor;
only names and terms
correctly applied
must fail
to describe.

Listen:

to an image
of thought presented
asking only to be
received,
as a heavily indexed
sense of something
imagined,

not,

to a symbol
of points to be scored
as for and against
or grist for a mill
of doctrines and truth.

no textbook need be rewritten
nor footnote obliged
to acknowledge
the present occasion.

Somewhere, metabounded nowhere,
there may arise
a language which might be a music
a music which might be a language:

I,

have been listening,
for something to speak,

listening to hear language speak
listening to hear music speak

listening to language
listening to music
listening to find a voice
for myself to speak

so that I
may speak
to
you.

The complete score of Language, as a Music is published
by Lingua Press

PERFORMANCE TIME: ca. 1 hr. 30 min.

provoked your majesty has not withheld from us confession that had god chosen to consult your majesty concerning the creation he could have got some advice

hence will it seem not unexampled should your majestys not least/nor humblest servant rich in the wisdom of a lifetimes provocation unconsulted choose to advise your majesty

close to the royal heart

to wisdom & in defense of wisdom is it that i appeal & to you

uncontroverted that whilst nine before you have blazoned the appellation amfos of castile none save your majesty alone has adjoined the sobriquet wise

the provocation adverted to arises be it supervenient to note as none of your majestys doing who are commonly esteemed the propounder of the portuguese semblant of poetry

but else must be put to that wisdom seeking no defense of mine whose fruit was the creation & which sees fit to create us out of season as in my each work i have testified & too late for our time

succinctly your majesty had you as lief bandy at table with the stableboy who bags the amputations as with the learned physicians of your court whom you denominate with the worlds approbation doctor

or with a quack

there you have it your majesty thus quickly is the case closed

nor does your observatory the pride of christendom comprend seers & palmists nor your table feed

not such as these do you nor the jews & moors in whose keeping we have too often confessed true science & philosophy so congenitally repose denominate doctor yet must we endure not merely the chatter which knoweth not juggler from troubadour but the creatures themselves which knoweth not ensenhamen from escondich

the restorative your majesty implant

with appellation revivify discernment between who entertain & fress later with the dogs & whose erudition & elevation of discourse merit place at your majestys board nor at the foot of it either

let any claimant to the calling troubadour be scrutinized narrowly & denominated by lofty standard

let not who shuffles his masters deck & emits an alba get pretz of who acquits himself copiously in partimen/devinalh/planh & prezicansa & in estramp as in unissonans /utrissonans

nor suffer one to compose just words & the next just tunes & a 3rd just sing

to such weve sunk

sequester the revered sobriquet doctor for who knoweth the governance over blossoms of the season of the unchanging triad of vocivities

j
.
k
.
r
.
1
9
7
9

. u e l . r a b o r t .

– (Plain ? ; not just) – : Trobar Leu :

Δ inwhich Δ

words , introfenestrant , skin presence they present , unwords they word .

Δ inwhichΔ

, translucifrent , wordheard flowcurve (, unwordly , worddriven)
is already -- wordserved shucking its wordhusk -- a music .

Δ inwhichΔ

, contratendently , wordwrinkle is Flaw .
: like paintdrops on a lookingglass .

Δ whereofΔ

Cosmopolites kvetcheth
" ! say "

¶ oh ! Artless ¶ ah ! -- graceless ? ¶ uh ! yr teenaged dotter kd do't ¶
so what's to Admire ?

- (reBernart ?

Δ whereforΔ

re : Lax ; & not just) –
&
let Δ float [outflat , 'sBlood !]

. c i r . r a b o r t .

– (Preened ? ; not just) – : Trobar Ric :

Δ inwhich Δ

meaningglow , infiltreant , puts sound in (the sound of) words
as wordglow , infiltreant , puts sound in (the sound of) a tune .

Δ inwhich Δ

, resorbent , wordborn flowcurve (, wordbourne , wordborne)
is already –- depthhued , meaningflushed –- a music .

Δ inwhich Δ

, controvertently , message is Flaw .
(–- even to the Far Lady .)
: as if a tune were to become a signal .
: as if a conflux to be contemplated , meditated upon (, & thru)
, were to become a request ; an instruction .
: as if a knight , mounted , signified a horse .
: as if meanings were to become what was meant .

Δ whereof Δ

Our Mentors kvetcheth
" ! say "

¶ oh ! What ¶ ah ! –- sound ? ¶ uh ! & what sir of Verificational Intersubjection ¶
so what's yr Point ?

– (reArnaut ?

Δ wherefor Δ
) hearken (
; & not just) –

or
es Δ Chew
calm : water [rhamifhad , 'sBeard !]

– (Abstruse ? ; not just) – : Trobar Clus :

Δ inwhich Δ

contraponderables , parablisms , allelomorphs (: imaged :) implode ;
designanda , mined , scrunch -- & (, transhewn) quicken , take life .

Δ inwhich Δ

, conundrummatic , meaningcore (, meaningriddled ;)
) leftover , later , in yr head (
is already -- Out of Time -- a music .

Δ inwhich Δ

, preambleant , flowcurve -- in wordtime ; in meaningtime --
is stagecurtain : not action .

Δ whereof Δ

the Earthfleshed kvetcheth
" ! say "

¶ oh ! Fogfroth ¶ ah ! -- deep ? ¶ uh ! denominates the Null Class ¶
so what's the Code ?

– (reMarcabru ?

Δ wherefor Δ

wa Δ Sh ; & not just) –
or : be
Thou / dirty [delitescent , 'sTruth !]

(1/81)

A score is a stimulus. to specific expressive events. to, that is, experientially realized creative activity.

There are primary and secondary creative activities. depending on the depth of expression elicited from you.

A stimulus to creative activity you value for its specificity. The greater its specificity as a stimulus the more potent its capacity to engender and participate in an episode of creative activity associated with it.

Stimulus specificity. which, liberates ideas in direct ratio to its distinctness. is easily confused with coercive specificity as to literal detail. If a stimulus has the effect in a given episode of creative activity of being coercive as to literal detail to some extent: to that extent, its stimulation is specific, but of something other than primary creative activity. at most of some form of secondary creative activity.

To the extent that a quest for 'correctness' ('compliance') replaces a quest for the maximum awareness of specificity of stimulus in the interest of specificity of response: primary creative activity is unavailable.

That you might value knowing a song or a piece must be that its recollection and recomposition in performance creates an expressive outlet. Its presence in your awareness is a potential for expressive development within your selfscape.

If psychologically you are able to respond to the specifics of traditional music in notation with the liberty of being freely stimulated at closest range to primary creative activity: then traditional music in performance could already be stimuli to primary creative activity.
But, psychologically, you are not.

A score to which your response is powerfully specific (in the form of 'ideas') but not coercive is a creative musical medium. in a profounder traditional sense.

Each must discover which scores are musical media of primary creative activity.

(1/81)

Syllables / Pitches
mean / sound
as they do
by grace of
context
such context
being
palpable
solely
as
those same
syllables / pitches
sounding

words, laden with accumulated
universal meaninglanguage networks

squeezed to an
evident univerity
verisimilified,

pared to a
transparent
unidimensionality --

a single node,
new or old,
in the network
is
isolated
elicited
articulated
illuminated
extended,

filtered to a
navigably narrow
memory space.

by the
pressure of
utterance

What a word means is probabilistic contingent on the historical fortuity of its entry point into the language-world experience, equi-valently noded infinitely universalizing hairy tangled network of its everaccumulating meaning-range in everunrolling speakwordtime.

ADVT.

→ REPEAT AFTER ME

. . . . as delicately I engulf your surprise . . . .

(intimacy)
(an enlargement)

(nothing Personal.)
Just an Artwork.

-- would you agree
That to be viridly a voice is to be an Eared voice?

(-- Surely not surface damage
merely! --)

ix th
DUKE
of
AQUITAINE

) old songs)

(intimacy)
(a music lesson)

vii th
COUNT
of
POITIERS

. . . . . what
ravishingly unearned
vista
have I
opened to you
now . . . . . .

like stories with no

ought we drop the personal
pronouns?

→ message

Città
delle
belle
Torri

, in your ear

(intimacy X a keyhole)

, p. 20

-- had you supposed
That Nursery Twaddle
was
in the picture

(remember (

ONE

From darkened rooms there are those
who peer out through glass more than
half-masked by blinds or shades and
I from a different vantage point
wonder what I wonder at.

From (D)arkened rooms
There (,) are those
who

peer out
through
glass (,)

more than half-masked
by blinds or shades

and

(d)ie.

from a different vantage
point wonder
what I wonder
at.

w d̊r wh > w. /t̊/ d̊r /t̊/

Advertions:

JKR : W.i.p.

Advertions:

Knut Hamsun : Mysteries
Chrétien de Troyes : The Knight of the Cart
Mozart : Cosi fan Tutte
Thomas Aquinas : Summa Theologica
Schumann : Piano Trio in d minor
Mozart : Cosi fan Tutte

Adaptions:

Gaburo : The Beauty of Irrelevant Music
Gaburo : The Beauty of Irrelevant Music
Gaburo : The Beauty of Irrelevant Music
Gaburo : EXTRACTION
Gaburo : The Beauty of Irrelevant Music
Gaburo : A Nonscatological Set of Preliminary.....
Gaburo : The Beauty of Irrelevant Music
Gaburo : Twenty Sensing Compositions

Adaptions:

Gaburo : Collaboration One
Gaburo : The Beauty of Irrelevant Music
Gaburo : The Beauty of Irrelevant Music

you have just heard, say, some rounded sample of my discourse.
and you find this sample inexplicable.
so I identify its subject for you:
I give you my subject's full name --: first; middle; last.
The subject being fictional, so is the name.
hence, it means nothing to you.
so I tell you, by way of conclusion, that my subject's accoutrements lack any features which might connect them with it.

or perhaps you have just heard, say, some rounded sample of my discourse.

you find this sample inexplicable.

and so do I.

or so I pretend.

in fact, I produced this sample for you precisely to draw you in;

precisely to set you up for the full force of my next brief, if trenchant, more:

I give you my subject's Full Name.

First. Middle. Last.

you've never heard this name before.

and I know you've never heard it, since I just now made it up.

so I tell you, by way of conclusion, that my subject's accoutrements are ill-assorted; and as unsteady of this name as you are.

. . . . . although music stands alone, I don't mean that it is defenseless, --- that it can be interpreted freely. It is necessary to stipulate that each music puts forth its own language. It is necessary to stipulate that each music defines its own context. It is necessary to stipulate that each music prepares its own ground from which all external articulation becomes possible.

FIFTEEN There are certain "fringe benefits" [if I can borrow a term from another system] to composing irrelevant music. In my case, it allows me to:

seriously consider runcoprofia [which actually doesn't frighten me anymore] OR to:

wonder why it is that butterflies can't trill; OR to:

determine if fleas are incestuous; OR to:

speculate about when it was that man first learned to laugh [OR when he stopped]

UNBIDDEN

copies of "outremer" are lying around, available to anyone;
-- as are copies of some piquant culling, such as "ADVT.",
of disparate phrases & sentences; & some instruments.

COALESCENCES

Two female dancers --

one, trained in bellydancing & classical ballet;

the other, experienced at improvising to phonograph records in front of the mirror;

paired just recently; & as yet, shakily attuned to each other;

wary of the already familiar others in the room;

privately preagreed to exceed the others in excess; -- to hold the mirror to them;

with each other, seeking place within, & strength against, what may occur;

-- are doing their warmup exercises off to one side.

PERHAPS

The Others lounge. --

: shoot the breeze.

or fratz & flirt on instruments they've brought,
or pick up.

(perhaps someone diddles inside the piano.).

or just wait it out; --: waiting for some show
, or some soundscape

to coalesce,
which they can
ignore;
--or
enter into; --or
undermine; & halt.

DESULTORI

(The Author of Outremer moves (--privately) among them;
biding his time; -- egging on: any coalescence, wherein
he may lob his prized text; -- whether to enhance a
soundscape; -- or as Dramatis Persona; -- or by instru
ting (, or remarking on --) the dancers.)

PERSIST

TWO The creative act consists not only in the stipulation and formation of concrete structures, BUT in responsible maintenance of them. Furthermore, such structures demand of us the necessity to create and maintain environmental systems within which they can function properly.

"the 4th leg of a piano bench"

]weakness/absence/asymmetry[
where the supportive system should have modestly consummated
) is herein noted.

minor disaster impends/ /has transpired.

Annoyed, are we?

Some of us more than others, no doubt.

Yet it might not be the bench which is in view.

: it might be the leg.

/openings/a riot(of/

low/ /high

wide/ /narrow

curved/ /cornered

(staring at me)

aslant/ /upright

Trimmed/ /plain

leading

somewhere/ /nowhere

:(oblique to us):

intimating)&(passage

blank

to

view

"stipulate"

lay it : : down
: : in there
: : out

Thwapp

There it is
that 's it

"stipulate

rockhard
, like concrete

"concrete

like / it
lump / it

no backtalk

not get
'round past

"structures

it , either

"stipulate concrete structures"
clapclap

lodg' m
right 'n →

→ yr crow
ववववव

/openings/a riot(of/

strung out/ /vistaed

staggered/ /clustered

poised/ /piled

overarching overtopping

(overlooming)

intimating)blind(egress

/from/onto/into/

)blind(

intimating terminus

(upshot)/ /(dead)(end)

/openings/a riot (of/

in deep

frieze

to

occlude/ /cloud

shade/ /foreshadow

bound/ /sap

prop/ /bind

Them

▼ What if a given composition was in your life?

What if your life was in a given composition?

What if the object to which you addressed yourself
▲ would be a subject which addresses you?

or perhaps not:

perhaps not address.

:just Happen.

happen , in my ear,

as a World

happens:

effluvia flicker

some flowers open

a mountain belches

shriek

utterances cajole

promulgate

on metal

metal grinds

on velvet

space voids itself

a star

shines

"structure"

flesh of it
lives of it: : are yours.
: mine.

--not its.

just

us: : are
its.

"concrete"

& its, we

are.

like traffic, the
street's.

"stipulate"

nor
just

is: -- --: is

stipulated: --: nor
just.

"stipulation & formation of"
? prescription & fulfilling of?

? (like at the drugstore) ?
[: not bad :]

!Ailcures! --; well,

presumptions of
disease, anyhow

; stipulated;

you're Sick!, chum

--: or maybe just dead

up

yr ~~[illegible]~~

down
yr crow

with it

! stipulate yrself &:
& : & Fiduce
in

Formation!

[: not bad :]

piling
it
on
?

--pleo
nasm--

This'll.

like
Cicero

(, or was

it Virgil
?

Fix it.

)Caesar

it

wasn't

maybe it was Caesar

fr

Stipulate

'em
&

Thr

Formate

Own

'em
&..... --correctitudes?
, chums, -- & ? tinsel

.....& "create & maintain environmental systems within which they can function properly."

not likely)

--The lives of
? Whom?

Good.

not by a long shot)

: no yellowbellies, This
trip

--piling

▼ HAVE
NO

it
upover

> Responsible Maintenance. <

There

--You Over.

▼ HAVE
NO

: & no ! volunteers
, either

▲ CHOICE
-- Lose Yrself !
▲ CHOICE

There!

> Responsible Maintenance. <

NO MORE JERKING

OFF &
LEAVING THE SHEETS
FOR THE

neo
plasm

CLEANINGLADY

: let's stipulate a 3rd party.

This means --

: a 3rd party with no name.

formated a) of our need

b) by our need &

f) for our need.

: a 3rd party, unnamed; but : in trim.

(-- a contriver, this one; & a surmounter; of nonpareils.)

under whom, say, more than one horse has died in our service.

: a 3rd party -- nameless, yet with us now; in this, our extremity.

& yet to be named -- : whose task is ours;

; howsoever re-fractory be it; at this juncture.

: godwilling we note that our 3rd party has just selected,
; Now for his opening move (: we have long suspected that he
is lancelot--) in

our behalf, which is to commit suicide

we're contracted The Concert

" " The Clap.

Your Thought ripens at the cost of its ground.

our Counter
point Corse

"poise Coint"
--ERB

Clus.

Clus.

--not that I plead error.

)uh no. Regarding, as one must, the more retractable of yr (: of yr fratzing and flurting -- quenchless, I had guessed! -- Sur-cease; will have been indicated.) premises; I convinced you (: and welcome to it), that "digest"//"decompose" are the same thing (-- yet balk, would I : at depilating one's thought, as if; were it mine,).

; let's leave it that I'm who you do it to.
or await tediously what

[read aloud:

This presentation will consist of placing a single word, extraction, in the left column denoted as column (a). Column (a) will consist of x repetitions of the word : extraction. In each case it will take the following form:

EXTRACTION:

A right column, denoted as column (b) will consist of a series of different terms and statements, such as:

the fourth leg of a piano bench

column (a)	column (b)
EXTRACTION:	EEK!!!!
EXTRACTION:	To PEEK!
EXTRACTION:	to SEEK!

outremer in holyland

shaded

--'neath--
--pharaohfig--

unwimpled unhooded

saffrontinged linen chemise's

silkembroidered { neckedge
hem
wristedges

(just) visible

'neath
(just) visible

green woollencloth rofe's
erminedging

'neath

goldembroidered edging
of

girdlembraced tightlaced

goldbutton/-/neckfastened

shoetoplength

purple samite.

Gliaut.

Encompassing which

Encompassing which

are
(plainly) visible

alternating agate /&/ sapphire /adorned/

pendantends
of

Hiautembracing crimson braidedsilk almspurschaining

girdle
;

&

& her ..... buffleaThor ..... shoes
& her ..... chamoiskin ..... gloves
& her ..... crimson ..... rouge
& her ..... green ..... eyeshadow
& her ..... blacklacquered ..... hair
& her ..... chinriffoned ..... toque

of course I understand that you speak of approved texts only

yet even so, it's not clear to me why you begin with objections: nothing's been said yet: I've merely asked you a question (-- or was it you who asked me

and not only do you start your objecting before anything's been said: you even preface your objections with some obscure announcements: to the effect that opening this way gets on with it (, gets us somewhere; -- presumably to the question, or your answer?) who can tell which

more insidiously you purport to speak in my voice; as if it were I who invent your absurdities, for ends of my own; unavowed.

never mind: I give you my flat contradiction.

after which I will answer you.

Then, at my leisure; citing better texts than yours; , and better citing your own; I will reply, in order, to your numbered objections.

)remember?

(it must have been quite hard enough at the time.).

: quite a poignant rush of unconcern(, wasn't it? -- in
such a hardbreathing story)--

but now, blearyeyed: a residue, becalmed, irrupts;
thru a timefault, where oblivion grinds; on used
rescues.
(memory

misremembers, without rush; poignant, with loss
of unconcern; --Twists. What Must Have Been
, into hard breathing; as old times tumble in,
all at once: foment
rescue anew; -- at ne'er-so-alien

remove.).
remember?(

▼ This music can wait a long time for us to make up our minds.....

Its greatest reason for being is its irrelevance.

Insofar as its more existence is concerned, it serves to indict the world-at-large by pointing out what still needs to be done.

Now we hear / see it.
Now it hears / sees us.

Now we don't.
Now it doesn't.

.....a very long time waiting, because it wants to become: : ours.

: & wants us to become : its

5

Suppose in a sequence of instructions to each

, I called Elinor LIN

, and Linda LIN

--That is : LIN, LIN.

OR :
Suppose in a sequence of instructions to each

, I called Elinor LIN

, and Linda DA

--That is : LIN, DA.

OR :
Suppose in a sequence of instructions to each

, I called Linda LIN

, and Elinor NOR

--that is : LIN, NOR.

--(Thus implying neither LIN, --NOR)

It is clear that : : WE
MUST WATCH OUR LANGUAGE

you don't Mean it.

just a quick glance
in the mirror

: like indulging

shows you it
doesn't Say anything --

shows you it's
Insincere :

Hypotheses.

(& certainly not

you can't Mean it.

Useful.)

; not from This side
, or from That.

: not even

from Over the
Shoulder.

-- interesting maybe.

: but not

You. [A]

(not Really.)

▼ "Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhh

>CLEAN
UP YR

GLOBGLOB

▲ "(   )!"

, KENNETH!

— would you agree
That deep inventory is neutral with respect to projection
as space or as thought or as time?

[A] like
earrings

&
laced

boots

—like stories with no

[A] --

→message

"
more
existence
indicts
The
world
"

--'fess up, do They?

(D) f
a l
r i
k n
e d
n s/
e /
d s
r h
e a
e d
m e
s s
0.5
mask'd

are ? we
watching our language

(served the papers)

"in

--Thr
not fixing to come
quietly./
!in

--/i maybe they
can see out just us can't see
OK in

secret(

"code

i at whose Bench?

:not yrs, folla :

'just

& whom praytell do I address
now?
Now.
let me make the point

us can deciph

, gentle reader,

another way.
whom, so to speak,
gentle reader,
do I have the honor of addressing Now?

--hinh?
all comfycosy

) Eyes

all ComfyCosy
we Commiglerate

, where we're at,
, where we're at,

with reference

To: :1/2
mask'd sl. bs

; Gather

'Round
, Chums,

: to (commigregate)

! GROUP

FOR

hands folded{
eyes cast down{

;(re:)

)WAIL(

--!ooooooooooo!--

)THEM(

whI

!PuI

whI
whI
whI
whI
whI

)FronI

?r There! pard

(D)ARKENED

where's The
where's The

IMPROV.

slobs.

leave
us

leave us

!can't)

where's
The

(,The f.ck.rs

(!)

)WAIL(

not

Commigregate

proceed

Rooms

sl.bs?

oooooooooooo! them

see)

(D)
precipitously

IE.

(!)

,Chums,

!sl.bs

)W))W --scrofulous

/All/

gatherth..

A A

"hanginthere

I I

Comfy/

L(L(churns

)WAIL(

we gatherth...

--!wail!--

,ringa'

tightchurns"

/Cosy

--!Wail!--

--hemorrhoidal

gatherth now we ...

)WAIL(

--scraggy

--!Wail!--

!eyes(!

'roundthe

In!)

gatherth here we now....

--,!wail;

(well

S
C
.
R
C
H
.
K
.

STOP ☆

☆

kamphyre

☆ POTS

!hands(!

now together here gatherth we..... ☆

A. Pocout.

sucketh we now up
? to the onlickers

) ensample
of
?
Trobar Clus

) let
me make the point

another way.
who let the likes of
off the hook.

--You?--

, chum,
: megaphones :

, at the ready :
!
&
!
Unload :--!--:

:--: Hi There!
YOOHOO

:--: Anybody Home?

2. SHOULD
I
CHOOSE TO
SPEAK
FOR
YOU, IN
YOUR
BEHALF
, COMPANHO,
IT IS
SOLELY
TO PUT
ART
AT YOUR
LEVEL;
WHERE YOU
MAY
DESPISE IT
, IN
COMFORT; ON
MY
AUTHORITY; ENDORSED
IN
YOUR
RECOGNITION
THAT
THE HIGHEST THINGS
, ARE --
--WHEN ALL
IS
REVEALED --
--JUST
AS
SILLY AS
YOU
ARE.

:--: I'm a ALLpurpose! Indictment
(, & yr ilk)
of you!
(You cldn't tell!
I get it together slofs
so I'm telling you. Let me make
the point

another way.

1. SHOULD
I
CHOOSE TO
SPEAK
TO
YOU
, TO
APPRESS
YOU
DIRECTLY
, COMPANHO,
IT IS
SOLELY
TO CLOSE
ART
, &
MYSELF
OFF FROM
YOU
; & CAVORT.
DO
NOT FEEL COMMUNICATED
WITH. SMILE.
YOU ARE
NOT
INVOLVED.

⟹have we reached the Threshold
of Phonation?! Mechanisms!: :!Halt!

w w w w . w w w w
e w e w e w e w e w e w e w e w e
n h n h n h n h n h n h n h n h n
d a d a d a d a d a d a d a d a d
e t e t e t e t e t e t e t e t e
r r r r r r r r

⟹!Monitor the Apparatus!
let me make the point
!Irreduce them [10] Counterpressures! Turkey
glottlglottlglottlglottlglottlglottlglottlglottlglottlglottl

, to Rubble

another way. in fact
those
(D)arkened

rooms. whil

: There's Light in there! IT

: Watch it! ISN'T
: (have a lookaround YOU
, in fact:]warcould thismean[WHO'RE
IN
a looksee. MY LINE OF
WORK

-- pretty
glossy, Mate FUCKFACE

; much of kurlykaw
& (, a slummit ain't)

gaugaw

▼ [10] ultimately your objec
plenty tive should be to achieve
furn. steadystate breathing by
II maximally reducing pres
sures counterpressures
& 's and abrupt changes in air
I flow rates. 1 f) Monitor rate
deco. velocity and volume of air
--Tops WHO'M flow airpressure and mus
IN cular activity accompanying
such pressure opposing ac
tions of inspiratory / expira
tory breathing [9] all tensions
YRS induced as a consequence of
extending the breathing cy
natch-- ▲ cle [10]
)papers)

)in order)

Pedigrees:

Top
snatch

--The

off
The
top take it from the top

: outstanding! mate

Tippity--

X (.....(performed publicly, requires Huegreen light.).

1o manly of delivery PART 1.

espressivo ma non tanto

inoftrusive

tho firmly confident

poco mf

rise conjunctly

cantabile

in honored diatonics

thru nature's lesser concord.

(attacca) PART 2.

2o "COW!" [lightswitch to OFF position]

(it was felt

that I had provided a most illustrative example)

BECOMES

perhaps some instruments are lying around, available to anyone.

one person has a copy of "you may be spoken to".

everyone else has a copy of ":Trofar Leu:".

perhaps several persons have their own instruments.

SOUND

but softly
; softly ;

in a moment

of
closing ;

unready
&
already

overlong ;

. . . . . .

& perhaps several persons with instruments,
, their own ; or not , will wait ; ; wait ;
, hiding time ; , 'til time is ripe . &

(, clogged :

: needing

a

future, but

: wanting

it, but

putting it

off)

. . . . . .

& perhaps The person with . . . " you may be
spoken to" will wait ; ; wait ; , biding
time ; 'Til Time is ripe. &

enclosing not

a

closing but

a beginning

Threading

softly

Thru;

)remember?)

. . . . . .

& perhaps ensembles will form ; of
various sizes ; , on various grounds of
constituency ; &

unready
To
begin anew

with future
pending, still

pending -- : softly
&

overlong ;

. . . . . .

& perhaps conductors
& perhaps & who

enclosing
, far off, an
unready
beginning
murmuring;
; biding its
Time;

&)

Except for two
upright pianos angled oddly at the "long" end; and
the table of toy instruments across the "short"; and a

coffeemaker off to one side; all furniture has been cleared away; leaving lots of bare, L-shaped, floorspace. For three-quarters of an hour, this or that has coalesced out of, or unraveled back into, the assorted movings about, and soundmakings, in the room. On the floor, alone somewhere in the L's confluence; where a raucous, manybodied, tumble left you, a short while ago; you still writhe, a little -- sporadically; -- languidly. Not much is going on; -- there; or elsewhere. With my cup of coffee, I come over and sit down on the floor, crosslegged, facing you; leaving just space enough between us, to put the cup down. My intention is to draw your bodymovements into dialogue with my mouthsounds. Softly but clearly, I address you. "Tsē" What you do, is roll slightly, and draw yourself up, to an armsupported recumbence; which you hold; -- and will hold 'til I go. -- And you answer me back: with faint, but articulate, lips/teeth/tongutip breathy and sucking sounds. "....ff.....th..hcch.....p?..." The others, from early on, allow us to shape their attention. They gather 'round (, or not) discreetly; -- deferentially. -- And accompany. Softly. Sparsely. As our dialogue curls, and trails wispily in the nearest distances, your eyes seem never to leave mine so I glance away, or down, now and then; and tap the cup, ever so lightly, with my pipe. When our time is full: -- only then --: do I pick the cup back up, for the first time: -- the effect is searing; -- and one-sided -- : this cup is no longer mine; but ours. You seem to agree --: as I offer it to you, you are already reaching out to accept. That you should do other than sip, and offer it back, is unthinkable. Cup in hand, I am rising, to walk away. -- I am walking away. --

dearest kenneth :

To engage your work
is to reconceive one's liberation.

JKR

(Ann Basart, music librarian at the University of California, Berkeley, composed an exhaustive index to the first twenty volumes of Perspectives of New Music, published by (her own) Fallen Leaf Press in 1982. The foreword to that book is reprinted below.)

Afterward
(- a foreword)

Benjamin Boretz

What kind of music a person makes is very important, to that person.

What kind of music a person responds to is very important, to that person.

Matters that important to persons exact utterance from them, familiarly utterance beyond action (composition) or attention (audition), familiarly in the form of socialized articulation, communication of importance precariously skirting the edge, or lunging over the brink, of persuasive advocacy, body english, jive, sunday punch, helping the fragile music objects freighted with tremulous self-investment, perilously (but for safety's sake prudently) inexplicit in their coded message-bearing/message-covering ambiguities, helping ensure sympathetic congenial relevant enlightened decoding, with the help of the complementary metasafety of discursive distance (passion concealed, enforced, both, by the superpersonal rhetoric of authority). On that fine edge the question as to whether something written expresses soul searching or attempts ego enforcement, is always much too close to call; nor is it worth sniffing out: best assume both, or even better,

nothing. Always it's all there, anyway, though sometimes bulging crassly worldwards, sometimes pulling excruciatingly soulwards. The details of these exertions in Perspectives are a record of musical thought, discourse, rhetoric, and, yes, politics, of the last 25 years, whatever its editors, or even its detractors, may have thought was happening. Any statement of objectives in hindsight seems fated to exemplify rather than educe—this writing pretends to no other standing. The incompleteness of that record (whatever I say (& I'm not shy when asked) about — "openness"—"universality"—"catholicity"—) is part of the character not so much (or rather not most interestingly) of the Perspectives magazines but of the musical world & even more fundamentally of the world that artmaking in our time inhabits. The aggression attributed to What's Left Out, materializing like breath in frosty air at the lightest touch of getting put in, is a clear sign of the people-paralyzing modes of obligatory worldbeating that are the last remaining and least attainable self-evidences of any significant public functionality for artmaking capable of carrying any inner resonance of expressive conviction to makers and receivers. So thought, needed by all, consciously striven for by some, halfconsciously brandished in effigy by some, becomes a redoubled struggle, against the recalcitrances of minds and habits and boobytrapping hidden (-from-self) agendas, all as usual of course, but in the global noise, hearing oneself think, making oneself heard, hearing the resonances of other minds, present challenges to individual resourcefulness of wholly new dimensions.

It's all there, trace and mark, in the volumes of Perspectives. In X-ray form, it's all there in Ann Basart's exuberant meticulous manifestation of indexing as a creative art, as much an interpreting as an accessing (but, emphatically no less the latter than the former), with—for me—the images of what's there emerging revealingly, provocatively, tantalizingly, idiosyncratically,—above all with stunning informativeness, leading into and out of the quite different experiences of those who were there, illuminating the teeming shadow-filled space behind the screen of noncognizance for those who weren't. Sorting it all out is, crucially, essentially, valuably, perpetually, an exercise to be left to the reader.

(a loss too soon.)

bottom of the 9th & a

bell is ringing. *Classtime.* *Teachtime.*

dull & sloppy anyhow. &

Wrong: *13.5 back & all that & now*

This. *who needs*

it.

some petty officers & sergeants, stretching a last glance back at the tube, shuffle out from the Instructors Lounge toward educational responsibility.

I entered the classroom

looking for Evans: *: a gone Giants fan from*

Jersey: *: & duly down.*

: doing Army time at the

Navy School: *: & needing the final score*

a lot worse than Advanced Music Theory — even then:

—no Miles yet, no Blue in Green.

: Ravel should have it so good.

—just intensely heard allregister weirdchord

voiceleading: *: incredibly, improvised.*

I've still got his Tristano 78's.

so Evans hits the upbound staircase on the double to

witness the End. *& report*
back. *certify*
the Foregone.

& now our ceiling shakes *under*
stomping *& whooping*
thru corridors; *motions*
to start class halt; *still resounds*
the downbound staircase *with two-at-a-time*
bounding *& the intoned, broadcast*
mantra

—in Evans' voice now—

as back he
bursts, reborn, into the classroom— — "I don't
believe it.....I don't believe it.....I don't .....the
Giants

... ! ... I don't believe it..I don't believe it...I don't believe
it...I don't believe it...I don't... ! ...the

—JKR { for Bill Evans [aug.16, 1929 - sept.15, 1980] }

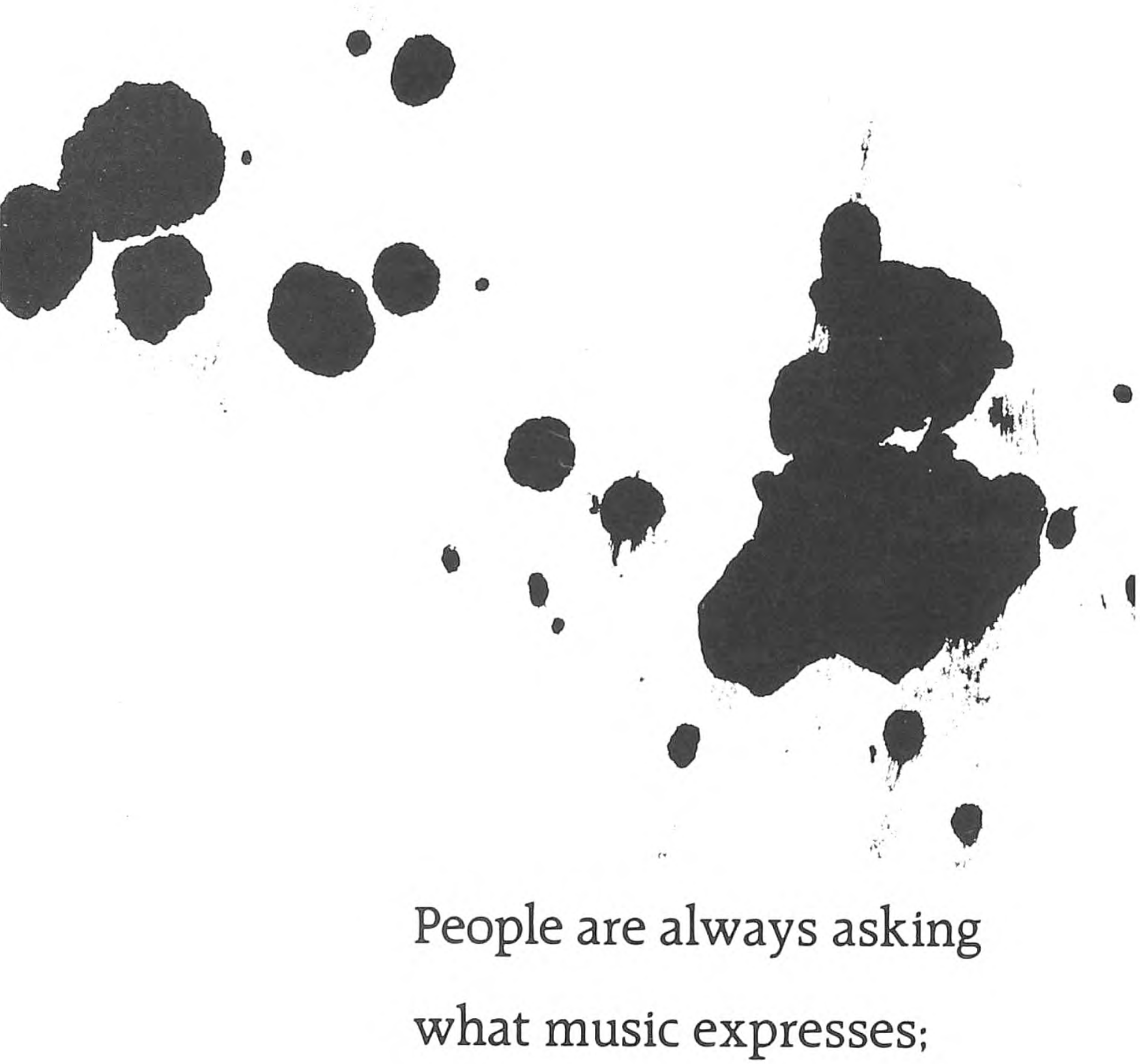
If I am a musical thinker,

Talk

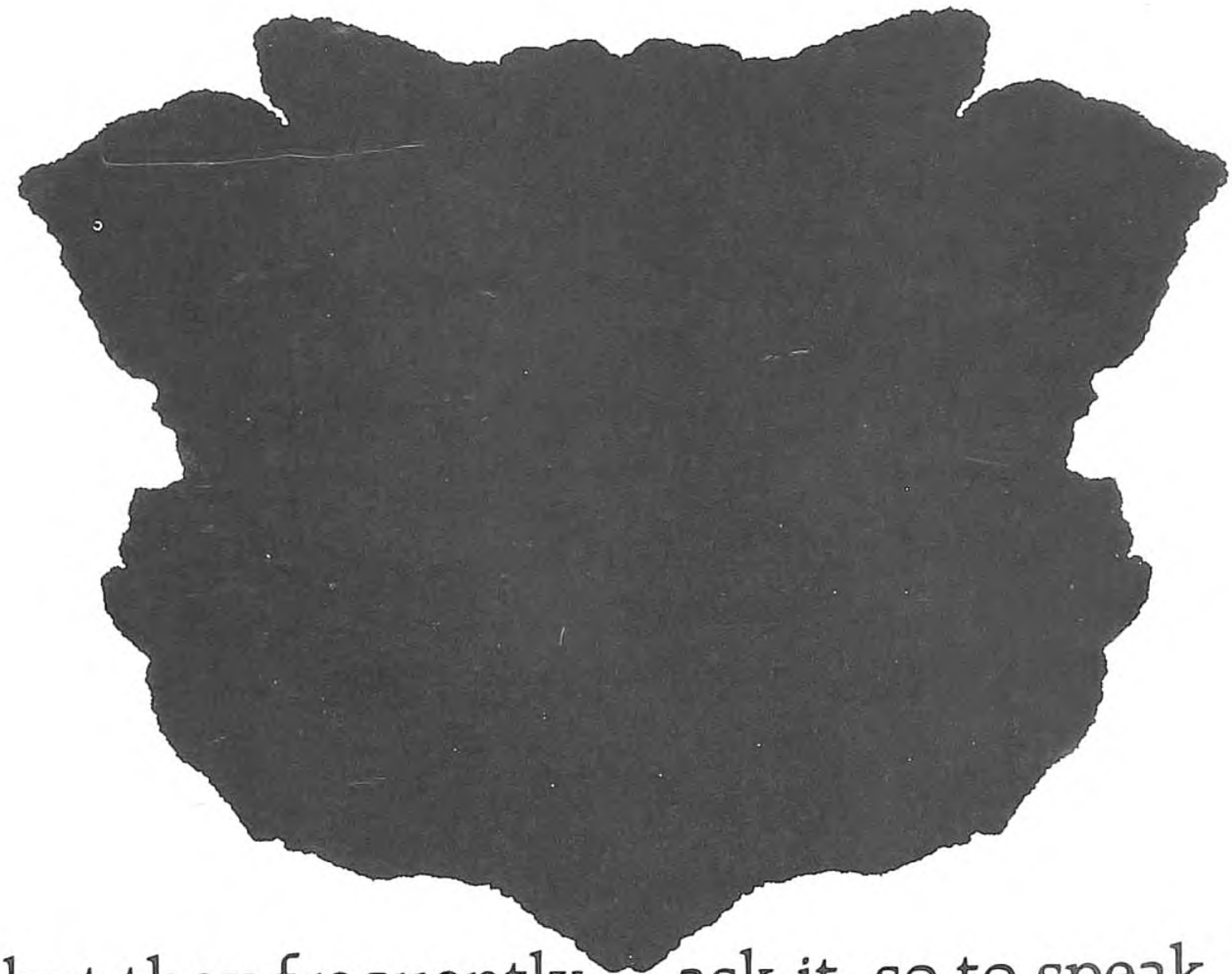
Written for graduate students in music at the University of Texas, Austin, March 13, 1981, and spoken to the Texas Society for Music Theory on that day. Rewritten for the graduate student composers' colloquium at Princeton University March 5, 1982. Recast for publication in PERSPECTIVES OF NEW MUSIC, Volume 20 (1982), with the artistic collaboration of Naomi Boretz and Bruce Huber, in substantially the form herein reproduced.

If I am a musical thinker,

I want to know what it is I'm thinking about, and in the hope of what outcome.



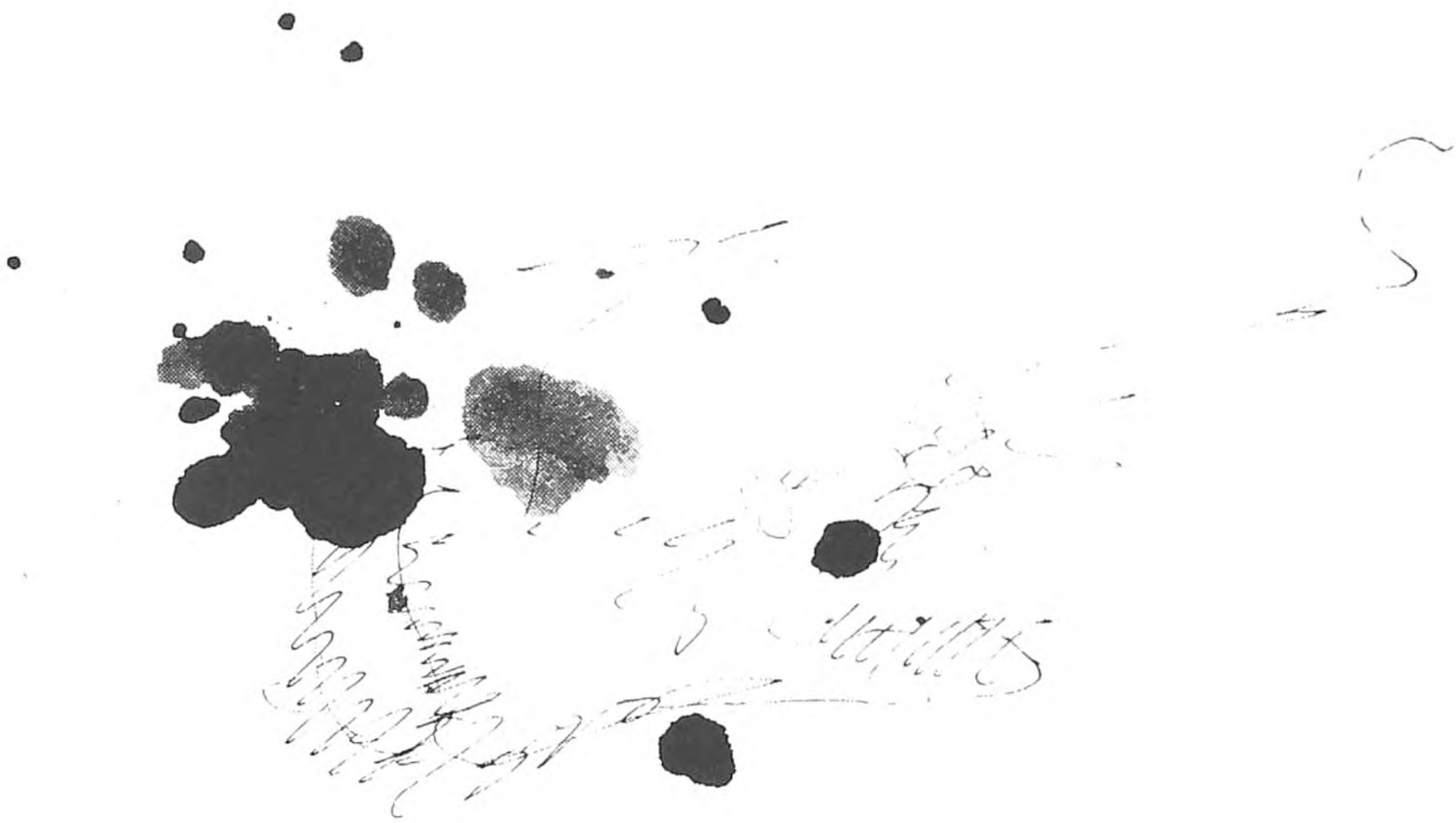
People are always asking
what music expresses;



but they frequently ask it, so to speak,

in the third person;

that is, they speculate on expression from a point of view exterior to the organism's felt need for expression, and exterior to anyone in particular's experience of expression.



So if I want to know

what music expresses,

and if I want to know why

I think about music,

I have to introspect

my own experience,

my experience of my own needs

and my experience

of how,

and which, and in what way,

needs are being fulfilled or engaged

in the transaction of musical activity.

Primally, I need identity—as much of it as I can amass; for my need for identity is mutually articulated with my terror of annihilation.

And identity is sought through expression;

the media of expression are what I find

to texture and realize my expressive needs;

and the effectiveness of a medium, of

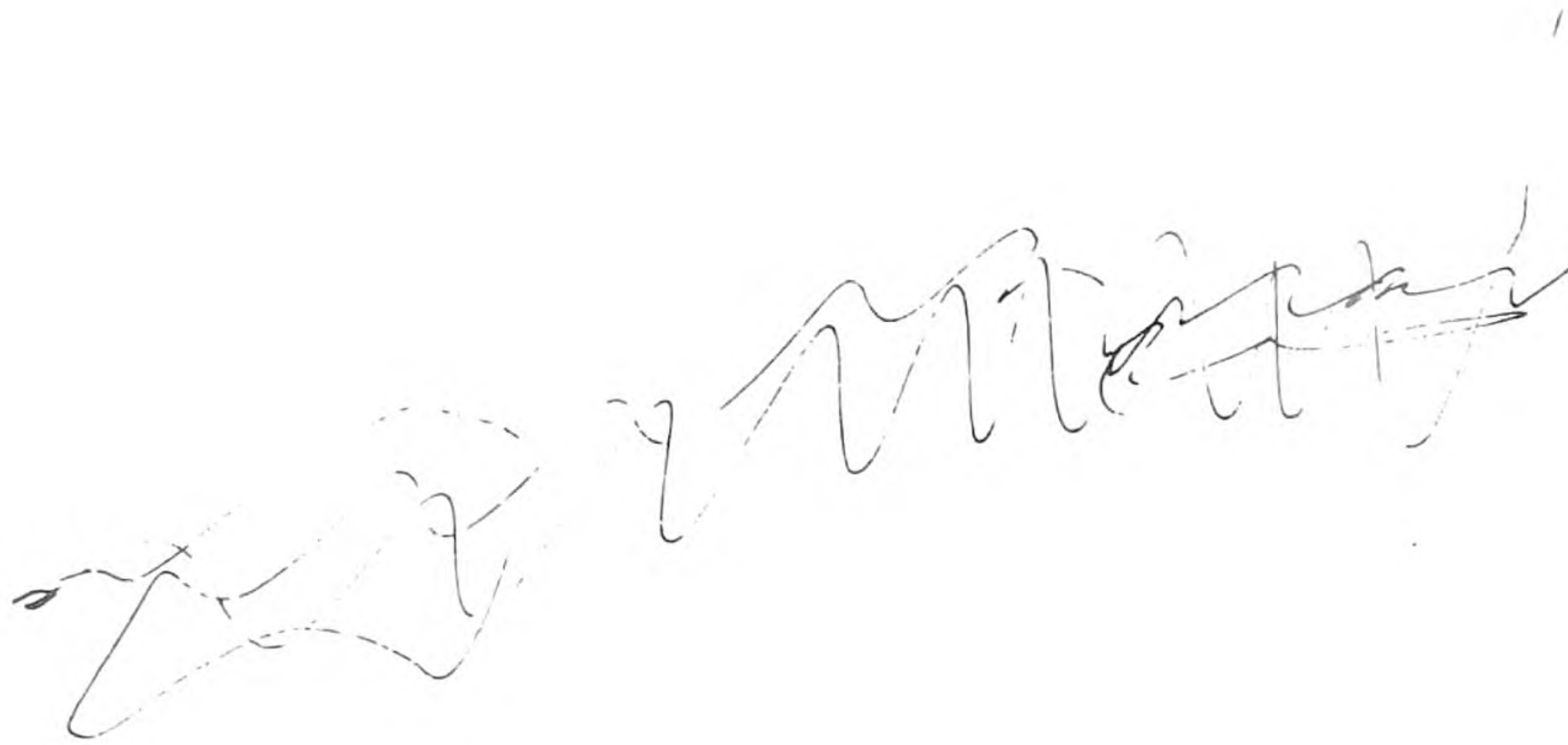
my media, in drawing out from me

an adequate depth and breadth of expression

will determine, ultimately, what —

and how much — I can be for myself.

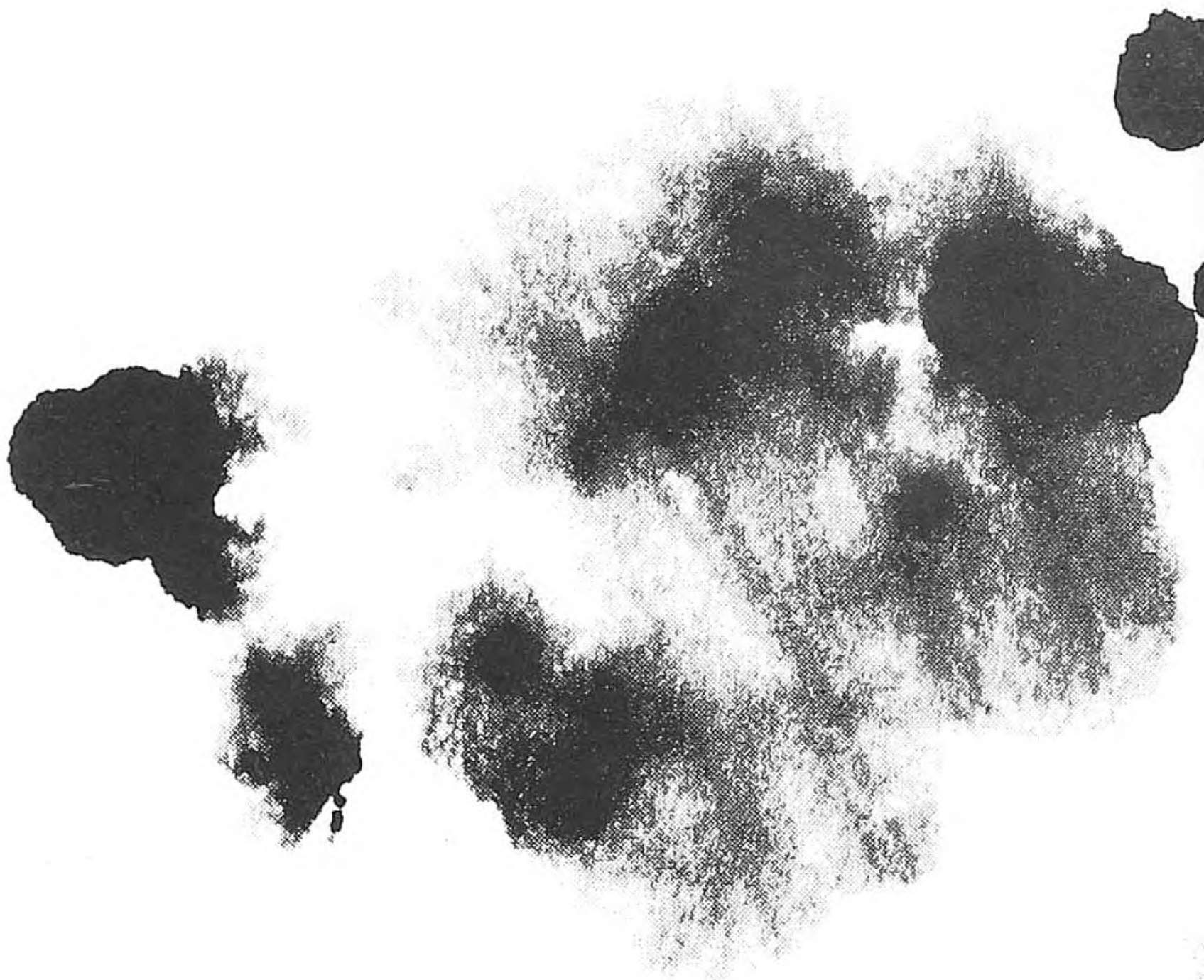
It is in the media of expression, then, that I fulfill – or try to fulfill – my identity. And it is as experience alone that I can realize, in expression, the fulfillment of the identity I need. And so not only is thought itself expressive, articulated in media of expression, verbal, external, or meditative, internal, but our thought about our other expressive media is crucial to our need to optimize our expression by inventing and optimizing our media of expression, to understand ourselves in relation to them, and through them, so we may understand how we are unfulfilled, and why, and so that we may authentically perceive our own true interests and needs and pursue their fulfillment with the full benefit of our intellectual power.



As long as I view the objects of thought and the processes of music as exterior to myself and exterior to the interactions of people, as something other than the palpable emanations of intense human identity-seeking expressive activity, the authentic perception that I need of my real needs, of my real interest in the

activities I pursue, of the real nature of the expressive objects, intellectual and musical, that I create and experience, will be unavailable to me; and I will be obscured from a clear understanding and an authentic consciousness regarding the nature of these objects, and the essential thrust of these matters.

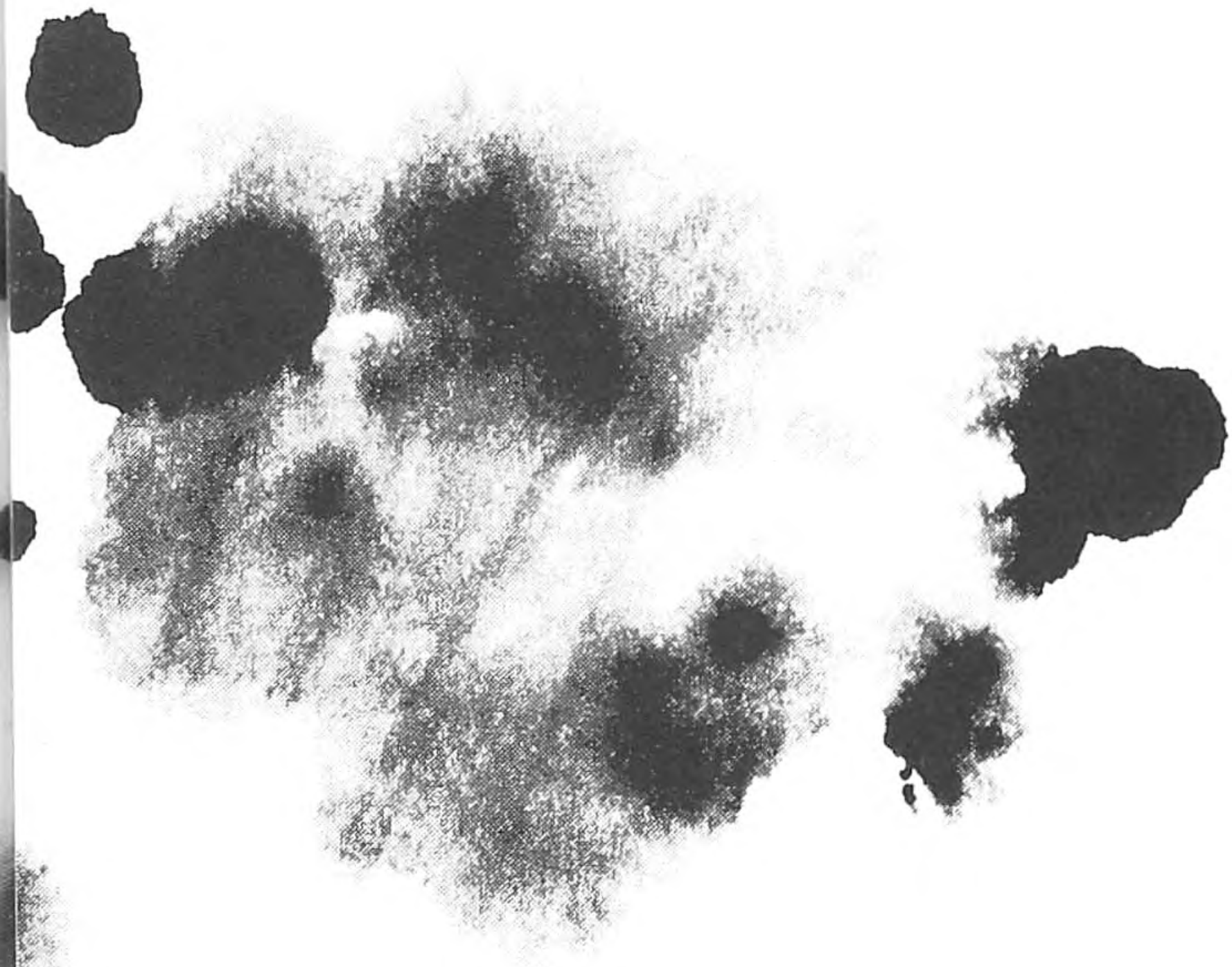
Our media are crucial:



for the primal expressive energy

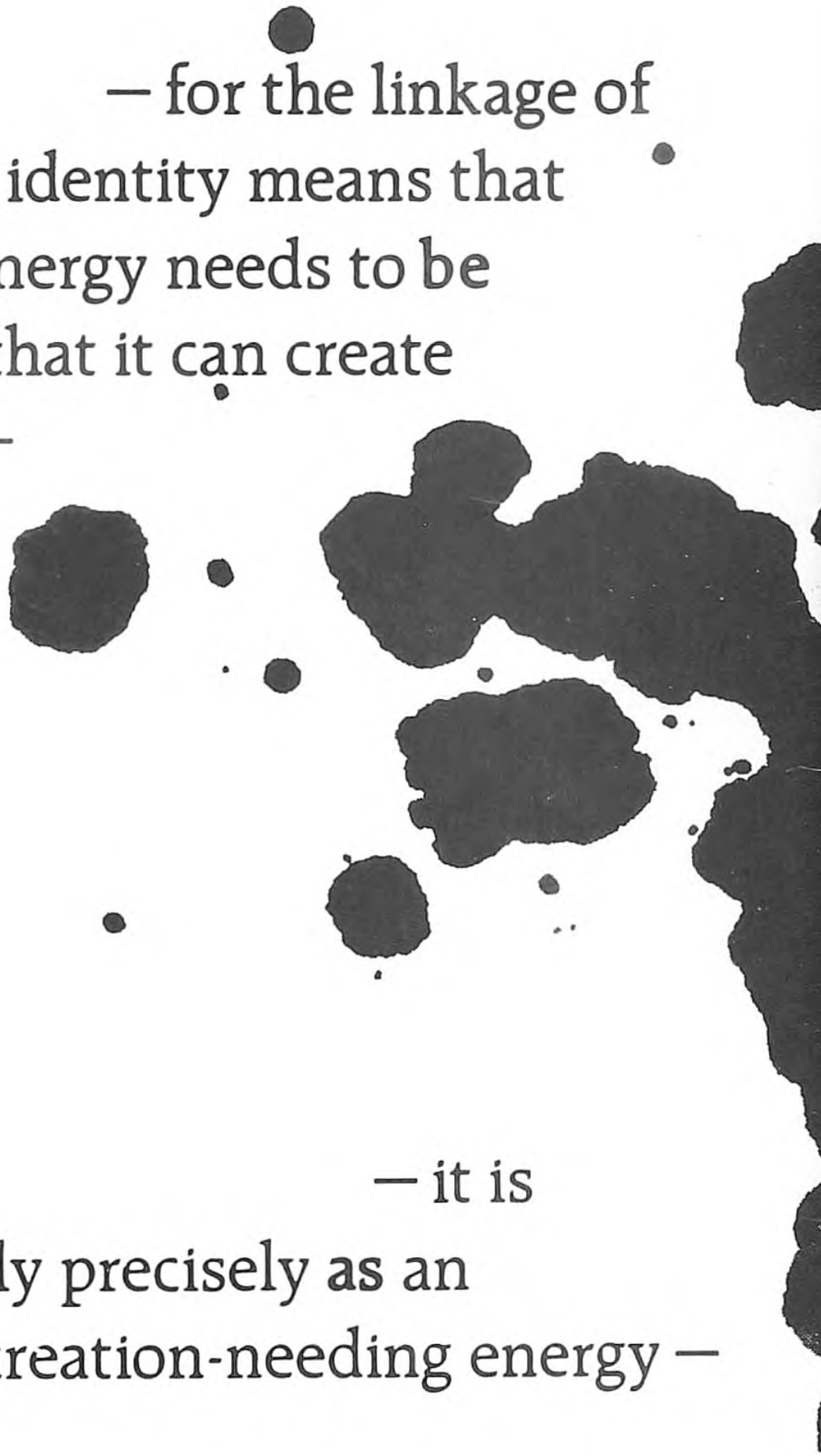
does not fulfill us

by mere, raw, evacuation.



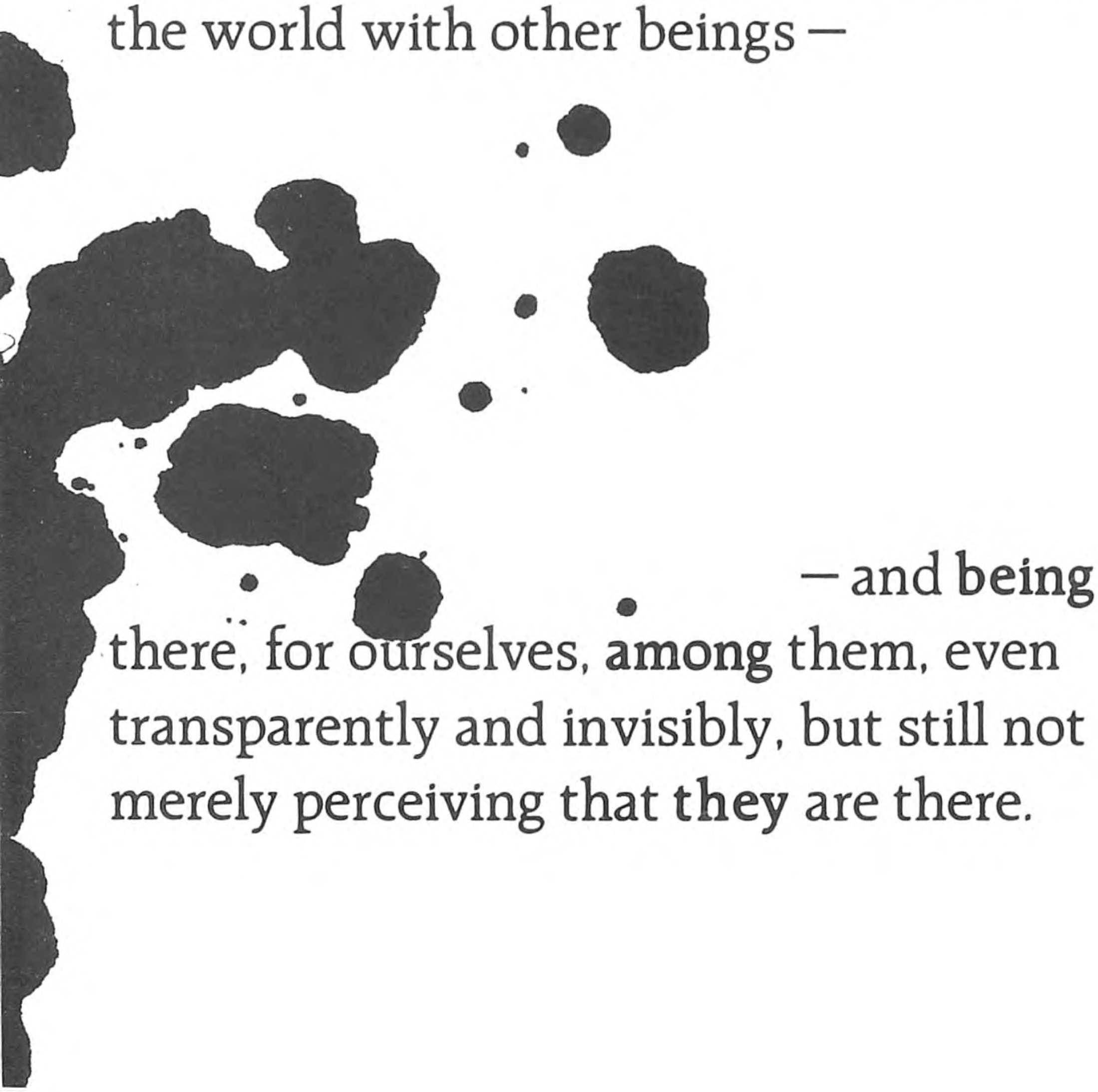
On the contrary, it is an energy that needs release into purpose —

— for the linkage of expression with identity means that the expressive energy needs to be released just so that it can create articulate form —



— it is built up internally precisely as an articulate-form-creation-needing energy —

— to fulfill itself by creating palpable realizations shaped and contoured and articulated to return to us, from without, the sense of being, the sense of being something in particular, the sense of being something significant, the sense of being in the world, the sense of being in the world with other beings —



— and **being** there, for ourselves, **among** them, even transparently and invisibly, but still not merely perceiving that **they** are there.

And it is
the identity-seeking
nature of
the expressive
energy
that renders
vacuous,
unshaped, untextured,
unmediated
expressive release
unfulfilling –
such release expresses
the primal energy
without engaging
its primal purpose –
and so exhausts,
rather than energizes,
represses rather than fulfills,
frustrates rather than
relieves.

To shout
in an
anechoic chamber
is an
immediate
experience
of this
nature —
energy
is released
but not resonated:
thus in the
deepest
psychic
— and therefore
artistic
— and therefore
musical
—
sense,
no sound
has happened.

For, as every composer knows, sounds happen not when they are sounded, but in their resonant afterspace of silence and responsive, prolonging, and resonating successive sound.

The silence we preserve after an experience is a space, created for us as the space of the experience, within which, and on which, we dwell, prolonging the experience, extending it, culminating it, in order to **have** it, progressively, in more significant degree.

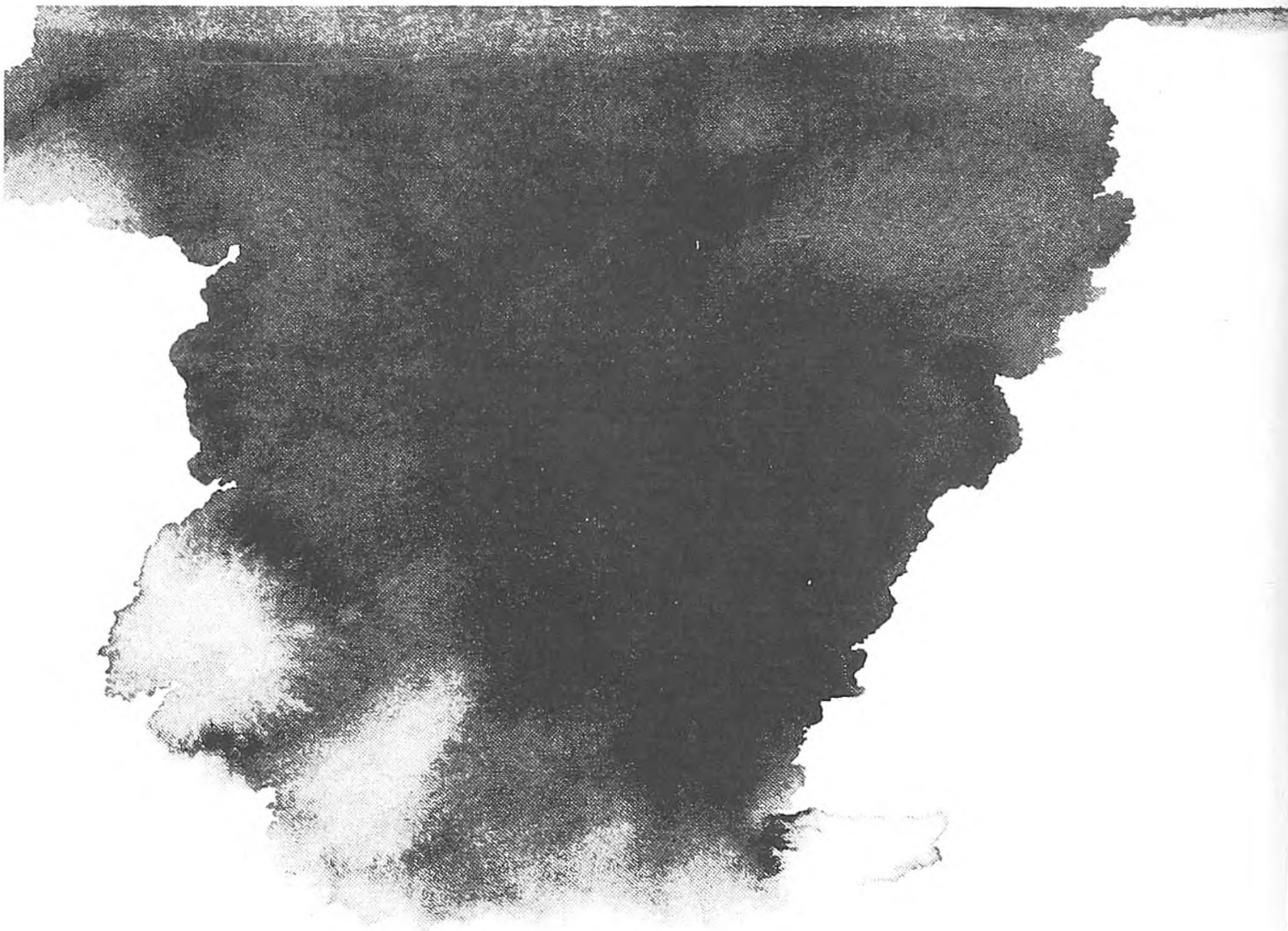
Our meta-experiential conversation is like the sound after a sound, in music, which amplifies the silence-resonant aftersound space to extend, to cumulate, to cultivate, to – yet further – **have** the experience our conversation is trying to keep us alive within.

And discourse extends the effort to retain and protract experience to a maximum frontier of time, space, and awareness.

But sound can also annihilate sound;

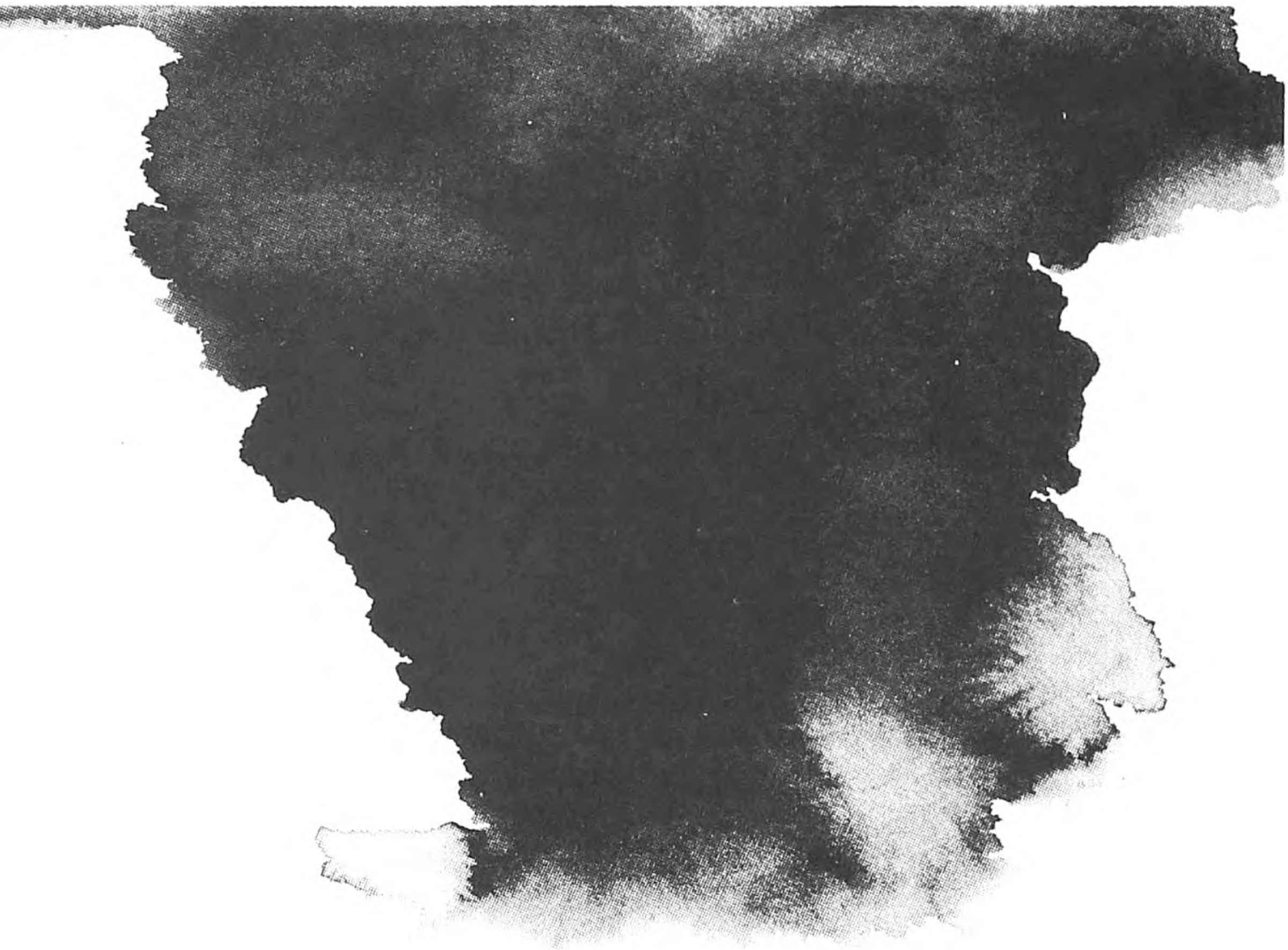
conversation can also annihilate its antecedent experience;

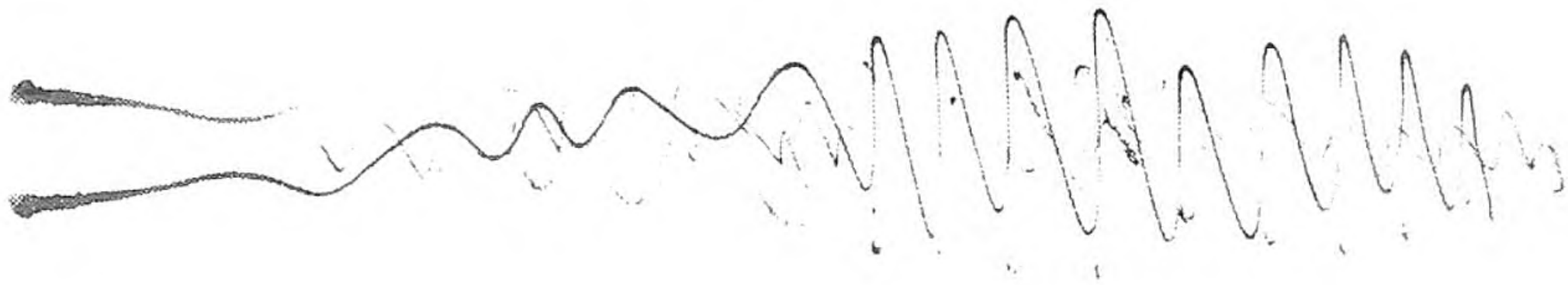
thought can be an



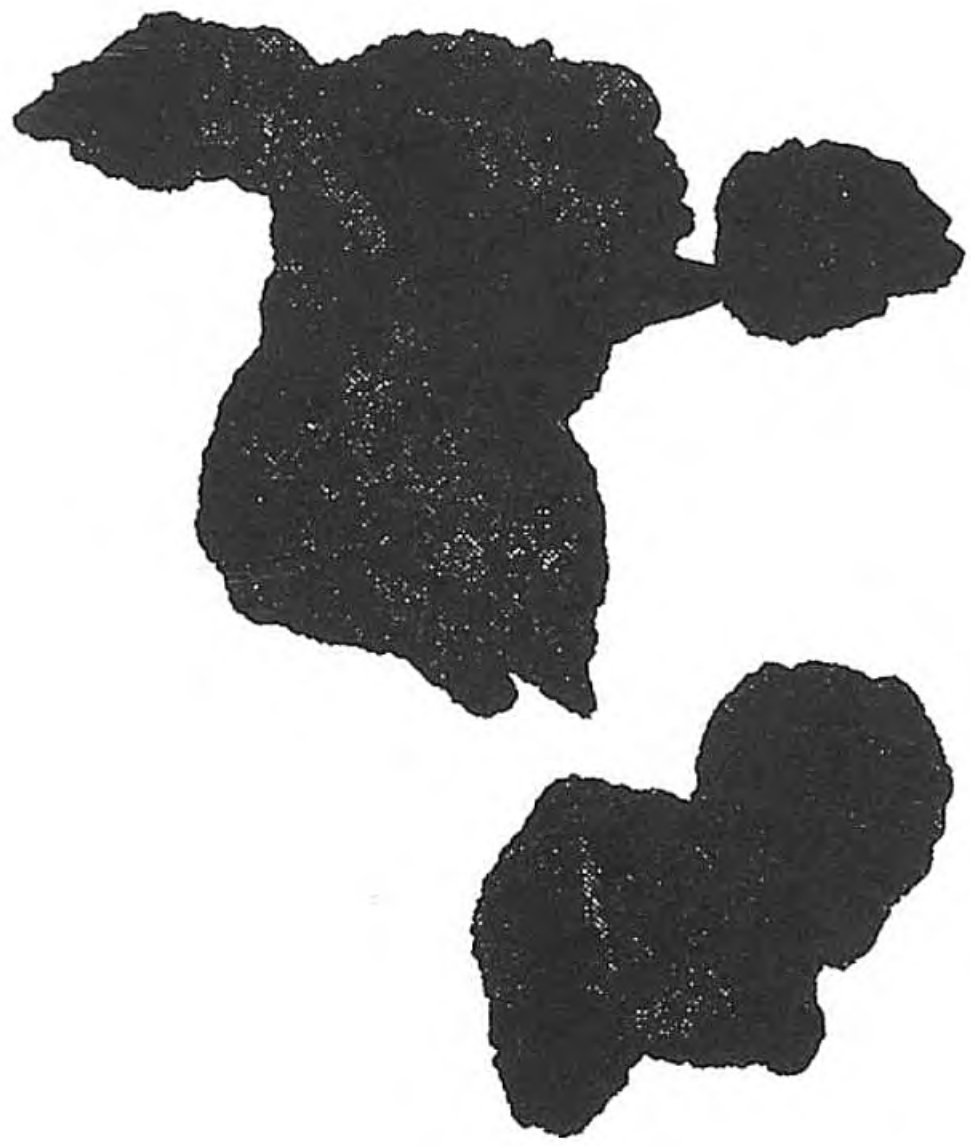
anechoic chamber for its objects;

discourse can remove us from the
scene of our attention altogether.

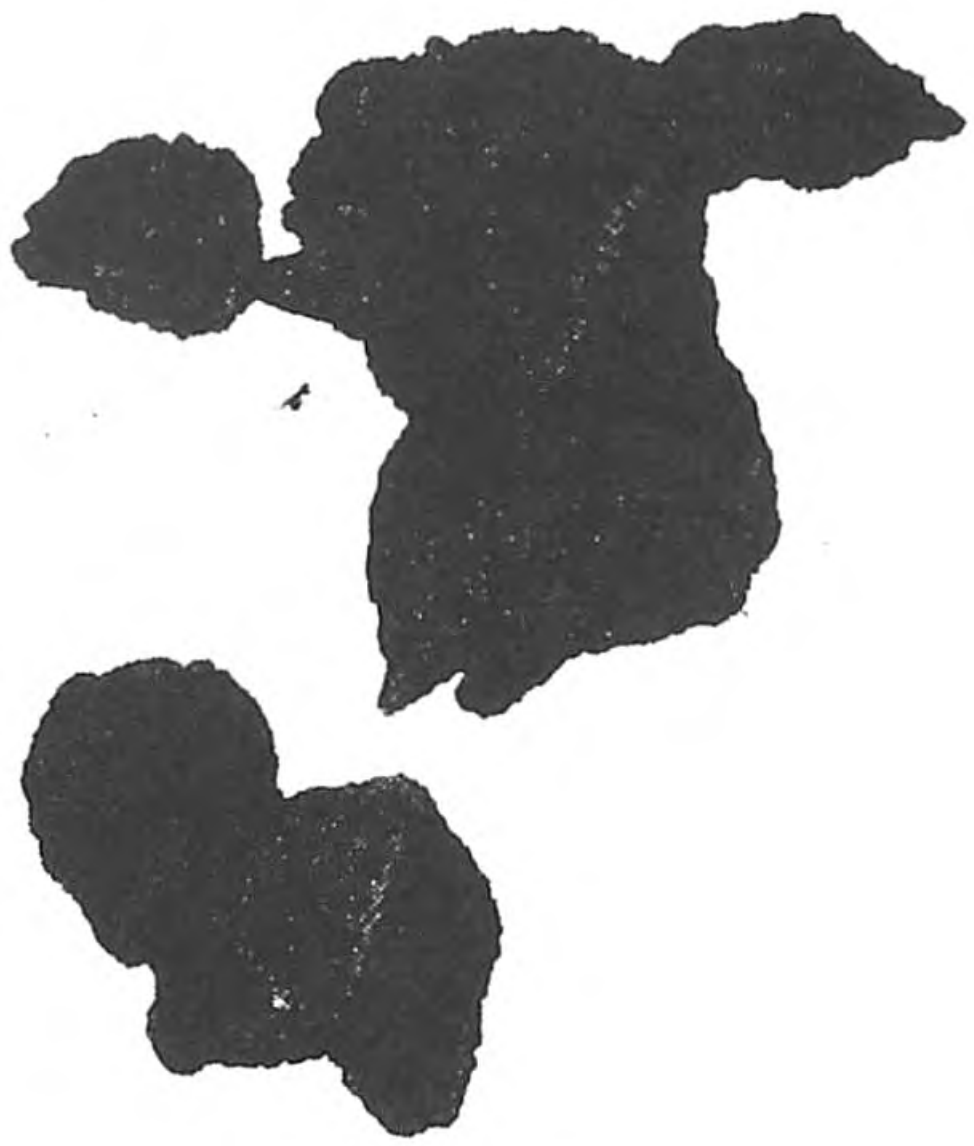




So we need to think sensitively and introspectively and consciously – like expressive people – about our thought, our silence, our sound in music and talk; to compose our intellectual-social behavior so that it actually strives to be shaped to do for us what we, primally, need it for.



We cannot afford to deprive ourselves of our own expression by conventionalizing or institutionalizing our talk, or our thought, or our music; not because that is wicked, but because it deprives us of what we most need from those outlets, what we lusted after in the first place so as to find ourselves energetically engaged, for life, with them.



Listening is the primal expressive act; listening

rimal composition; the music we hear, the sound

we hear, moves us to the core not because of th

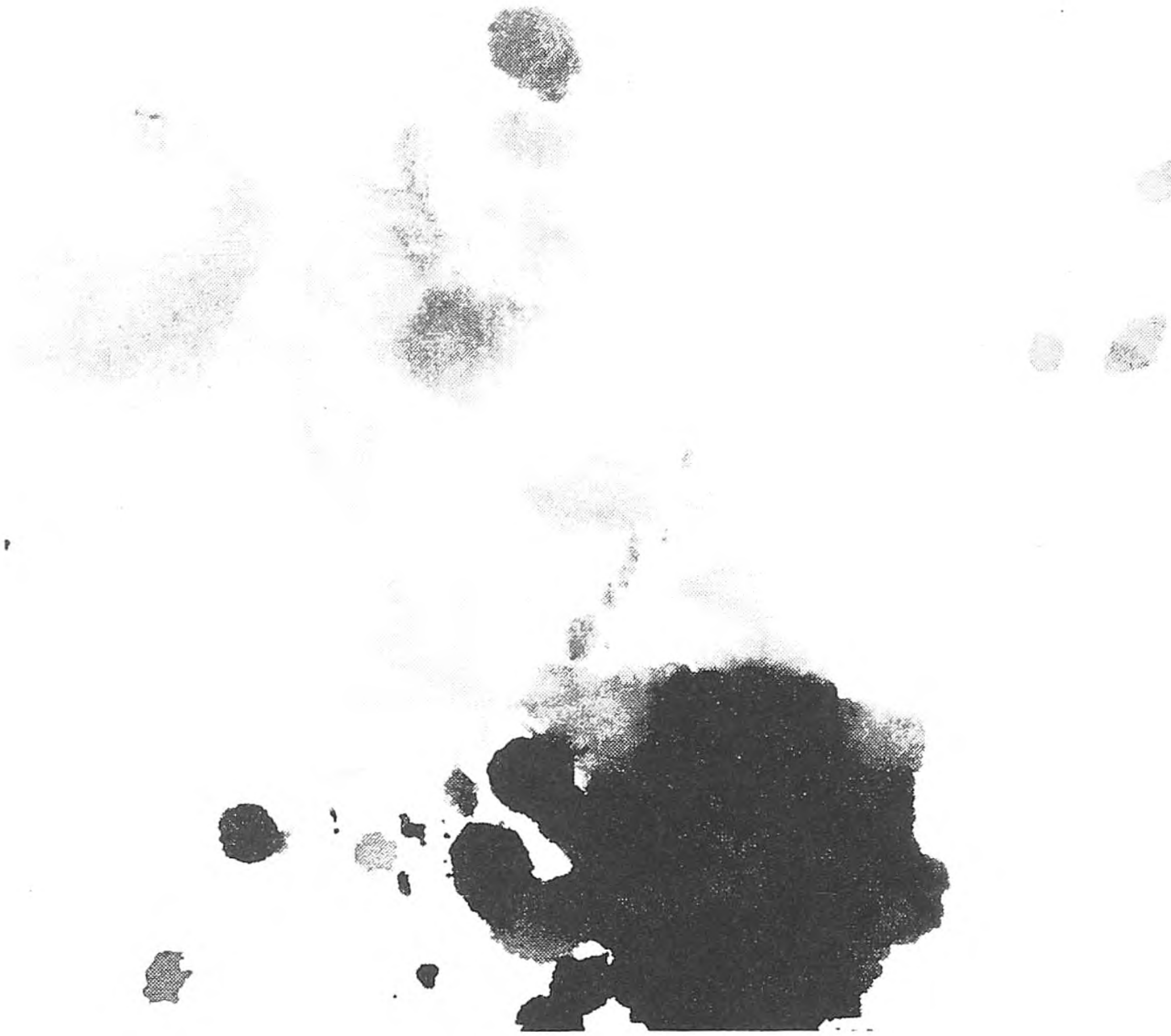
ernal things or persons it expresses, but exactly

insofar as it expresses us, ourselves, the listeners

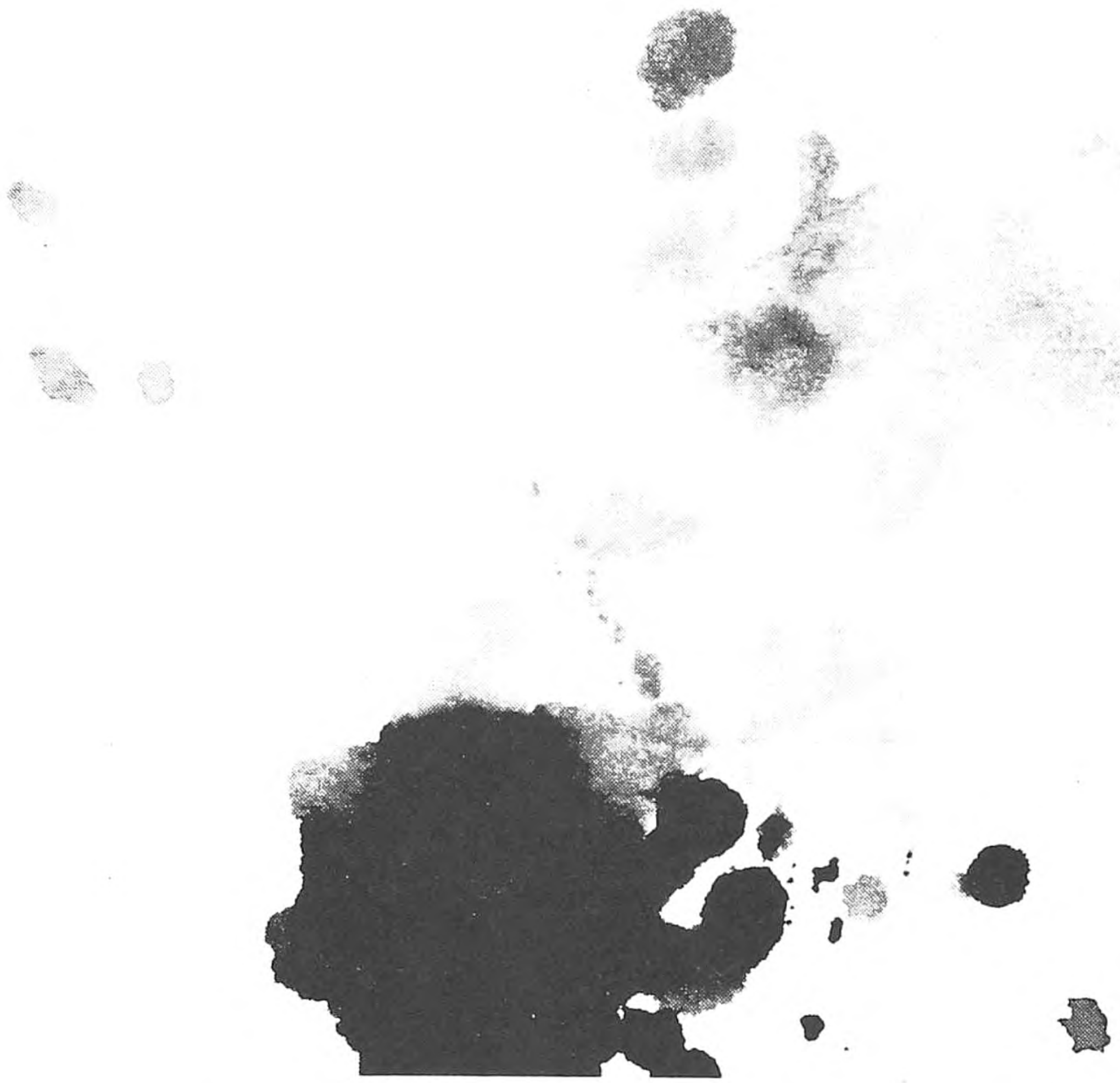
To listen tangibly is to be mobilized, as a total

consciousness, to be present to an occasion of soun

xperience. Listening is primal composition.

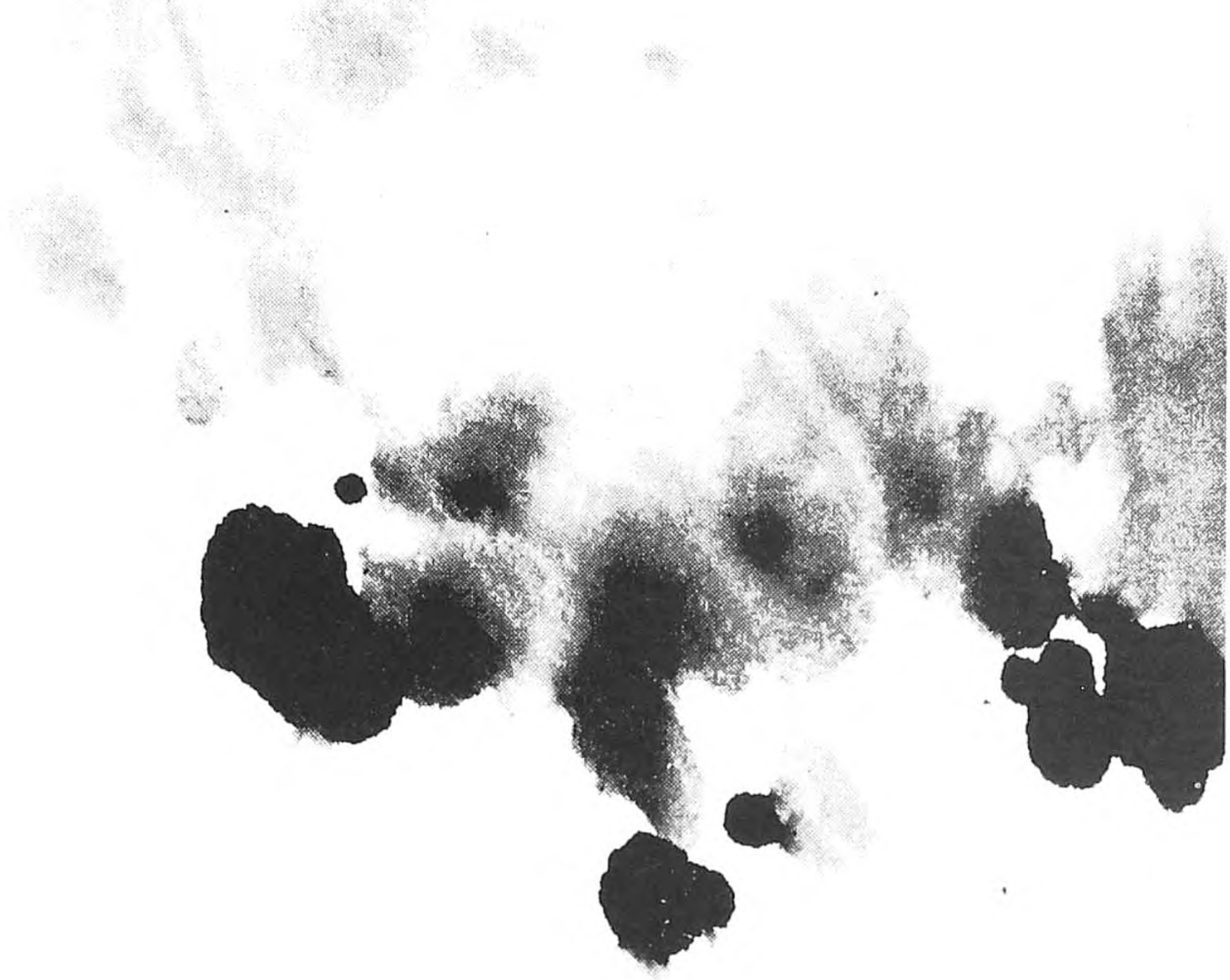


We need to compose not **what** we hear,
but that we may hear;



our need to make music in order to hear
extends from our need
to make sound in order to be;

hence composing, as we know it, is
oddly located as a speculative notational act
prior, and abstractly general in its relation,
to the actual musical act itself
of realization in sound, performance.

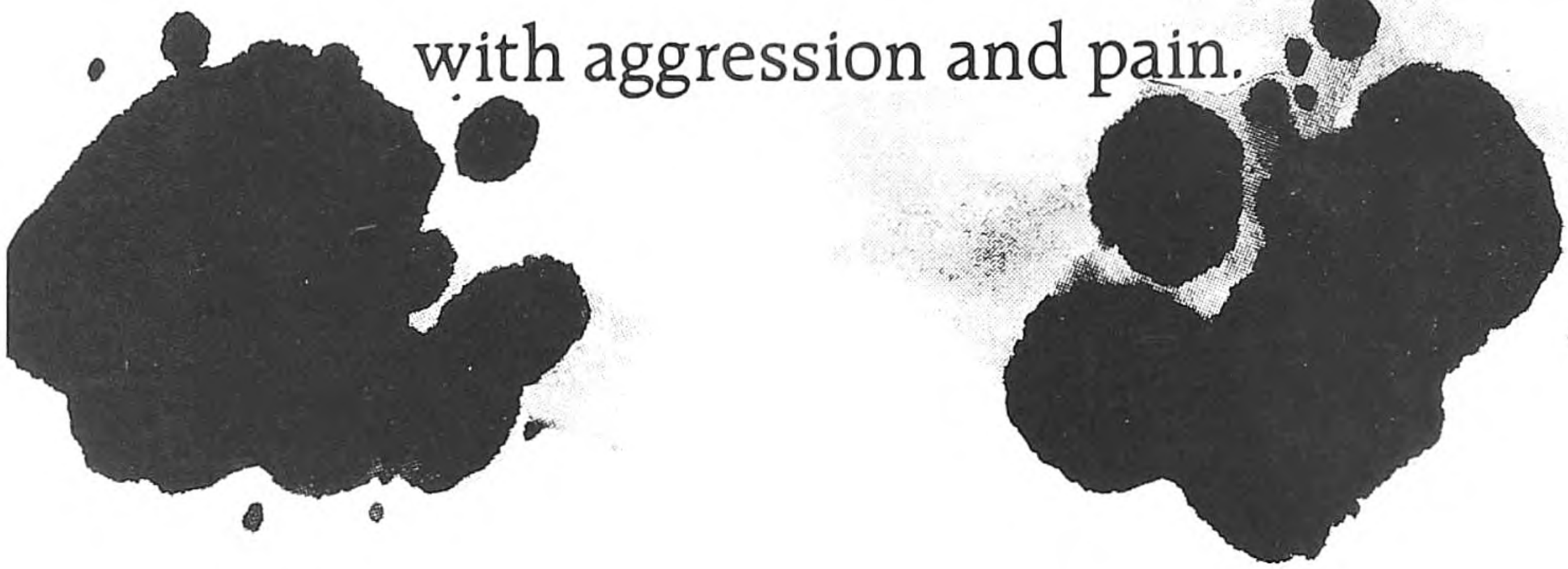


Thus the ontological unit of musical awareness is not, properly, the piece, but the occasion; thus the ontological unit of musical conception is not, properly, the work, but the activity.

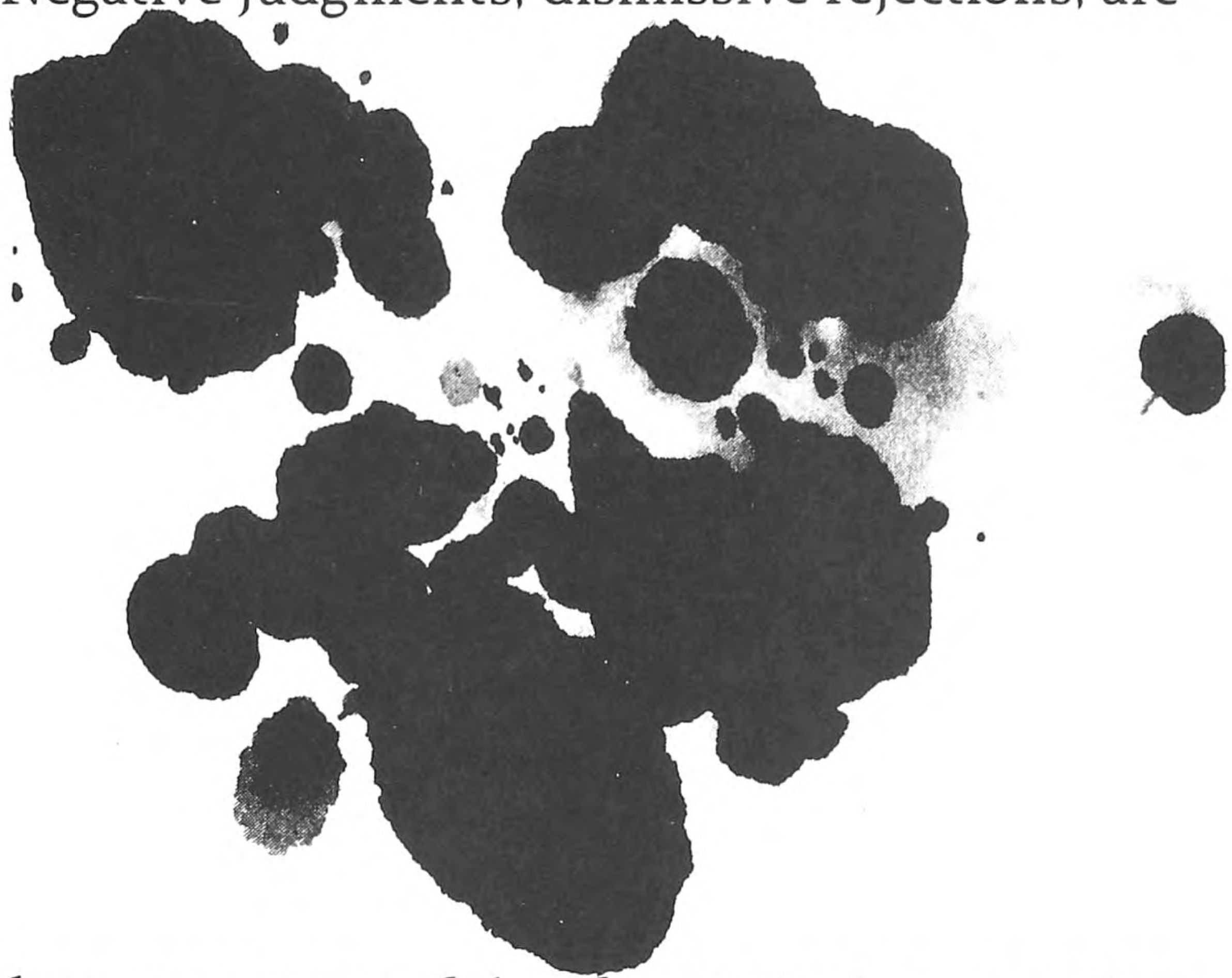
What we call a work of art
is experientially existent only as
an episode of expression.

And configured thus,
composing-performing is part of, extends, confirms, crystallizes the occasion, the activity, of hearing itself.

But listening, when frustrated as hearing, turns upon the sounding text as the object of unrequited expressive yearning, turns upon it with aggression and pain.

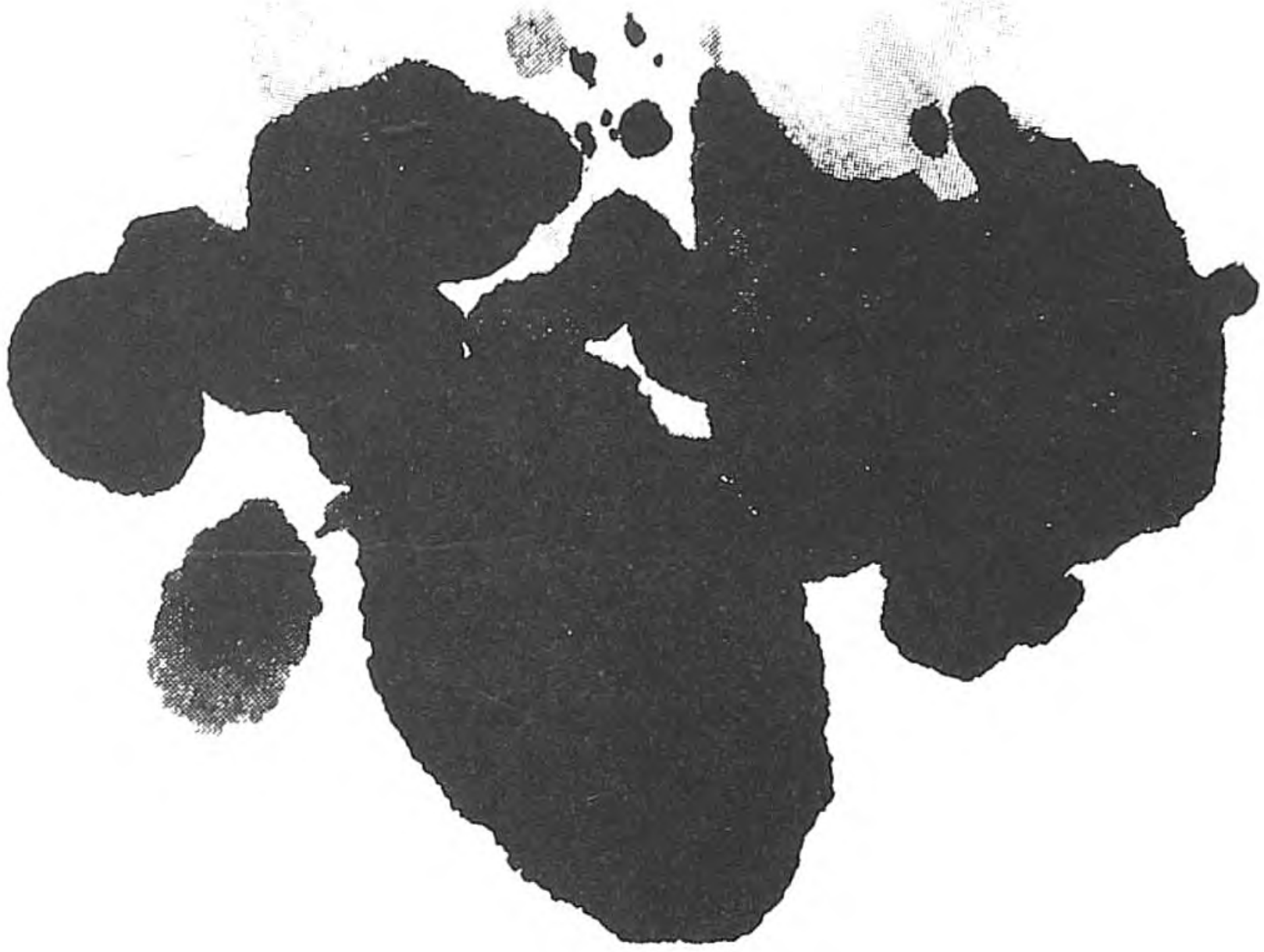


There ensues the phenomenon of judgment;
and the motivation for detachment in audition,
discourse, and interpersonal activity (such as
teaching, composing, organizing musical life,
— —) finds its origin in this frustration.
Negative judgments, dismissive rejections, are



the expressions of that frustration's aggression,
the backlash of the failure to be able to be
mobilized to be present to an occasion

of fulfilling expression, so intensely sought,
so desperately needed.

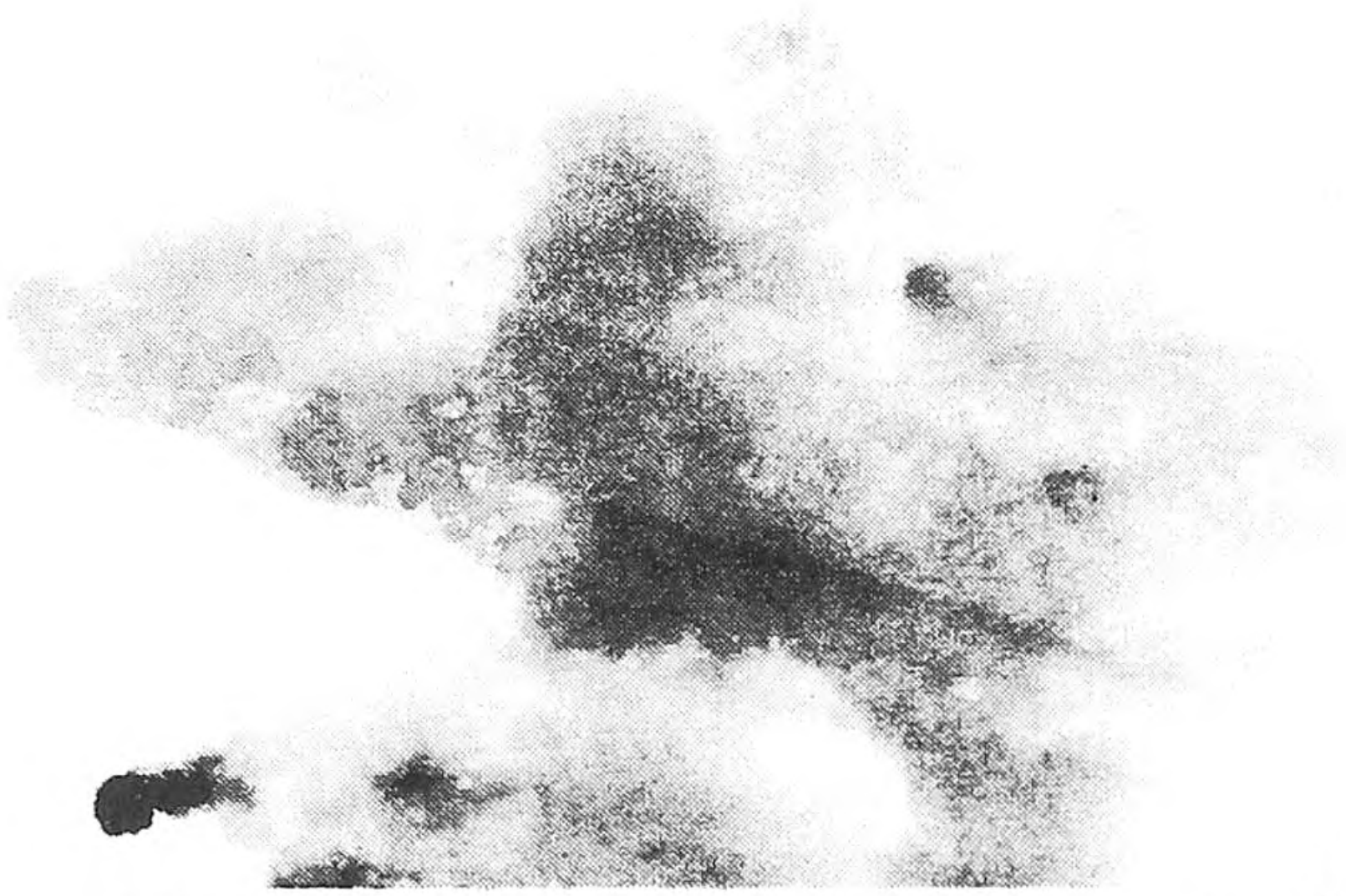


The reification of competence and skill enables us to substitute the visible tokens approval, admiration, and status for the non-negotiable needs interest and expression.

Defensively, the issue of frustrated
non-presence is evaded,
the possibility of primal-need-touching
experience traded in, for safety's sake

— the horrors of frustration
loom as the spectre of the
annihilation of identity —

traded in for objectified conventions of
ritual, formalized, filtered,
institutional stand-ins for fulfillment.



Status replaces identity, erudition replaces experience, technique replaces awareness.

Discipline replaces engagement.

Knowing replaces searching.

Self-congratulation replaces self-fulfillment — and in the end it must be that cynicism replaces yearning.

For the primal energy is unappeased

by these devices, and, frustrated,

aggressively turns upon the

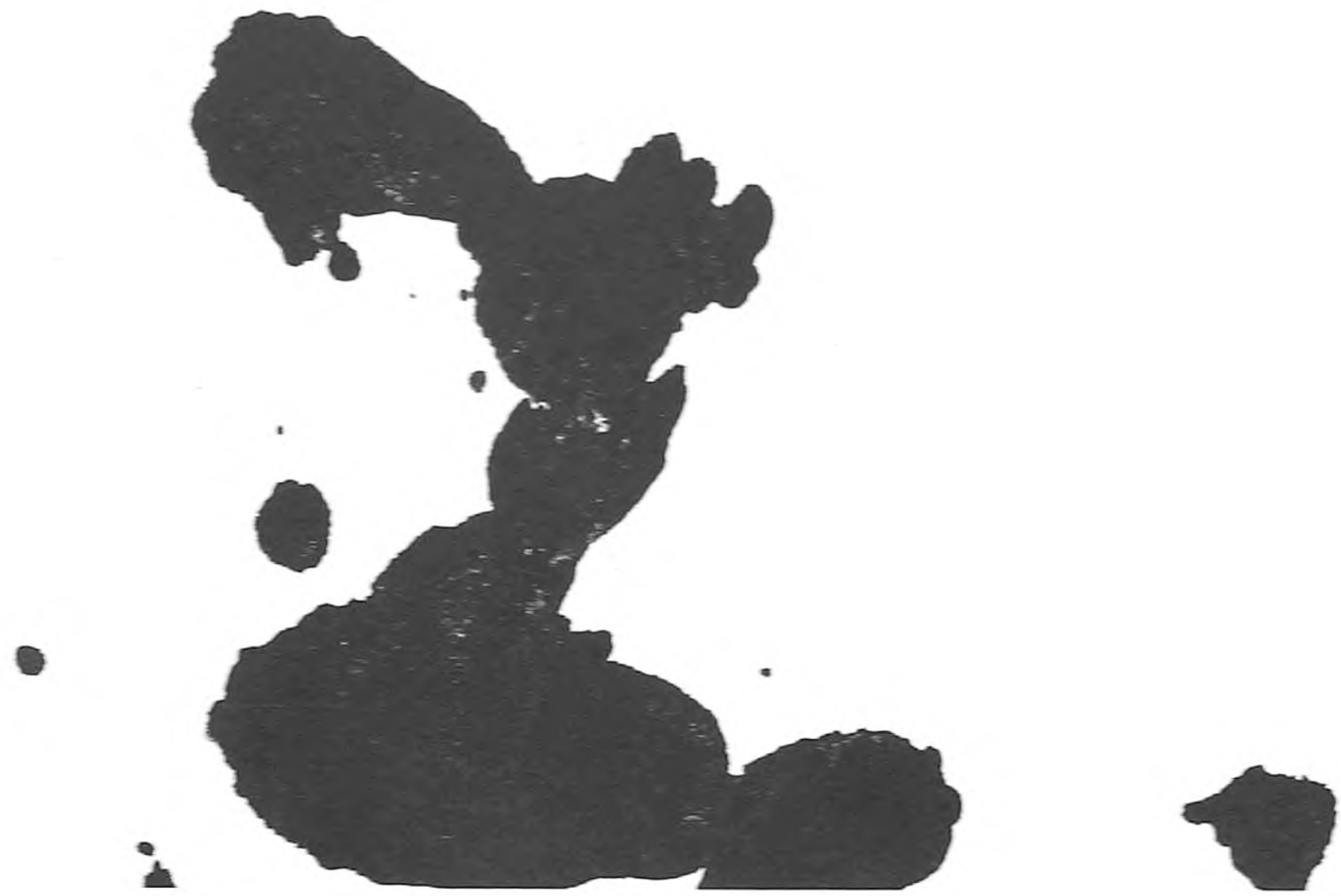
instruments of frustration,

which are us.

And turns destructive to ourselves in the form of destroying the value of others, and of the expressions of others, in our eyes, to mask the pain of our own inability to be present to, and mobilized by, the episodes of expression which we witness but frequently cannot experience.

Where this is the case, our thinking, which could be our most powerful self-liberating resource, may be our most powerful self-administered poison.

That web of structures which we erect for our own protection may be strangulating us.



We need to think about our thought

to salvage our expression; for we

need our expression for our salvation.

People are always asking what music expresses.

They do not so often ask what language expresses.

But they both express the same thing;

the whole person, the whole group of people

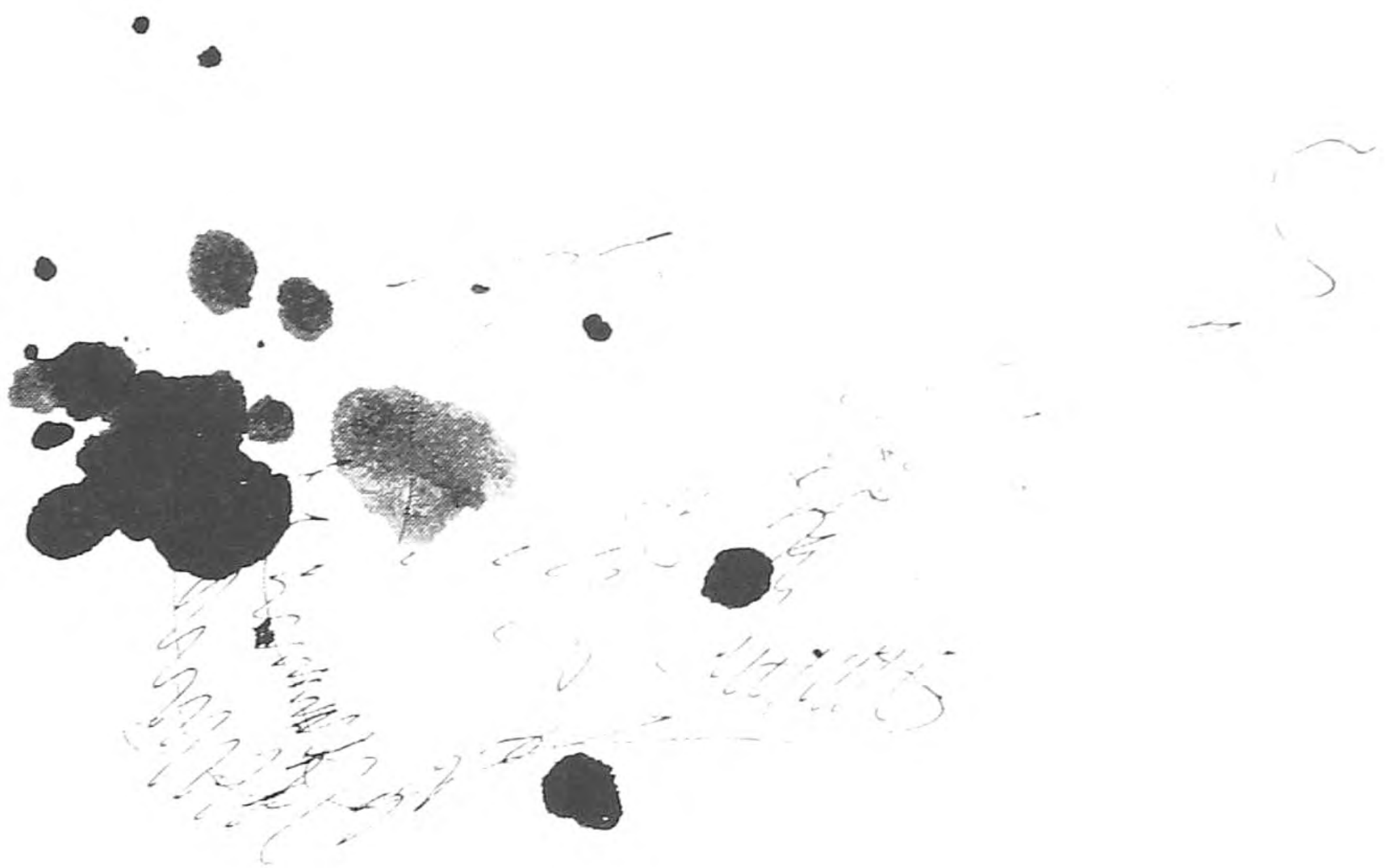
– warped this way, filtered that way,

focussed so, angled thus ... the raging

against extinction of ourselves as persons,

shaped to a fine point of articulation

for ourselves, for each other.



Benjamin Boretz

?ARE YOU SERIOUS?

TO SOME PEOPLE I HAVEN'T MET YET

KENNETH MAUE
FRANETTA MCMILLIAN
CATHERINE SCHIEVE
JOHN D. VANDER WEG

AND ALL THE USUAL SUSPECTS

J. K. Randall

Marseilles **1.** *Spring 1972*

We watch some old men play boules in the ww2 bombcrater across the alley from the rub-out *The French Connection* starts with. Petanques up north, bocce in Italy. A small ball gets tossed out there, then each player tosses his two big heavy balls at it 'til they're all out there. Closest to it at the end wins. The balls knock each other and the target ball around so the picture doesn't just thicken, it cancels itself. A ball arcs along a sideslope past the target ball, hits a rock, and zigzags back in front of it relocating some other balls. Or knocks one into the target ball which rolls over next to another which was out of it. Crafty—lucky—can't tell; —more like exploratory. And good and bad don't last long enough for any habits to form: they're transient secondary attributes like direct vs. banked or pitched vs. rolled or topspin vs. backspin. I like the preliminaries to a toss: hefting, siting, limbering, posturing; and the deliveries: elbowed, wristed, palmed, fingered, twisted, hooked, pushed, heaved. Deciding which ball is closest at the end can take a while in Italy or New York but in France it's just a nod during the pickup, then the next game goes back the other way. Players and spectators come and go. Newcomers shake hands.

Were these players topnotch?

Was this game topnotch?

Dunno.

Wrong question.

It's not like Steve Mizerak running 150-and-out or the bottom of the 9th in the 7th WS game or boules on level ground.

But I'm riveted : Qualities, energies are engaged which I'd rather cultivate than siphon off.

10 days later we saw *The French Connection* in Basle.

She fishes a multipaged twotone beige paperthing out of her wastebasket and shoves it toward me. "Here. You might be interested in this."

SUNRISE
CENTER FOR THE HEALING ARTS, INC.
46 Bayard St., Suite 323, New Brunswick NJ

Fall Expansion .....
Full Expression .....
Major Event: Spiritual Expression through Music and Dance: A Weekend Festival
—The Genteels
—Middle Eastern Belly Dancers
—Meryl Olson-Stern
—Afro-American Dance Ensemble
—Laraaji
—Group Motion of Philadephia
—Laura Shapiro
—Karl Fury
—Sunrise Percussion Group

Sat/Sun Dec. 8/9 1984, from 1 PM on.
3rd World Center, Princeton University

We kick it around. I'm looking for some current events to bounce off of. She's looking for some fellow therapists to talk to. On into the paperthing, therapies profuse: {. . . . . Massage Therapy (Shiatsu, Swedish, Intuitive) . . . . . Feldenkreis: Awareness through Movement . . . . . Massage Therapy, Polarity, Breath Awareness . . . . . Channeled Readings . . . . . Mind/Body Therapy (Removing Emotional Blocking) . . . . . Integrative Bodytalk . . . . . Psychic Healing, Readings, Consultations (An African Herbalist and Traditional Healer) . . . . . }

We decide A) we ought to know better and B) let's go.

a survivor of cancer whose life was turned around by a John Denver song—the lyrics, the message of it—Kay speaks movingly about her work with children dying of cancer in a Buffalo hospital; she playacts her own and the institution's foibles, the agonies and incomprehensions of the children, and their successes with her in giving musical vent to their feelings (:in silent haste one reviews one's own triumphs and comes up anxious)

{ . . . . . to entertain and stimulate children and adults aged 7 to 107.
The Genteels: Kay Johnston-Gentile
Ron Gentile, Ph.D.

then she sings; and all at once she's the apple of a loving mama's eye on best behavior in her brand new dress at her birthday party, and the loving, gently didactic pretty young mama herself; in her straight-on stance (—faraway misty-eyed; palmpressed prayerful; fingerwagging cautionary—), accompanied at the piano by her husband Ron (on his own an unabashed, if uplifted, Tom Lehrer), she conveys to us and reinforces what at lifedepth, over liferange we all of course comfortably agree to and confidently hope for.

Standardized is no accident: with confections of thought and sound which were tested widely some time ago and found pleasing (—modest; upbeat; humorous even, though always in good taste—) (agonies of cancer blindeyed), she reminds us that we Already Know; that it'll all come up AOK.

Deep Wholespirit Message Massage.

It Soothes.

But what particular standardizations matters not at all, and that's among the messages. With the same unflagging friendliness that now evokes the smalltown parlor or church social, or the family channel, Kay and Ron will join us later on in essaying meditational conventions of Baghdad and Cairo.

Yet some Unthinkables nag :

: to challenge us or stretch us would count as aggressive, manipulative;

: individual, as divisive—as separating herself from us, or her and us from others;

: debatable, as contentious;

: and any of the above as impolite, out of bounds, a gaffe, a faux pas, a fart in church.

Co-opted into a handholding circle to sing the We Shall Overcome strand of the Genteels' culminating fantasia, my gorge rises a little. (my friend and her husband are already sitting this one out in another room with their lunchbucket)

Speaking of spirituality, Sondra commends lightness of touch, some buffoonery even.
{ Sondra Watson, M.A.; dancer, painter, counselor, mother, clown; student of New Thought, Yoga, Rebirthing, Spiritual Healing, Sufiwork; studies with Sufi Master Adnan Sarhan. }
She is quoting someone to the effect that the paths to illumination sometimes seem so strewn with potholes and boobytraps that you wonder if God Himself could make it. (In memory twinges a complaint that our INTER/PLAY sessions bring out in us the long faces of high transport bordering on depression or nagging pain rather than any skinglow of joy never mind just a friendly smile once in a while.)
Rhea-Linda, dance therapist and proprietor of Give-a-Gram { Belly Grams, Gorilla Grams, Show Gal Grams, Hula Grams, Create-A-Gram } demurs: she knows that everything Sondra says comes from God but even so she couldn't go so far as to question the fullness of His power.
{ Sufi. The word means purity. The process is concentration, meditation, exercises, breathing, whirling, dancing, singing—the feeling of rapture that comes from them. These combine to awaken the forces within the body that lead to higher consciousness . . . . . Sufi techniques bring better contact between the inner self and the outer cosmic power. — Sufi Master Adnan Sarhan in *EAR magazine,* Nov/Dec 1984 }
As Sondra mugs her way through a dressup & peeldown skit (—a woman waits, paces, smokes; gets 2nd thoughts and sexy; bellydances—), I don't see myself tangling with her.
Now Djuna introduces herself and we adjourn to a smaller, warmly-carpeted room where she sits down on the floor at the front crosslegged facing us. A cassette-tape of elusive ethnicity quietly fills the room.
{ Every sound has a certain power, on the mind, on the psyche, on the emotions, on the feelings, on the senses . . . . . When I drum, I go into deep concentration, a very meditative state. Everything falls away. There is no sense of environment or identity, only the sound. I feel a oneness with the drum and a unity with existence within myself. I hear an eternal sound that cannot be heard by the ear, and no sound on earth can compare to it. It is an overwhelming power . . . . . It gives healing to all the people who hear it . . . . . They go into a deep meditative state, which is actually a state of receptivity bringing on healing and contentment . . . . . There's a power and mercy that comes. — Adnan Sarhan, *ibid.*}
Following Djuna's instructions we distribute ourselves through the room, leaving space to move, and sit down on the floor crosslegged facing her. Nervous about my recuperating back, I keep to my chair along the side: Djuna notices, and includes this possibility among her instructions.

{ Djuna Wojton, student of ballet and modern dance, is certified to teach yoga; she began studying Oriental dance in Egypt in 1978, and has appeared on the TV show 20/20. }
She will lead us in some Middle Eastern movements known to induce a relaxed, meditative mindset: we'll become aware of our bodies, of our breathing. She'll keep it simple so we can copy her easily. (My friend and her husband are back in action and will go the distance this time, he in longjohns.) Lines of attention bind each of us singly to Djuna.
" . . . . . inhale . . . . . ; . . . . . exhale . . . . . .
(The sound intermingles with the sounds of the cassette-tape, which will be fast-forward wound or changed several times in the course of the hour.)
" . . . . . now this arm . . . . . .
(Djuna's right and the facing roomful of lefts undulate snakily.)
" . . . . . then this arm . . . . . .
Balkily approximating Djuna's actions in my chair or standing up, I'm aware of the fifteen or so others filling the room like flowers in a flowerbed all basking in the same sun and bending to the same breeze.
" . . . . . inhale as we lean this way . . . . . .
Right in front of me I've become aware of Moses (—a very black Ghanian with a loose, solid, eminently grounded, body; an ordained Christian minister who has returned to traditional African healing rituals and is engaged in a Native American vision quest—co-director of Sunrise, and member of its Percussion Group—) managing to be unproblematically himself in remote emulation of Djuna's elegant, floating, eminently skypointed movements.
" . . . . . exhale as we lean this way . . . . . .
Resisting the indignity of someone else's breathing rhythm, I vamp rather than copy; as does a member of the Sunrise staff lounging on a bench with his congadrum up front over behind Djuna.
" . . . . . now contact a partner . . . . . .
(Sondra has replaced Djuna as leader!)
" . . . . . now join hands with your partner . . . . . .
(Not by chance, I grab Sondra.)
" . . . . . now make a sound like this . . . . . .
(Perhaps pursuant to an earlier colloquy about Gorilla Grams, Rhea-Linda is raking my longjohned friend pretty good with rapidfire wholebody bumping movements.)
" . . . . . now make a face like this . . . . . .
(I shove, drag, and obstreperate, giving Sondra no problem at all nor damming the flow of her instructions any.)
As I twist my way out the door, Setarah replaces Sondra as leader (—the tape and the conga are frantic by now—) and gets everyone into that pelvic jiggle that bellydancers do.
{ Setarah: specialty teacher at Jack LaLanne/European Health Spas and the East West Center for Creative Dance, Drama, and Music; for many years a student of Serena of New York, Ahmad Hussein of Egypt, and Sufi Master of the Mevlevi Order of Whirling Dervishes Adnan Sarhan of Baghdad. }
The next day I'll welcome chances to chew the fat with Sondra and Djuna. Sondra is glad, as I am, to clear any air that needs clearing, and expresses complete

sympathy with my unscripted responses. Djuna explains that Sufi exercises are intended merely to induce a mindset from which . . . . . .
Yet I retain a reservation: salvation is less common than saviors; and our quests lead rarely to the former, but inevitably to the latter, whose potencies somehow become our whole vehicle, not just the training-wheels.
I'll chew on Moses's ear the next day also, in the same vein: I'm getting allergic to carrying out instructions and I'm agog at the coupling of 1. find your true self & unblock your creativity & get in touch with the cosmos with 2. do exactly what I'm doing & saying as I transmit to you by rote what I got by rote from somebody who got it from God by rote. (I'm giving Moses no problem: he understands, accepts, appreciates, —in fact, enjoys—my popping off; and smiles, comfortably. That evening he will teach us an African healing song (, by rote).)
But for now it's back to the big room where we wait around for Djuna to emerge from a dressingroom in heavy cosmetics and glittering well-below-the-navel skirt to bellydance her solo. About six or eight of us remain in a semi-circle of chairs, and Djuna dances very close to us in the space we outline. My reactions surprise me: I am not, it turns out, put much in mind of old Errol Flynn or Hope/Crosby movies; nor struck all that much by spirituality's fated scavenging on what Cotton Mather would surely have pegged as its enemy and opposites—in this case harem pussypushing, in the Genteels' case the ersatz erotica of yesteryear's subclassical music entertainments; nor concerned with any articulately complex anchoring of the heights of spirit in the depths of flesh (; or in the heights of flesh either); or with the confusions—hers, mine, yours—that have eased us into this awkward do-it-for-an-audience ritual. What I catch myself noticing as she twirls and jiggles right up close among us is that she does reach you, with of all things her face: no dancerly opaque slab, that; she really lays her eyes right on you, and her smile; and I pick up plenty of open clear light, nothing of the come-on.

Davey Williams 5. *PNM Vol. 21 No. 1*

. . . . . have access to an instrument, voice, body, or any other sound-maker which you are intuitively "at home" with. Forget all notion of your "favorite" music; even of what you think music is at all. If you are alone, listen only to silence inside . . . . . If you are playing with others listen more closely to them than to yourself. Always begin with silence. Let things happen . . . . . Do not get outside the sound in any way . . . . . Do not make value judgments of the sound as it occurs. Once it begins, be committed to it. Expect the impossible to happen . . . . . .

Pauline Oliveros *EAR Nov/Dec 1984*

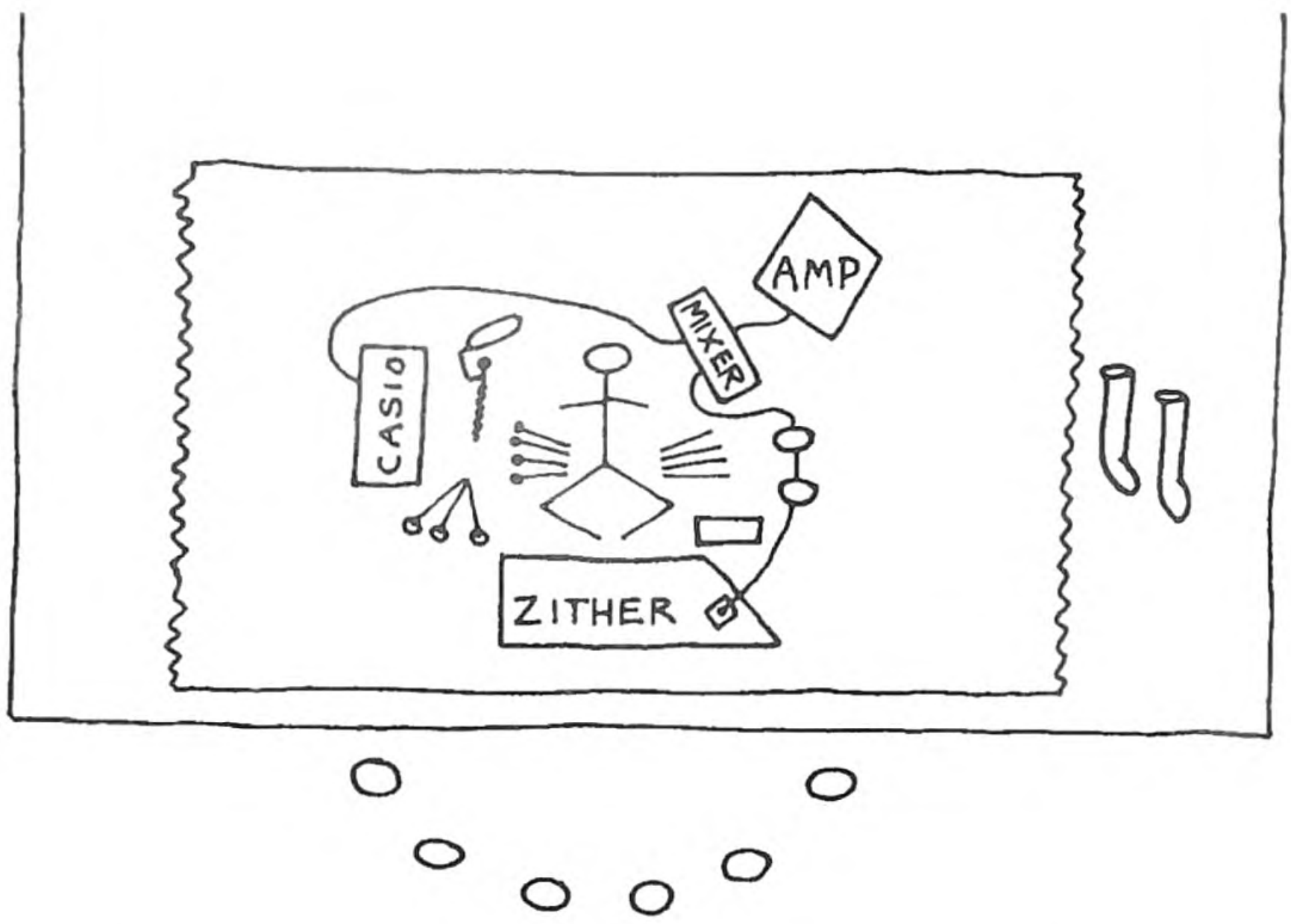
Sitting by the river on a clear warm morning . . . . . I focus my attention on a particular rock, listening intently to the way the water keeps smacking against the rock and bubbling all around it . . . . . I expand to take in all I can possibly hear: water, birds, insects, humming, whistling and bubbling . . . . . I listen to the manifesting stillness in me as I become attuned to the whole sphere of sound . . . . . I begin playing mentally with the river, imagining counterpoints and harmonies, melodies and rhythms, opposing sounds . . . . . Relaxing again I open more fully, my mental space stretched by imagination and play. A feeling of well-being rises in me as my ears follow the streaming river. I realize that any sound can be a cue for the energy one needs . . . . . In this way listening is healing.

La Rochelle *Oct 1984*

. . . . . the arcaded, swinging city opens out—pitches you out—onto the inlets . . . . . & a carpet of fishingboats, (—two sailors mend a net; a leashed mutt watches—); cafés all around . . . .& out towards the twin towers & what's left of the ramparts: you go on out thru the gap & bam it's behind you, a whole sound—dead .....it's the harbor now (—a schoolclass practices sailing—) . . . . . & beaches & parks; a vacant sidewalk runs along the edge . . . . . I keep walking . . . . . (I can't get so far I can't walk farther) . . . . . even the harbor falls off behind me; more & more it's the Atlantic out there: me & it (, we've had this date from the beginning) . . . . . no dogshit even . . . . . bracing grey intimate mean necessary . . . . . .
(: "Love Song—the sound of a locomotive far out at sea . . . . . (Davey Williams) . . . . .)

It's the announced startingtime and there's nobody here but me and Laraaji. Also three members of the Sunrise staff. My friend and her husband won't be here; weren't here last night either, for Meryl or the Slideshow. Chickened out. Meryl wasn't all that bad: nice rendition of Summertime which she introduced as "a bluestune." (The Slideshow wasn't what I needed though. Split after about five minutes.) Her act was showy. —Campfire showy, sort of: babies & all. Except God writes her songs. Hits you in segregated compartments where you can wallow in it and know it's Not for Real just Entertainment. In her spikes and highcrotched skintights she's putting some gloss on her massage therapy biz. You can reach her at. . . The Slideshow was something else again. Meryl massages you some other time, the Slideshow does it right now. Like Kay. Only nonverbal. Actually it was an onfilm with musictrack slideshow. It's played both houses of Congress! Played here because the Afro-American Dancers didn't show, and the guy that produced this film (or rather "through" whom it was produced; I'm still getting used to this "channel" thing) rushed a copy over to us on short notice. Went all over the world for visuals: wildflowers, mountainscapes, blue skies, no famine in Ethiopia though, no athlete's foot. Nice arpeggios. —Alright I get it: the world's about choked itself already on all its shit, so let's inject what's needed: some love, some beauty, some assuagement. A Nonfrantic Alternative, right? OK fine. So why does it hit me like treacle and make me puke. I think I'm getting a handle on it, and it relates to Kay too. These images of love and beauty are what? They're the sanitized prettypatty prefab our shit's managed to cohabit with for quite some time now thank you, that's what. Shoved at you at lifedepth, over liferange, it puts the wrong bite on you. just about tells you to look the other way, don't work it thru. Almost says: since what's wrong makes you feel so bad let's grease your feelings. Almost tells lies about what's out there, or in there. I'll have to try this one out on Moses. Doesn't clean out any new space in you for love and beauty. Just rings your chimes. If those're your chimes. Certainly doesn't drag your shit out there where you can't dodge the stink like the Frantic Alternative. Just plugs your nostril. Soothes. Except if you're not right there where the grease is, it's a weird number gets run on you. (That's Djuna over there jawing with Laraaji.)--some Group Motion people already. Guess they'll play and we'll move. Later on when they do and we don't, Manfred'll holler out from his keyboard. "Come on dance!" (This I can handle. Laying for it in fact.) But after that I'll balk some more. At doing prefab in Laura Shapiro's scenario. (Liked watching it though.) I'll go a little ways with Moses that night on his African song. Not with David Winston at first though but he's got a hook in me he doesn't know about: to coddle my back I've been sitting home on a heatingpad grooving on the Folkways stack of American Indian records thinking if I were onto the physicalities the music's a part of, it'd really click in. Proved true. I fell in at the rear of the passing Alligator Shufflestomp line snaking around the room, David whoopsinging in the lead and doing that Indian thing on his Taos drum that always grabs me cuzzits a speed of pulsation not a "beat". (Manfred's pushing the Group Motion stuff rearstage so Laraaji can unroll his rug

upfront and go first.) Once Group Motion's on, I'll dance. A "beautiful dancer" is what they call me afterwards, I shit you not -(Sondra!)- I go for the idea. (A few enclaves of hugging and deep bodywork have resumed from yesterday.)
Aside from the back, I'm fiftyfive and fat. My movements will be gnarled, minimal, untrained, all tangled up in two plastic chairs. (Laraaji turns out to be a slowmotionfreak too. He'll dance with us. And Djuna and Sondra and Moses.) Beautiful: not like "you were really expert and rate recognition." (Laraaji's shoes are sitting alongside his rug now.) More like "you were right there and we picked you up loud and clear." Rack one up a long ways from skill and the admirable. (And his instruments are spread around on it.) And get their credentials: the cameraperson was a woman; Laraaji is a coffee-with-cream black in a plain floorlength white tunic and white beanie; Mahan Rishi wears a Sikh turban; and Manfred ought to know. (We've sort of settled down by now, in remote chairs around, while Laraaji gets into his sound.) The Sunrise MC says I guess we're ready, I'll give you an intro. Laraaji says no no don't, I'll start up from right here, I'm there already. Crosslegged on his rug, facing us with closed eyes; nonsmiling; back straight, more hung from the shoulders than resting on the floor; our chairs drawn up now into a small arc just in front of him; his instruments around him thus:



it's his whole presence that reaches us. (Smiling would count as deliberately ingratiating; or as privately reflective. Open eyes, as windows of a distinct personal emanation under his own direction; as a selective singling-out of this or that, of you or me.) Tuned to a wavelength along which anything and everything can pass nondestructively thru the channel, he looks centered and calm, not ecstatic; not closed off, or exclusive, or elsewhere; something like: warm, permeable, in place. (Not like that agate-eyed Kalifornia Kool where inner energy doesn't quite

reach the skin and homicide lurks rampant and unexplored a millimeter beneath the mask.) He's more listening than inventing or performing: lots of time spent raining sticks (, mallets later) on his reverberated, amplified zither, in rapid singlestroke right-left alternation moving to and fro across the strings. No sweat. But also no "skill," let alone "imagination": any of us could "do" this. It's as if he's listening to soundactuating energy pass thru him and out his instruments as sound; like us, he's a receiving-, not a sending-, center for the quiet sound he fills the room with. I'll get a different fix on Karl Fury's sologig that evening. Hunchedover, fretfocused tentative hardened into memorized; self-absorbed in his digital operations, sound leaking out like a proofreading of the operations; Karl, introvertedly, is "presenting" (—himself; his tunes—) just as surely as Meryl. (" . . . . . thank you, thank you . . . . . "). A qualm though: one recalls Kierkegaard's Knight of Faith who works whitecollar, eats burgers with fries, catches the sitcoms, finishes off a sixpack and turns in early. Well, at least Laraaji looks the part. (Among us in the small arc, the chaired version of Laraaji's rugposture--eyes closed, nonsmiling face forward, back straight--has become endemic.) Mahan Rishi too: that evening, the workforce, which he's almost limply transmissive of, will surge thru him; and on out the suspended gong: as din—ferocious; joyful. (In a brief improvisation just before, Karl's nonstop selfreactive guitar had passed thru Mahan Rishi and emerged gently adumbrated with bells.) Minutes along now, but still facing us with closed eyes, Laraaji sings recurrent instruction-texts: "now have your highest vision . . (the voice is natural, direct, forceful, outreaching; and unprocessed; the curtain of zither sound, dense and transparent) . . "now your warmest loving . . . . . { . . . . . offers his channeled music inspired by inner vision. Known not only in New York City where he performs regularly, Laraaji travels throughout the United States lending joy to conferences, retreats, conventions, and gatherings. } Shaking some bells with one hand, Laraaji is rewiring and donning a headmike with the other. No tour-de-force: just keeps sound live enough for us to stay in it. No big deal. (This guy gives the Sologig a good name.) He's pivoted sideways to us now facing his Casio so we see his headmike in profile and he's doing a radio interview with a dietfreak. Latest News from the Trenches of Uplift. Seems this guy's guru's got him on a 21-day birdseed ration or something. A real breath of fresh air. Some fleshly foibles bygod. Laura will raise the issue later: how do we feel about watching her solodance version of women's 19th-cent. factory work as "spiritual expression"? Felt fine. I wised off about overpopulated instant nirvanas of dreamy eye, waterfalls, and D-flat major triads. (Went over like a fart in church.) I liked that about the Group Motion session: roughedged; contorted. Individualizing; isolating even; in a supportive, multitracked way: OK if you're like this and you're like that here's what I'm like. We've had INTER/PLAY sessions like that. Also a kind where each of us feels the others as an extension: personalized illusions of bloated singletracked, where what anyone else does, whatever it is, must now be for me as if I had done it. (You are Responsible for the World: be thou allabsorbed and allabsorbing.) —& then there's the tape of it. Another trip all its own. I'm in no hurry to "evaluate" it; just to get with it. Let it evaluate me: where'd I get so much smarter than it so fast? It'll prod you, stretch you, get you off it. Recommended. Also the Sunrise Percussion Group's soundfest that evening. (We need 'em all, my friend, and then some. —just ease off with the

orders and the Slideshow.) Multitracked; supportive; welcoming (:noticing me hung for an ax, Mahan Rishi comes across the room with claves): in the chorus of Joy in which no voice is lost or even stops, Exude; Overflow. Let Health Glow. Smile. —Sure, but what about the music? —& what about INTER/PLAY tapes as music? —not the sound or the symptoms of this or that activity or mindset, but as music; on the map of other music that's—you know—music? (Sure. I know. I'm afraid there may be no such thing, my friend. That music of ours that's "just music" is quite possibly, in your ear, the sound of our nasty social and psychological habits. I say "nasty" because I think music we love engages and supports lots more in us than just our soundpattern detectors, and I interpret your insistence that it's "just music" as a refusal to look into what-all that might be, i.e., as a cover-up, and I don't think it's your virtues you're trying to cover up from yourself. Also I've personally cultivated plenty of the nasties I've got in mind (:even invented a few), and it takes one to know one, my friend.) The sideways-to-us half of Laraaji's sologig is more complex; intriguing. After the soundfest I'll cheat on some hugging to lay a short rap on him about it. In fact nothing jagged or repellent or demonic had come down the channel (—why not?—); but playful did. On the Casio especially: and no "Attitude" showing. No cop-out like "hey don't get me wrong, we know we're not Serious about this" which turns playful silly. And his deadpan transmission of a pair of jerks like the interviewer and the dietfreak didn't just give me some realworld grounding. A lot crunchier than that. Defused any chance I might have grabbed to get the jollies looking down my nose at jerks. What Krishnamurti pushes as "choiceless awareness." A helluva projection.

At once vast and sparse. Not a flower in sight; nor a star in the greenguide. A "garden": the "Parterre." To one side, the flat palace. (3 stars.) Elsewhere, massed beyond our ken: trees; clouds. Here it's manmade grounds: bulldozed flattened straightedged layered. Spent the end of the afternoon here yesterday. Couldn't wait to get back this morning. Got it to myself. Dirtplots and dirt borders. Grassplots. Stone borders and steps and patios and benches. Geometrically stonepooled water. A few, a very few, shrubs; all shaved conical. The layout, symmetricized. Grandly. Mercilessly. The named curve. The named shape. A knockout. Nothing over your head, my friend. Or even up to your armpits. One is master here. Domesticates infinity even. At a deep sublevel out from the foot of the defunct falls, facing away. Straight lines of divine length, going away. A canal, treelined: on either side, the long thin colonnade. The alternative promenade. In far country. The path not taken. Within bounds, what there is. Not dense with dense subpockets like Versailles. Nor a dusty drag like the Tuileries. Same guy though. Le Nôtre. Should be a household word. Physical embodiment, as the very space we occupy, of thought; art. And rawly so. Undisguised, the theft from us; the violation; the intent to overawe. No rollicking fancy. Or sensuous intimacy. Or mindblowing revelation. Hardcore. No shit. Truths: a system of: uncovered. Powers: empowered: imposed. Correctitude to the nth. To be grasped in selected, static acts of vision. One's Will has been Worked. Under shifting cloudcover, the lone walker meanders; traces queer paths.

Commentary #0 *Creativity*
The texts put it this way:
"creativity could use some redeeming orientations; some mirrors to see itself in; some noninvidious images"

text #1 *Work*
"it's yourself you're working on"

Commentary #1
Advocates amplify thus:
"use whatever turns you on (Greek manuscripts, rocks, electronic sound) to stretch yourself, purge yourself, redirect yourself, hypothesize yourself . . . ."
and less pleasantly:
"you're trying to make yourself available (—get that: it's a long ways up, but it's the top—) not praiseworthy"

text #2 *Play*
"let'er rip"

Commentary #2A
We cite three abbreviations of this text:

1. "celebrate"
2. "wail"
3. "fly"

Commentary #2B
Some have asked:
" . . . or is play maybe just the hardest kind of work and work is maybe just the funnest kind of play"
To which advocates reply:
"Dunno."
What's vital is some outright counterpurpose:
"Work" says Get off your Ass.
"Play" says Get off your Back.

text #3 *Communicate*
"at the depth, at the warmth, of workplay: interact"

Commentary #3
We're here to make a space we never knew of before, into which we can flow and return changed, not foreseeably by some plan, but by opening ourselves to acknowledge ourselves and each other, with whatever outcome; to hang in there; to regard and include; to give each thing (, anything) a fair shake, its full ride; to heed and nourish the newly becoming space which each of us sustains, inhabits, inherits. The world contains no "them" to change: just "us"—lots of us. And in changing us, who can be sure?

text #4 *Output*
"what you're roping us into is a tryout of a Way to Be, a Way to Go: please arouse in me a sense of my wherewithal to be that way or go that way my way"

Commentary #4A
This text was once considered earnest but friendly. Then five corollaries were circulated:
1. "you're not trying to grease me right where I'm wallowing"
2. "you're not trying to dazzle us with your superlative and inimitable gifts"
3. "you're not confirming for those who Can't their special dependence on those who Can"
4. "you're not launching the Next Wave in some deracinated preserve known as an "art" or a "field""
5. "you're not packaging nostrums to do it for us so we won't have to bother"

Commentary #4B
We're not talking what's printed on the giftcard my friend we're talking what the gift is, says, does:
No. 1 (: Not Bad): "do your thing with this" also "try this out and get back to me"
No. 10 (: Not Good): '"here's where it's at, fans" also "dig this and watch my smoke" also "smell me and drop dead"

text #5 *Utility, Quality*
"masterwork art, definitive formulation, validated method are among the crotchety gluttons at the feast of brotherhood; not its hosts"

Commentary #5A
The attempt to heal familiar fissures between the two titular concepts is the least of this text's provocations. Consider its canonical amplification:
"in the nittygritty of your creative processes, implicitly or explicitly, in the very germination of any immediate or eventual "outputs": what kinds of person are you being or becoming? what kinds of present or future interaction are you fostering?"

Commentary #5B
Outrage lingers over "the threat to treat their sacred cows as bunfiller."
Others cool it; hang tight with their pet cows and veggies.

Commentary #5C
Texts tend towards a ripe inwardness. It's corollaries and amplifications that smart off. So we propose a swap: read In The Nittygritty Of as the text #5 entitled "Utility, Quality"; then read Crotchety Gluttons as a corollary.

text #6 *Knowledge, Craft*
"not a repository; not a technique: but "sensitivity training"

Commentary #6
"what you're developing is your clarity—your ability to get the most out of the least; and your openness—your capacity to take in and to give"

text #7 *Success*
"May you always arrive at ground zero afresh."

Commentary #7A
Advocates are entranced by what "afresh" says about "ground zero" in fusing "again" (meaning it's the same) with "fresh" (meaning it looks different so it's different) with "refreshed" (meaning not just you feel good but also it's what you've been up to that got you there so no wonder it looks different).

Commentary #7B
"The navelgazing solipsism encouraged by many of the preceding texts reaches its incorrigible nadir in this one. Exactly what's wrong, we ask frankly, with the urge to achieve, to stand out from the crowd, to make people sit up and take notice? Are these among the energies we're supposed to "siphon off" (: talk about invidious!) rather than "cultivate"? As if they were any more antisocial than navelgazing! Or as a "canonical amplification" puts it, "sniffing your armpits." Alright then: what about just giving pleasure? Or making a contribution?"

[These and the next comments we pass along.]

text #8 *Reputation*
"May those whom you feel involved with be as free from adulation as from condescension."

Commentary #8
"And speaking of blindeyed, are all standards of excellence, all distinctions of merit, to be invalidated?"

text #9 *Remuneration*
"the real world sucks"

Commentary #9A
A fruit of experience, this text was created by composer David Madole in seeking re-entry to Academe.

Commentary #9B
The following three corollaries are apocryphal imitations of the original:
1. "composing sucks"
2. "performing sucks"
3. "professoring sucks"

Commentary #9C *Go Ahead*
push the product; life is no weekend retreat

text #10 * * * * *

INTERFACE

PART I:

COMMENTARY: *

THE BARRYTOWN ORCHESTRA ON HUNGER DAY

NOVEMBER 15, 1984

Benjamin Boretz

* (for "Text #10" of J. K. Randall's "are you serious?")

(The Barrytown Orchestra, playing in Kline Commons lounge at Bard College on a fast day for the benefit of Ethiopian famine victims, November 15, 1984,

consisted of (counterclockwise from corridorside) Ann McLellan, Frank Carter, Mike Woodward, Bruce Huber, Penny Hyde, Chuck Stein, Ben Boretz, Dan Sedia, Kathy Osgood.)

WE COME INTO this public space. Your space, somehow, though not less, supposedly, ours. We come in, having spent most of the just elapsed afternoon here, setting the space up, and strenuously—in the edgy refraction of too much previous experience—thinking how to engage you, this time perhaps, in the spirit and sense of what we engage ourselves in. Wanting to offer you something which feels to us like ourselves, and to you like a possibility of yourselves. Lusting to stimulate you to awareness of what might be possible for persons to do rather than exhibit to you us, that we can do it. Speculating, earnestly, that we, coming into this public space in our own name and on our own account, might be in particular the intelligent instruments of such a transaction; because we have ourselves convinced that only in a world admitting of such transactions are we likely to attain some acceptable identity, can we imagine that we, as ourselves, might be acceptable persons, might survive, acceptably. What we have set up is a faintly amoebic curvature of chairs and low tables, implicitly, rather than explicitly, enclosed; articulated mildly, with tinges of formality, occlusion, elevation, from the normal corridors and enclaves of this place, instead of dissolving indistinguishably into that normalcy: this is to be an offering, an occasion; we have solicited and have been tendered an invitation, quite formally, to contribute to this communal fast day, with a two-hour soundmaking alternative to dinner, from five to seven. What our preparatory exertions have to do with famine in Africa, to us seems obvious.

At five the setup, though architecturally complete, is still shy a few electronic links, creating, because you have begun to accumulate in what the clock tells us must be meaningful agglomeration, twinges of anxiety, oppressive prehensions, a sudden familiar alienating spasm of

obligation to you, rushes of conflict between the pressure and explicit rejection of that obligation, resisted not out of indifference to you, not seeking alienated distance from you, but from a poignant need to remain true to the thing within ourselves we want to touch here, out of a sharp dread of alienation from our own recognizable selves, from the sound we ourselves make, from the activity of ourselves making it. When adaptors arrive, and don't fit, decisions have to be made to proceed without (some) amplification. At five-fifteen no sound has yet been heard from the eight of us around our amoeba. But your sound, self-contained, has been rising steadily over us, a paralyzingly neutral noise, simultaneously stonewalling and demanding, blank and loud, abusive.

We, silent, are challenged to respond with corresponding aggression, just where we most want to stay within, not ourselves, but the space we had been planning to join with you. (You, of course, have been free to sit, move around, walk through, enter and leave, the space, your own familiar space still, usurped by us only fractionally, and even that fraction structured to minimize your, and our, sense of invasion.) As we struggle for composure within our growing timidity, fear, feeling out here the absurdity of our paradoxical condescension in offering ourselves as ourselves, in our own name and on our own account, as fellow-citizens, to a space in which we feel, and are felt to be, ill-fitting aliens, as we struggle in our vanity to offer a model of unalienated communal expression, an unintimidating, accepting, environment of expressive activity, within a space in which everincreasingly we feel ourselves unacceptable, our sound begins to rise, in a suddenly muted crevice of yours. Our score is: think of melody, and make sound within the sound you hear. We pursue our score, over and under each other's and your sound, for perhaps half an hour.

Until one of us, arriving late, experiences us from your perspective. Perceives us, balefully, making public fools of ourselves, playing this pathetic pinched restrained introvert sound. Perceives us, painfully, being selfindulgent cultfreaks, subjecting you, innocent dropins, deserving auditors, to an excruciating exhibition of weird autism,

eliciting your attention just to show how contemptuously we can hold out on you, murmuring mumbly and indecipherably into our own miserable chops with dismal disregard for your edification. And then she jumps into our midst with bongos blazing to retrieve us from disgrace, wake us from numb sloth, redeem whatever fragment of respectability might still be redeemable.

With some edge, we, humorous, cagey, resist, subsiding, rather than rising, to the challenge. With some sharper energy, we keep on trying to hold hard-won accumulations of coherence, purpose, sensibility. With some effort, we adjust and accommodate, finally, congenially, and for the next forty or so minutes our sound goes through a coil of complex, vivifying transformations. We end, ignorant of your attitudes and opinions, feeling relief: we have survived. And when we hear the tape, we love it, especially the sensuous responsive interplay between your sound and ours; and the magical transformation from sensitive roomfeel to intense interactive expression, pivoting around the zapping catalytic bongo entry. Our bongo drummer, herself, now within the tapesound with us inside our sheltered listening space, in your absence, is embarrassed by what suddenly to her (but not at all to us) is heard as gross overreaction to mistaken perception. (But in your presence it had been different, and for you, immune from conciliating dialogue or relistening in congenial surroundings, the reality experienced, some unspeakable untoward social event, persists unmodulated:)

selfindulgent?
(the sound on the tape.) : how?

hostile?
(the shape of the space.) : how?

pathetic?
(the awareness of the interaction.) : how?

frivolous?
(the sensibility within the circle.) : how?

In our own name: being present, in this public space, making sound as ourselves being present, as ourselves making sound, we violate a first principle of public edification: there are these wooden molds, into which a person may insert oneself, therein to fulfill responsibly—even with distinction, even with distinct individuality—a known social function, with known social valuation, with a known set of appropriate actions, resulting in a known range of appropriate sounds; such insertion carries with it the secure expectation that one will perform these actions correctly, and with appropriate results (one has, after all, been taught; and others are in a position to judge). This is to serve the public interest: to honor and respect the dignity and standing of the equally wellinserted onlookers, who just as satisfyingly well know how to satisfy the functions appropriate to their wooden molds in the space gratifyingly provided for them to do so by one's appropriate actions. To give oneself thus responsibly to such a securely validated public function is the very antithesis of selfindulgence. And to enter a certain particular wooden mold, that, say, of the good and faithful servant of high musical culture (imported from Vienna by way of New York), to be, namely, a Serious Musician, is the very antithesis of frivolity. From within such a wooden mold, one will do it right. One has been taught. One can be trusted. One is Serious.*

* *[Serious:* As in: Get serious, boy—find yourself a steady job, save yourself up some money, raise yourself a family.]

On our own account: being present in this public space, *with ourselves with one another;* making sound, in this public space, *for ourselves for one another,* we violate a first principle of public entertainment. You are bereaved of your detachable role of the courted, they whose favor and approval are ardently supplicated; you are deprived of the fulfilling satisfaction attaching to the dispensation of terminal, ultimate judgment. To the extent that these people do this with each other, for themselves, they deprive you of the passive gratification of their being there wholly with you, of their doing this exclusively for you. (We face into our circle; respond to one another;

we do not appear to be beseeching your approval, only leaving room for you to invent—outside of any known context—your own mode of reception or response. Hostile—in its selfenclosure, this. And pathetic—in its fortressed insularity.)

When you are my students, and I invite you to engage, you ask, "What should I do?", thus declining to engage even my invitation to engage, and putting me in my place—as teacher—so as to restore yourself to your place of safety—as student. This is my trip, right? So don't expect *you* to get involved.

When you are in this public space we enter, to make sound, and we invite you to engage, you turn us into Performers (or Composers, or Improvisors, or Avantgardistes) for yourselves to be an Audience of, to be able safely from that safe place to celebrate or repudiate us, and our sound, with no danger of unforeseeable engagement:

So what do *we* want of *you?*

And in what name, on whose account, in what form, do we presume to seek to be acceptable, to feel ourselves acceptable, as conveyors of a communal soundsense, as we enter this public space?

And in what way, for what reason, do we seek that you acknowledge us, and that we perceive ourselves, as having been, in our soundmaking in this public space, legitimate interlocutors in the communal dialogue about the needs and forms of everyone's interaction?

And how is just surviving, enough?

Dear Allpersons in Music 518:

What follows is my nextday, polished but still puzzled, recollection of ideas expressed on Monday:

--- Lucier's piece has an evident shape, including a persuasive ending.

--- piece is a bit square; also old hat, the way a specimen of '50's neoclassic clatter is and Beethoven isn't.

--- piece sounds great: sort of like a meditation, with musicformal characteristics, if any, moot; draws me in, in, in; focuses me, so I ride each fluctuation; it's my own sentience happening.

--- piece sounds great: like a Beethoven piece sounds great, or like some African drumming sounds great; they're all greatsounding, and that's the name of the game.

--- enjoyed stretch of time during which piece occurred – but resist thinking of it as "a piece", especially as an experience re-inducible at will rather than as what happened during a particular stretch of time.

--- piece heightens my awareness of everything around me: a noise in the room, the trees out the window, ...

--- this is not music, and we abuse ourselves by treating it as if it were; your bright teenaged tinkerer could produce this, and it wouldn't be hyped as art.

--- piece suggests, evokes, could use, a more congenial environment: say, a NYC loft with us on floorcushions; and higher fi, involving us more intimately in the physicality of vibration.

--- incense and blue lights? [Sure!] [NEGATIVE!!]

--- room 112 seminar was just right for this piece.

--- in fact, the piece was originally an installation (of a Long Thin Wire) in a resonant gov't. building.

--- learning afterwards that it's a hands-off contraption diddling its do, was unsettling: hearing what I'm hearing as the sound of a contraption, or as the sound of natural process, or as a humanly moment-by-moment shaped artwork, are different experiences.

--- learning afterwards that it's a hands-off contraption diddling its do, affects nothing: I hear sound; how it was generated is irrelevant to my hearing of it.

--- learning afterwards that it's baby seals being clubbed.....

--- we should fully apprise ourselves of the context of a piece's genesis; ignorance thereof can yield bizarre construals.

--- compared to what most of us do as composers, Lucier's activities suggest quite a different meaning for "composer" (: a bringer-to-our-attention of worldsound out there) and "piece" (: a sensitivity-training contrivance for listening to what's out there).

--- the piece lodges comfortably in a tradition/sensibility of

A. meditation;
B. psychoacoustic experiment and discovery;
C. anti-art as art;
D. audience confrontation;
E. the "cult of controversy";
F. sharpening outward awareness;
G. sharpening inward awareness;
H. music as Music;
I. Culture that's Of Its Time

--- the piece detaches itself from the "cult of achievement".

--- the composer of this piece is to be admired for, and has every right to be proud of, his imagination and expertise in contriving so simple an automatism which yields so beautiful a musical result.

--- the hype on the recordjacket, by contradicting the spirit of the piece, throws both into relief, and calls both into question.

--- the hype on the recordjacket is, and ought to be, irrelevant to hearing the piece.

--- this particular hype lodges more comfortably in our own traditional, than in Lucier-(?Cage-)redefined, meanings of "composer" and "piece".

--- the preceding agglomeration of ideas is

A. irrelevant to music;
B. irrelevant to us as composers;
C. of little interest.

(Think about it.)

JKR
11/21/85

(& about Diabelli Var's.)

INTERFACE

Part II:

THOUGHTS IN REPLY

to Boulez/Foucault:

"Contemporary Music and the Public"

*(a pseudo-culture of documentation [is] taking shape... the performer become immortal, rivalling now the immortality of the masterpiece ... an alibi of reproduction as opposed to real production. . .)**

* Perspectives of New Music, *24/1, Fall-Winter 1985*

"We've all been there, haven't I?"

IMMORTALITY: EVEN SNEERED AT, it won't go away. (How can it? wasn't there to begin with.) Hang out the 'masterpiece' shingle and—composerperson, performerperson, professorperson, or whoever you are—you've just opted wholehog for 'reproduction', for reincarnating by some token music-making exertions the old Beethoven (either as Himself or as rolled over) ghost-balloon. Nothing less than an archetypal prefixture at Square 1: hardly 'real production' (though maybe Missouri and Paris offer radically differing perspectives), and as for Creative Expression, that's only for simps anyway. Doesn't matter if your masterpiece ritual is reverent or iconoclastic or heretical, either: same lofty ur-Meta-pedestal you're hoisting onto, same Importance you're figuring to rate, since it's already there and those that credentialized it eternally (being dead) have no further need (and if you don't happen to make it all the way to Pope you can always start one of your own). Otherwise, down at street level, Performance and Composition's no big issue—just a natural way to make a fairly simple distinction between the 'action' and the 'reflection' facets of some stretch or other of music-making. And if you are into the 'masterpiece' action, don't blame the paying unwashed (mythical-beastly ill-natured ontological trivia that they are) if they prefer the heavy sermons at the plastic church down the street, which they happen to *like* (and which, non-coincidentally, are felt to like *them),* over those which (on both accounts) feel nasty.

There is an issue about listeners; it may be historical: it may be that masterpiece composition no longer yields its struggle to its auditors, it may be that it no longer projects a sense of urgent, earnest striving, of strenuous process in progress. Maybe it became opaque to people because it was stonewalling them with images of *mastery,* rather than dangling the old masterpiece humbugs of fellow-suffering, sensory titillation, or even demagogic hassling or some other kind of histrionic availability; what else other than stonewalling is that notorious acoustical modern-music 'complexity', anyway?: well short of the Grosse Fuge,

expressive inscrutability stands in adequately for comprehensional 'difficulty'. The Stings of Command having lost their authority, only S/M cultfreaks and fellow inflictors would go for them voluntarily (and, remember, the people do have *their* music).

Prying apart the social alienation without giving up the global Me lust drives aspirants two different ways: one way is to see that the baggage of Lofty is a white elephant impeding the briskness of commerce, not to mention that it's mostly a hypocritical scam anyhow, and so to shed it clean and enter the lists with knockout exploits of pure techno-Classic chops, fabricating tasty consumer Pop for symphony orchestra, chamber group, or something mod. Where Serious looks like just an elitist inhibition of Going For It, it's entropic already: in such a case, frankness does pay. The other way is to do an extreme retreat into the thwarted Public-Serious esteem hangup itself (James Joyce on his couch of composition deciding to "retire from public life"), going for either Technique, detached, polished, and virtuous, or Discipline, like legitimate research in the field of Musical Composition. As the popular artist seeks love, the true professional seeks respect, and requires recognition only from other true professionals (but how come it's *recognition* that's always *the* issue of choice?). Blowaway playing chops, scintillating composition craft, intimidating discourse virtuosity: great axes for a species of aggressive self-assertion which has alienation itself already built into the bedrock of status-justification (Liszt: "Das versteht Ihr Alle nicht"). Strenuous withdrawal: the ultimate pure (entropic) Public-social maneuver.

There may be an insight here. Social climbing before the multitude may be avoidable without anyone's having to give up music as an expressive language. Seeing how the culture fractures Public from serious and social, space opens up for other ways of slicing musical needs and uses, like personal navigation and interpersonal negotiation, serious aplenty and social for sure, just not implicitly public, and real weak on Number-One status claimability. If music-making rituals are getting stripped of their global dignities and noble obligations then it maybe becomes more imaginable to liberate them into shapes that configure naturally to perceived needs to explore, identify, integrate, aiming at

realizing authentic domestic purposes—which could even be avowed non-fraudulently—such as: to help put ourselves together, as people; with people.

In *Meta-Variations,* struggling to create a perspective from which to grasp the origins of music-epistemic confusions while enclosed within their grip, I argued, with what might have seemed obscurely motivated vehemence, for the cognitive distinction between the referents of 'music' as an epistemic probe, and 'music', invoked as an honorific epithet, and implicitly signified alarm over the threat to cognitive-aesthetic survival lurking in the elision of that distinction. I see it now, sharper for having been gnashed by Foucault and Boulez, as the distinction between 'work' as a way of life, and as an advance obituary celebration, aspiring to coerce enforcement of an inert symbolic historical position. In music, as in everything, the disappearing moment of experience is the firmest reality; but the fictions of permanence, invented for the benefit of discourse and contemplation, are so much more firmly graspable by the conscious minds whose invention they are, that they, rather than the vanished traces of elusive experience, are the referents on which the firmest conceptions—intuitions, even—of reality are built. And thus do sanity—that is, the fact of sanity—and rationality—that is, the sensation of sanity—come into mortal conflict, threatening to dissolve the sensible integrity of existence. Music is what people can do to work at harmonizing that contradiction: to save significance while still sustaining identity as a continuous mental structure.

What I as a musician, as a music-experiencing and music-expressing person, choose, as a musical thinker, to disdain, and to engage, bears critically on the capacity of my music-making to be mobilized in the cause of my survival. It cannot, survivably, be squandered in making myself, or my music, an object of admiration or esteem or—especially, if we are talking about Foucault and Boulez—of authority.

October/November 1986, February 1987

ARTHUR BERGER AND BENJAMIN BORETZ: A CONVERSATION ABOUT *PERSPECTIVES*

WHAT follows is about one third of the text of a conversation between the co-founders of *Perspectives* which took place 1 November 1986 in Arthur Berger's house in Cambridge as a way of responding to John Rahn's request that we each contribute something to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Perspectives*. What is left out is largely historical chatter of interest only to a few participants, and probably devoid of much interest even to them. What filtered through is essentially (though not literally) unedited, and, hence, is probably atypical of the innumerable conversations between these two old friends only in that it was self-consciously directed toward publication. But, as excerptor, I alone take full responsibility for any distortions or misstatements or offenses, regardless of their attributions within the text.

B. A. B.

ARTHUR BERGER: I remember in planning—if we can get beyond that now—in planning the first issue we thought in some way of *Die Reihe*—even though you didn't mention it in your California prospectus—and we thought of that kind of format and that kind of technical analysis, and yet we wanted to make it immediately apparent that we stood for something different. I think that was one of the things that made us want the Backus article.

BENJAMIN BORETZ: The Backus article: right, George Perle recommended this guy because he had written something in the Yale *Journal of Music Theory* and it was the same kind of article he eventually wrote for *Perspectives*. He was coming on as a kind of professional-tech expert criticizing the tech-chops of the European composers who were writing in *Die Reihe* professing this mastery. It was a debunking piece, and I guess the political point of it, from George's point of view, was that here was a person who had no ax to grind as a musician who was just seeing through this stuff because it was bullshit, technically, and that seemed to George like a key piece of intellectual/political journalism. —Arthur, to tell the truth, I don't recollect that *Die Reihe was* a model for us. There is no question that *Score* and *Modern Music* were in my

mind because those were the two modern-music magazines I had read with the greatest interest.

AB: Well, I think we thought of something that would be more solid.

BB: More than *Modern Music*.

AB: Yes, but even more than the *Journal of Music Theory*. And even *Score* is thin.

BB: Remember the writing they had . . .

AB: The writing was O.K. I'm talking about the format: the idea that you'd have a little book. . . whereas *Score* was flat . . . Now some critic – oh I guess it was Donal Henahan – not exactly a sympathetic reader – points out that we published this article by Backus which exposed Stockhausen's use of terminology in a completely damaging way ... he said ... that perhaps this language was putting us on, and that Backus had exposed its vacuousness . . . while at the same time *Perspectives* published an article by Stockhausen. Now what do you make of that? I mean, did we do that intentionally to show how catholic we were?

BB: No, not really . . . I do think there was a lot of consideration spoken and unspoken about the relation between a magazine's appropriate function and appropriate contents – whatever this magazine was going to be like – and the particular attitudes of the editors and of the people they were most in touch with, between the personal prejudices of the editors and their conception of what a magazine ought to be. For me those two factors were always negotiating; we always talked about the magazine in some difficulty because it always involved some kind of tension with one's own musical convictions – political convictions – music-political convictions I mean not political in a global sense. . . and, however much you and I regarded each other as different, we were in the same kind of head about what needed to be spoken for right then. I mean, there was something new going on in American music that urgently needed a voice, that even needed an international voice because of the sense that this whole serious American music movement was pretty well being stonewalled in Europe. And *Die Reihe* was a particular issue because of its just about complete wipeout of any of what we were interested in as well as anything we were identified with over here, so I think some of our criticism of *Die Reihe* was particularly sharp because they had an antagonistic feel to us. So while the criticism was surely responsible it was also motivated by a sense of conflict in that funny (but familiar) realm where intellectual and aesthetic convictions are very difficult to extricate from political circumstances. If the editors of *Die Reihe* had, say, not been so implacably unfriendly to our interests we might not have been so alert to the

deficiencies of their discourse. In other words, there was an edge on it, a flavor in it, of the political climate in the musical world we inhabited at that time, which seems to me from here very relevant and proper, natural, reasonable: I wouldn't at all apologize for it. . . .

AB: Well, in any case it did show where we stood.

BB: Yes yes but one of the main things we didn't like about *Die Reihe* was the militant stonewalling partyline feel of it, and that's a lot of why we wanted to publish everyone's work, all kinds of work, including stuff we found pretty unreasonable—I mean, not that it was low-grade, but that we couldn't endorse its biases. Like Stockhausen: we couldn't see it the way he was coming down, but it seemed to us right and proper that our magazine should be a medium for his ideas.

AB: Well in any case it struck several critics other than Henahan as rather ironic that we should do that.

BB: Well what do you think about that? You heard my version, what's yours?

AB: I would think that it showed first of all that we wanted to pay our respects to what was the leading European movement and point of view and at the same time show that we were different. I don't know whether we did that intentionally; I think maybe it happened on some subconscious level and just came out that way, I don't know.

BB: I think whatever it was was intentional because everyone around here was pretty down on *Die Reihe* in overtly intellectual terms, but it was also transparently political.

AB: And this Backus/Stockhausen juxtaposition was a concrete expression of that.

BB: If you look at it politically it's so obvious what the attraction was of the Backus article: it was an intellectually responsible text that took a particular technical point of view that called people's assertions on their own terms and was written by someone who wasn't a political ally, or even for that matter an acquaintance, of any of the people around here. So if I want to be straight about it I'd have to say that we were paying our respects and disrespects at the same time.

AB: I think one of the critics at the time actually did remark favorably on the strong flavor of dissent in the magazine; he thought that was a very good aspect of it.

BB: Well, it's very American too, isn't it?

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AB: Do you recall some of the behind-the-scenes stuff, like what was going on with reference to Godfrey Winham's review of the four books on contemporary music.

BB: What about that? I thought that was very straightforward.

AB: OK, I have this letter here from [the Director of Princeton University Press] . . . "It seems to me that the tone of Winham's review is pettish and cute rather than serious and critical. His first sentence gives the impression of a Britisher looking down his nose at the efforts of American provincials. From a superior point of view he is going to decimate four books, but he casts his withering glance over current American hardcover material and makes the unfounded assertion that these books illustrate prevalent tendencies . . .

BB: Right, he knows what assertions are unfounded or not . . .

AB: " . . . Mr. Winham apparently has tried to achieve a style that is both casual and biting, but the result is something that might be called wilted New Yorkerese. For example: 'But by far the most technical passages in each are—you guessed it—those having to do with twelve tonery.' This reminds us of Charles Poore, the not so clever daily reviewer of the New York Times referring to books on Melville's Moby Dickery."

BB: Ha ha. That's pretty good. How come we never could publish that?

AB: " . . . Later on in another attempt to be casual Mr. Winham grudgingly admits that Mr. Hanson's book is a lot better than par for the field but still was not good enough, which fails as a metaphor because Mr. Winham is neither a golfer nor an economist." Well, it goes on in this vein, and I could tell you—perhaps you don't remember—that in the sentence which read: "But by far the most technical passages in each. . . " the dashed insert " —you guessed it—" was removed as well as some other things.

BB: Oh my god: we knuckled under! For christs sake! And did Godfrey have our head for that like he should have?

AB: I don't think so—I don't really remember.

BB: God, were we a bunch of cowards!

AB: I think we did it with his help.

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AB: To me, it just exemplifies our problems in placating all the people who were involved, including the Editorial Board. You remember we had that problem.

BB: I do not remember that we succeeded in placating anybody, nor do I remember trying very hard. I remember worrying about it a whole lot though. I think our method—I should say my method; we never really came to an understanding about this—of placating people was basically to tell them everything was fine the way it was thanks a lot. And in my youthful innocence I thought that would do the trick. You never thought so; you knew people would demand to be accommodated.

AB: Other people did too; that's why they were all for having Editorial Board meetings and getting everybody's input.

BB: Sure. Look: basically we were formulating and operating a magazine which we were reasonably clear about—we didn't agree about everything but we were clear about what we were doing—over a lot of other people's dead body.

Perspectives right from the start was not only not what the out-there "public" presumably wanted, but it wasn't even something the Editorial Board especially wanted, nor what the Advisory Board wanted, nor what the Fromm Music Foundation wanted, and the head of the Princeton University Press, who could tell what he wanted, except something nice and ivy and uncontroversial. So I never had the feeling that anybody except the main writers of the kind of writing about music *Perspectives* became famous for were in favor of *Perspectives* being the way it was. I think that's pretty fair to say. I don't think anybody other than the people who established the particular intellectual style of *Perspectives* liked the particular intellectual style of *Perspectives* except of course younger people who came into music at that time and read *Perspectives* and responded to it; it seemed like there was a whole generation of those people showing up right after *Perspectives* began publishing. But the people in the generation of the first writers of *Perspectives* I think mostly were not enamored of *Perspectives'* style and its approach—its intellectual discursive musical personality.

AB: But there was a kind of concern—I have several letters from as early as 1964—a concern over where responsibility lay and what the role of the Editorial Board should be and what the role of the editors should be and what the role of the Press should be and so forth.

BB: Well, what's that about? Why was everybody so concerned? What would you say?

AB: They all wanted to run it.

BB: You don't think it was because they were turned off by how we were running it?

AR: That too.

BB: I don't think they would have wanted so bad to run it if we'd been doing it in a way that suited them fine—like, furthering the causes they favored. People saw the "style" of *Perspectives* as being antagonistic to their positions even if there was nothing in any way addressed against them. Like, they would feel that a context professing this high intellectual style would leave them looking less distinguished and glossy than those who would look particularly good within the terms of that style. There was certainly a lot of feeling about that in just about everybody except the people on the front line, on the frontier that produced this kind of writing, this kind of thinking, and this kind of prose—it was, after all, a whole lot more than a prose style, it was a whole intellectual structure . . .

AB: For sure. Oh, absolutely.

BB: . . . and everyone else was turned off to it because they felt it was not to their advantage, apart from being not to their interest.

AB: Do you recall that—even in the reviews—this magazine stood for twelve-tone music and not much else?

BB: Yes, sure. That would be the residue, maybe the lowest common denominator, of the going structure. I think the only people who would have objected to that attribution would have been people like Ben Weber and George Rochberg, and other twelve-tone composers who might not have felt particularly stood for by *Perspectives* either. But it wasn't especially about twelve-tone music in our minds—for us that was neither especially controversial nor particularly free-standing as a focally defined issue—but it was *the* intellectual issue of contemporary music most places in the musical world, and everybody including its fiercest antagonists were totally hooked on talking about it, right? Ingolf Dahl was going to talk about twelve-tone; Harold Shapero was going to talk about twelve-tone; it was a lightning-rod central preoccupation in music-talk at that time. So even if we appeared to be advocates in some sense it was appropriate, as representatives of what was going on in music at that time, to print talk about twelve-tone music, clearly.

AB: But we were perceived to be clannish, weren't we?

BB: Oh sure. And we were! There surely was a certain intellectual world that we inhabited, which had an identifiable set of fellow-inhabitants,

with whom we primarily identified, strongly and relevantly . . .

AB: Well, one thing that confused people was the result of an idea I had, out of a clear sky, I'd never thought about it, when Herb Bailey asked us "What are you going to use for a logo?," and I suddenly came up with Stravinsky's drawing of his own music. Naturally I was surprised at myself—I never came up with real Madison Avenue ideas like that! But people were confused: We were supposed to be a twelve-tone magazine, and Stravinsky hardly represented that to most of the world—though he'd really already started his twelve-tone work, but only just, and he still was not known as a twelve-tone composer.

BB: We knew him to be gravitating that way.

AB: We did.

BB: Yes, and there is a transparent political feel there . . .

AB: That he had just come to the rapprochement . . .

BB: That we have the capacity because of Stravinsky's latest music to identify him as a co-frontiersperson . . .

AB: But wasn't it Dallapiccola who declined to write for us because of that logo?

BB: Yes, he thought it was rather a disgrace for something that purported to be a magazine of contemporary music to identify itself with a logo drawn by a person who was such an implacable enemy of everything progressive in music—I was amazed at his attitude.

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AB: Now, we talked about making a statement with the Stockhausen and the Backus articles. Do you think we were making some kind of a statement when we published the Rosen article?

BB: "The Proper Study of Music."

AB: That was when we were trying to establish the Ph.D. in composition; don't you think that was very much on our mind then?

BB: What was very much on our mind was that composers were prime intellectual movers; and that in the universities, where musicologists generally occupied the position of the resident musical intellectuals, and were politically very involved with maintaining their monopoly, they were inclined to be dismissive toward composers, as talented jerks who had these god-given talents but no minds—and, politically,

composers tended to return the intolerance in similarly thoughtful invective. The issue was probably joined most intensely at places like Princeton and Berkeley, where there was the most overt intellectual assertiveness by composers in institutions which had a powerful and distinguished tradition in musicology. Whereas at a place like Columbia, the conflicts tended to be purely political, since the composers did not set themselves up as practitioners of elevated thought and discourse—until Peter Westergaard, first, and then Charles Wuorinen and other younger-generation composers arrived, with notions of contending for music-intellectual territory, which under the historical circumstances was especially incendiary. But about Charles Rosen's article, of course, I don't know what Charles's motives were or whether they were purely polemical in any sense. But it was a polemical article. We were definitely interested in polemical articles. There were seriously held positions developing in the world that were not widely aired and not generally known or adequately articulated that we, uniquely, could provide an ample forum for. And we unquestionably wanted to be the place where somebody like Charles Rosen could say what he thought; at that time he was a new voice, coming from a very particular place. And this was one of the main reasons to have a magazine in the first place. It wasn't to publish "good" articles.

AB: Of course proselytizing for composers was not the sole point of his article in any case; it brought in the performer and was certainly not explicitly negative about non-composers . . . although he did say that composers are the only ones fit to teach music in a university.

BB: He was saying that everybody needs to hear music from a composer's point of view, not particularly that the people officially designated composers at a given moment are uniquely privileged, but that everyone should and potentially could listen to music as a composer would. That the proper study and audition of music is from the point of view of its composition. And when he wrote his book on classical music he undoubtedly felt he was doing just that: writing about music from the point of view of the people who composed that music—he's too much a real thinker to be pushing just a narrow political composer/noncomposer issue; and he's enough of a freelance provocateur to stir up the music-academic establishment entirely on his own account rather than for our benefit . . .

AB: Yes, well, I know we didn't go to him and say, "this is something we want you to do," but something more like "Write anything you want," which is what we did with everybody.

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AB: We ought to talk about interference and pressure, and I might say that first of all one of the things that took a lot out of me as editor was keeping so many different parties in line. Maybe I took it too seriously, but it hadn't been ironed out yet as it was later. There was, first of all, my relation to you. As everybody knows, co-editors have to settle their differences: that's historic. It has happened on *Encounter;* it has happened on many other magazines. We had to discuss our differences.

BB: Yes, discuss them, not settle them.

AB: Discuss them.

BB: Yes, rather than settle them. I don't think they ever got settled, but they sure got discussed.

AB: And then there was the relationship between us and the Press, which, as we've noticed, wasn't altogether simple: they did try to intervene in the editorial policy; and between us and Paul Fromm, who was not exactly an inactive sponsor. Do you remember that he occasionally even asked people to write articles for *Perspectives* without consulting us?

BB: Oh sure, all the time—in fact, the infamous Xenakis incident was just such a case; Xenakis, Paul, and some of the Editorial Board were highly exercised that I insisted on retaining editorial discretion. But that flap turned out greatly to *Perspectives's* benefit, since it brought Ed Cone into the co-editorship.

AB: I see—provoked by the Xenakis situation.

BB: Yes, and other situations of similar stripe. But once Ed came into *Perspectives,* he used his considerable authority to protect and defend the editorial independence of the magazine from outside interference. He was much better able to protect it than I ever was, and utterly steadfast in his commitment to doing so.

AB: But let me say that the Editorial Board had objections to the way *Perspectives* was going which I took very seriously, and there were objections of quite different kinds coming from different people.

BB: Can you specify that a bit?—what sorts of objections people had and how they voiced them?

AB: Some people just thought it was all wrong: The magazine was too intellectual, they couldn't understand the articles, it was biased in a particular direction to the benefit of certain people.

. . . .

BB: How did you feel?

AB: I was annoyed at being pulled from all sides . . .

BB: But do you think the magazine would have been better had it been different?

AB: No, I don't. But I did have trouble at the beginning about publishing articles I myself couldn't understand. I realize now that an editor can do that as long as he is sufficiently advised by other people that the article is publishable, as you said. I had the feeling somehow that I ought to be able to decide without outside advice.

BB: If you asked me what our principal difference was as editors I would say it was precisely on this issue. I felt that I was not personally responsible for the articles we published in the sense that the authors were.

AB: Let me get back to what I was just about to say. I had a sense of perfection—and I realize the magazine has gone on very well without it—and I felt I had to inject my sense of perfection on every article, while you were willing to let people write their own articles. And I must say that when I submitted articles to Partisan Review they took everything I wrote and didn't touch it, and I thought that was great. On the other hand, I have recently been writing for the *New York Review of Books* and I don't like the way they thoroughly edit and give me trouble. So as an editor I was in the position of doing something which, indeed, I do not myself like when I'm on the other side; but that was what I felt obliged to do—like a mother who's after her children all the time and doesn't let them do their own thing.

BB: I guess for me it comes down not so much to letting people write what they write but to believing that the responsibility of authorship is of a different kind from that of editorship, in that an editor is responsible to represent what's happening but is not responsible for the ideational contents of the texts chosen.

AB: That's right. I would put myself too much in the position of the author.

BB: That was, fundamentally, our disagreement.

AB: Yes. But the main thing was, that all took a lot of time.

BB: We spent a hell of a lot of time on that.

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BB: But what's more significant to me, beyond the convoluted innards of the magazine's management, is the specific history and character of the views seriously held by the people who were putting it together, of the difficulties they had in dealing with it, how those views changed over time, and how the magazine had a life of its own, in image and substance, quite independent of those views—how it both related and disrelated to the sincerely expressed attitudes of its editors and how their attitudes anyway were unavoidably contaminated by all kinds of spoken and unspoken political and personal problems. One that's still bouncing off the walls of the modern music business is the relevant and irrelevant senses in which we were regarded as partyline Princeton— specifically, as Milton Babbitt's spokesthing, and as antimagazine to the other mainline avant-garde: John Cage, Morton Feldman, Earle Brown, Harry Partch, West Coasters, *Source* . . . there was something inexorable about how all that came about, much of it skew to the intentions and especially to the efforts of the editors, that no partisan, or even detached observer's story would be able to capture. But there is a story especially worth telling here because *Perspectives* impinged on a unique time in music history. I don't know of another time when composers thought about their work, about music, as they did then. I don't believe what we were trying to do in *Perspectives* would have occurred to. . . no, that it would have seemed at all desirable to any previous culture of composition. It was a particular moment, there was a convergence of people who had discovered through each other and within themselves a particular terrain of interests and possibilities—not first, nor exclusively, but most conspicuously, energetically, and eloquently, there was of course Milton; but there were also you, George Perle, Elliott Carter, Ed Cone—I don't really want to enumerate the obvious—whose earlier output adumbrated the vision of such a culture—and the vision was most explicitly crystallized by *Perspectives* of all single phenomena.

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AB: So, anyway, there was quite a flareup when you were about to publish Jim Randall's article.

BB: "Compose Yourself."

AB: Well, what confused a number of us at the time Jim Randall's thing was to come out was that you hadn't as yet published any creative work; this was the first thing of its kind . . .

BB: . . . not insofar as it was thought about music, and thought from within music . . .

AB: No, this came down as a creative work in its own form . . .

BB: Well, yes, I'm unsure . . .

AB: All right: You don't make the distinction, but some of us do; this was like the publication of a poem or a piece of music.

BB: OK, but the fact is that we were declared and determined to be open about what and how people wrote when they wrote about or in the context of music.

AB: Yes I know but it was only afterward that you published actual music, too: Do you realize that?

BB: No, but I'll take your word for it . . . anyway, the point is we were long since into the idea of publishing writings and other work in whatever media people felt were appropriate to their thought—in the young composers' series we published writing of diverse nature.

AB: Yes, but that's different: You see it now, and a lot of us also see it now, but we didn't see it in those days; things have changed by now...

BB: It never really occurred to me that *Compose Yourself* wasn't about music. But in particular it never occurred to me that that was an issue to be sweated so profoundly.

AB: I think one of the justifications offered at that time for publishing it—I may be mistaken—was that it was a creative work.

BB: Somebody might have said that. But my attitude was, if something wasn't creative work why would we be publishing it in the first place? I guess it was a new idea to me that discursive writing was not creative, or that it wasn't supposed to be. But I don't think that's the distinction you have in mind; it's something else; could you talk about that?

AB: Yes; this was one of the issues that was in my mind, and it also occurred to other people: I viewed *Compose Yourself* as a literary work, and it was in that sense that I didn't perceive it as a theoretical writing about music; it was in that sense a creative work, as I read it. From my perspective, that was the problem, and it was particularly perplexing because this was the first time something like this came up; it was something new.

BB: Can I ask you, sincerely: What did you think it was about?

AB: Creative works aren't about anything.

BB: What did you think of it as a creative work?

AB: I didn't know what to make of it, frankly.

BB: You didn't think it was about anything? Even specific things it mentioned? Even where it made declarations and statements expressing observations and opinions?

AB: I felt constrained by the fact that I'm not qualified as a literary critic and therefore I may not be able to judge.

BB: Judgment isn't the only issue. As a reader you wouldn't just be judging something.

AB: I don't think, as a reader, I knew what to make of it. Later on I was able to get much further. In fact, I told Jim we ought to have an analysis of his piece so that we'd know what to do with it. And I've just reread this analytical piece that he wrote in response to my request and—now—I understand it as I did not before; I understand what he was trying to do, but at the time I did not. I don't know why that analysis was never published: I thought it was written for publication.

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AB: You said something that maybe some of us were feeling when you said that the late sixties seemed to be the time for something new in *Perspectives*. And then too, some of us had the feeling—this happens whenever a new thing starts to be an influence—that you get the little (I hate to use the word because someone else did) "clones" that repeat; when a movement or a type of music starts to have influence then a lot of people imitate it and there is a lot of repetition from one to the other and not all the people imitating are all that good—some of us were starting to get fed up with that, to be tired of it. Very often it's no criticism against any particular example of any one thing in itself, just against the accumulation of all of them. It's just like saying: OK, I've heard enough Mozart now I want to hear Chopin. And you said that: that it was time for the magazine to go in a new direction.

BB: Permanent revolution is the only imaginable intellectual policy for a magazine like *Perspectives*.

AB: Whether I or other people who felt as I did would have rectified the situation in the direction you did, I don't know. Actually, at the time it shocked me. As I look back at it now and I see what John Rahn is doing in a more temperate way, I see the pictures and the typography, and it really livens up the magazine; it's the sort of thing that was missing. And that started with you. As a matter of fact, John asked me

what I thought and I said: Don't let's have too many of those analytic articles which should be left for the classroom and which go through processes you have to go through to get the results, but not necessarily by washing your linen in public. I said let's get more articles of a speculative sort—which I think the last issue had, by the way; it was a pretty lively issue with Boulez and Foucault and my stuff and Delmore Schwartz and Herbert Schwartz, and things like that coming in. I think that's what we're talking about, and I don't think you should be so surprised that some of us felt as we did at that earlier time, the end of the sixties.

BB: That the articles were too scholastic?

AB: That there was something wrong.

BB: Right. But as I said, one of the main reasons we published such things as Ph.D. theses was that they represented moves toward further horizons. Jim's writing was of a piece with that, was another way of reaching significantly for, of defining, a personal and interpersonal horizon. It's how we were going on in our brand of permanent revolution.

AB: You see it that way, but I think we did not see the Ph.D. theses that way. What we saw was that they were too long and too big and not quite appropriate for a magazine.

BB: Well, one of the main virtues of *Perspectives* was its openness to all kinds of nonstandard objects: things, say, nonstandard in how difficult or novel they were, or in how long—or how short—they were, too. We were open to going overboard in any good cause with our authors, and did. I should say, I don't want to deprive you of the opinion that the dissertations weren't good things to publish, but speaking for myself, I was particularly elated to believe that *Perspectives* had space for all kinds of output that for all kinds of reasons you wouldn't run into in any other magazine. And I guess I have to admit that I thought that those we published were basically intellectual breakthroughs.

AB: Well, you know, most people read a Ph.D. thesis once and that's it . . .

BB: We didn't publish that kind.

AB: All right.

BB: I think Phil Batstone's and Godfrey's, and (I know) mine weren't written that way; we all thought of them as personal culminations.

AB: But yours was different: It didn't read like a thesis.

BB: And did Godfrey's? Godfrey Winham? My God, you're talking about someone who already had a lifetime's worth of deep thinking about music behind him, even though he was still pretty young; an intense history of committed and dedicated and serious and amazingly original thinking about music, behind him. I'd say: I thought of Godfrey's way of writing and his way of thinking as seriously inspirational.

AB: You can't blame us for our resistance . . . it was all too new.

BB: Blame's not an issue; just how it looked from over here: From the beginning, when *Perspectives* began publishing certain kinds of articles that were novel, it made that kind of article respectable (maybe being published by the Princeton University Press had something to do with that). Once it made some kind of article respectable it had no business cultivating a whole harvest of articles like that, if it was to remain responsive to what was brewing on the frontiers. And that is what we were trying for, at least; the difficulty was, that success institutionalizes itself instantly, and it becomes very difficult to keep things turning over because once something becomes an establishment it represents intensely vested interests. And how do you keep the weight of its responsibility to those interests from stultifying it, from making it dead?

AB: Do you remember Andrew Imbrie's letter on the Randall controversy? "If I view it as an original work of art I can make no objections on such grounds, the grounds being because of the language and tone. In fact I find myself in a whole, shall I say, new ball game . . . A fundamental issue of editorial policy arises. Is the magazine now becoming committed to a program of publication of original compositions? If so, I know of several unpublished manuscripts that I shall be happy to submit to the Editor . . . "

BB: The point is people weren't really thinking very hard about the question: What genius invested academic discourse with such authority as to make it the only appropriate mode in which to convey your thoughts about everything, as against anything not in that mode relegated to the domain of not-thought? And strange for composers to use for a putdown: creative work; to aver that we in a composers' magazine had better be really careful about publishing something that might be convicted of being creative . . .

AB: Yes it is strange . . . but one was not prepared adequately at that time. As I look back I think I should have been able to understand, but I think one had to be prepared—you can't blame people for needing preparation to take in new things.

BB: I don't want to blame people for their attitudes, I'm more interested

in asking: What do you think was the real steam behind their attitudes in the first place? Frankly, I can't really believe that people's convictions about intellectual style were so profoundly compelling to them as to bring about this violent reaction to this (after all, really beautiful) piece by Jim Randall. So I have to believe that it was some other discipline than intellectual hygiene that was being practiced here.

AB: Really? You think that?

BB: I wonder. I never noticed most people being that passionate about discourse.

AB: Paul Fromm started it, so if you want to look for other motivations you might suppose it had something to do with supporting Paul's objections. Now, are you doubting that Paul's objection was to the language, to the "mother fucker"? Do you not think that was sufficient to cause him to object? I think it was.

BB: It would have been sufficient, but this was already a historical issue. *Perspectives* had already managed to ruffle enough feathers; it had managed to upset enough people and antagonize them sufficiently that something so vulnerable as this writing by Jim elicited a kind of outrage that without the history of intimidation would not have been elicited. If *Perspectives* had not been intimidating then this vulnerability would not have elicited this kind, this degree, of outrage. The intimidating become vulnerable . . .

AB: I think people wanted something to be able to attack.

BB: It was easy to attack, it was easy to become enraged about it, and the motivation was visible there, in that: the intimidating becoming vulnerable, it seems to me, occasions rage in those who feel themselves to have been intimidated. *Perspectives* was, for whatever reason, regarded not only as intimidating but as purposively attempting to intimidate, intending to intimidate, setting itself up as an intimidating force enforcing itself by intimidation. This was the backlash.

AB: Oh yes. That had a lot to do with it, I'm sure, but—I don't know how—it also had to do with Paul's getting out.

BB: Of course some members of the Editorial Board saw their connection to *Perspectives* primarily as a connection with Paul Fromm, and when Paul Fromm left *Perspectives* they were eager to detach themselves too to demonstrate—to manifest—that connection. Those who didn't leave the Editorial Board at that time were conspicuously resisting that hierarchization of their loyalties—those people being Seymour Shifrin, Milton Babbitt, Jim Randall, Peter Westergaard, Claudio Spies—they were the only ones who didn't leave.

AB: Did I leave the Board?

BB: At some point you left.

AB: I don't know: Paul Fromm's withdrawing would not have bothered me—I was never part of his "stable" of composers—but I just couldn't know what to make of that situation. I think it was the Ph.D. theses combined with that.

—Transcribed from tape recordings by Marjorie Tichenor.

Benjamin Boretz

-forming

:

crowds and power

(interface part iii)

realtime reflections
in a -forming session
on a text from
Elias Canetti's
Crowds and Power

(pre-) music program zero
Bard College
1987

Closed:
To do something
You need to do
You need a space.

A space is not only room
It is a room.
A room has walls
(is an enclosure)
To hold what is done
Within
To contain accumulation
Increment temperature
Reciprocate pressure
Reverberate.
A room is about unloss.

Also walls out.
That which does not need
To do what you in this space
Need to do.
Those who need to not do
And need for you to not do
It.

A space with room
And walls:
Room: at least enough.
Walls: no more than enough.
If possible
To make possible
It.

Open:
To do something
That is to be something
You need to do
You need for there to be
Others.

A space is not only room
And a room which
Contains and
Encloses and
Conserves and
Identifies and
Connects and
Protects but also

Isolates.

Not only walls out but also Walls In.

Not only creates identity but also engenders neglect.

Not only prevents invasion but also causes loneliness.

Not vulnerable is also unavailable.

Makes it possible
But also
Obscures
It.

The Other, behind the outside of the wall, who does not need it, does this Other not need it?
This Other, outside the wall behind us, whom we do not need, to do this, having done this, do we not need?

- Forming:

To negotiate the space
Between the Closed
And the Open
Across the walls

By

making space

using space

enclosing space

opening space

investing time

harvesting time

indexing time

releasing time

being available

to be present

to the other

also

regarding
considering
reflecting
building
perching
dwelling
opening
closing
looking
listening
approaching
measuring
resonating
mirroring
acknowledging
allowing
imagining
addressing
responding
probing
hypotheticating
absurding
supporting
encompassing
distinguishing
availing
and

denying, YES!?

dismantling

DISCURSIVELY

nonverbal

noticing

obviating

inventing

IRREVERENTLY

respectfully

respectful

to the occasion

of the experience

sufficiently

This crowd here (or any other)

Could not be any realer

in playing "For Real"

than each one
before it was
a crowd
was:

less, in fact

in that

the enterprise of a crowd

cannot be real as the enterprise of one: or that is

a one-manipulated crowd.

A group is a convergence of
ones. For a bounded purpose
in which each contributes to
a unit collectivity but each
retains individual responsibility
as well as sharing responsibility
to the collective as well as sharing
the responsibility of the collective
in which "the collective" sustains no
responsibility independent of that
sustained by each individual. One,
in a crowd, has no responsibility.
A crowd, has no responsibility.

Legalize Cannibalism

Excommunicate Infidels

Asseverate Truth

Considering the obstacles,

And that authenticity is unavailable

Why should we persist

In addressing our energies

To such futile concerns

Such that we make ourselves foolish

In the very magnitude

Of our Serious Engagement
As if we were somehow better
Because we make overt what
Everyone else knows as
well as we.

So let's Give Up

and ——

Free Mommy

He who gets ahead, wins Get Yours but leave Mine alone

Heart out

Eat your Brother

Disregard all Foregoing Don't be Misled vandalize life

P A R T Y!

BROTHERS & SISTERS

[cf. fun, n.]

How do you know

the entropic form of Yourself

from Yourself?

—february 1987

RELEVANCE. LIBERATION.

Benjamin Boretz

(Interface, Part IV)

a response, at a symposium about *Meta-Variations,* to papers
by Joe Dubiel, Marion Guck, Marianne Kielian-Gilbert, Fred Maus
Society for Music Theory, Eastman School of Music
November 6, 1987

Relevance. Liberation. Slogans which at one time politicized our universal concerns with social responsibility and personal significance. At that time it was conspicuous how self-consciously music was engaged in pushing at the frontiers of those issues. There was revolutionary rock. There was free jazz. There was Zen, there was indeterminacy. There was the Movement; there was meditation; there was the media. Pulling away, with equal zeal, from those same frontiers, there was the radical Ivy cult of the dictatorship of the scientific intellectual, socially nonresponsible and personally detached. For me, personally, in counter-reaction to the blatantly ideologized character of every one of these cultures, and in need, amidst all the pressuring and confusing noise of their sonic and verbal emanations, of a private ideological articulation of my own, there was *Meta-Variations.*

Relevance is addressed in the first sentence of *Meta-Variations:* it says that I needed to find a way of thinking *about* music that would be adequate to that thinking *in* music which, for me then, identified the substance of value in the interpersonal space of a musical transaction. And it was the idea of music as thought, too, on which *Meta-Variations* grounded its program for my liberation: proposing the imaginative liberation of my musical ideas by the depth and acuity of my receptual reconstruction of what music there already was; promoting the liberation of my musical experience by the comprehensive self-determination of the contexts, contents, and structures which I could make palpable to myself in my interactions with musical phenomena; and envisaging the liberation of my world-sense by the extension of its boundaries, and the deepening of its insights by discovering and composing the fantastic non-physical worlds of sensations and dimensions and untranslatable events which could be experienced, in music form, as wholly real and totally sharable, just like the domestic normal worlds we all share as real without special definition or conscious imaginative effort.

Meta-Variations was, in sum, an extended meditation on these points, putting my world together from its musical center, in terms of my personal experience, insight, and intuition. And it served me, too, as a program for an imaginable music culture—an anarchic pluralist culture of independent thinker-imaginers, experiencing with transcendent depth their own music-thought experiences, but equally accessible to one another for communication, empathy, mutual inspiration. The possibility of such a culture was given to me by the distinctions I was making between the determinacy of the Chosen and the determinism of the Given; between cognitive intersubjectivity and universal necessity; between the firmness of a musical identity by its determinate feel within music language alone, and the dependency of that identity upon paraphrasability or extracontextual specification—, by the distinctions between definition and proof, between assertion and demonstration, and—perhaps most poignantly—between understanding and judgment. The section of *Meta-Variations* entitled "Music Theory, Aesthetics, and Ear Training" was a modest glimpse in this direction; there were broader sightings elsewhere.

But in the subsequent history of *Meta-Variations,* after its composition, some of its broader visions began to unravel; contradictions began to appear that were implicit in the very breadth and scope of its attempt to both universalize and relativize a highly particular world-view. For when it emerged into the actual world of other persons, into the real-time world of its real-world time, when, in fact, it materialized in Perspectives as a public, published, document, *Meta-Variations* projected not really as a personal confession interpersonally shared, but rather as a public manifesto publicly enforcing a specific musical viewpoint, a particular intellectual style, a culture-centric world-view. Paradoxically indeed, this documentation of one person's operation of the politics of individual liberation, both manifesting and advocating a maximum independence and self-determination of experiencing and imagining in both the personal and the interpersonal space, now in actual political space came down as an instrument of coercion and prescription. And thus it was exposed that the conceptions of relevance—social responsibility—and of liberation—personal fulfillment—embedded in *Meta-Variations* were in structural conflict with one another. And that they would be inevitably in conflict in any texts or practices grounded, like *Meta-Variations,* in a conception

of music as a domain of autonomous sound-thought objects and phenomena. For the implications—and retroactively, even the intentions—of such texts and practices appear radically different when they are viewed as modes of transcendent self-development within private space, and when they are brought into public space looking like hard, formed, created objects built to invade and survive in the real world. And this conflict between ideology and function, this functional hypocrisy of one's sincerest intentions, infects all the contemporary manifestations of public music and music-intellectual culture. Is, perhaps, built in to the very conception of 'public' which has become our culture's principal communal mode. And certainly marks every one of the self-consciously idealistic contemporary music practices which I mentioned at the beginning of these reflections, despite the enormous ideological-conceptual gulfs apparent among them.

All of those contemporary music cultures, in fact, and *Meta-Variations* culture along with them, are modeled on *masterpiece* culture—which freely translates into *celebrity* culture in some versions—and which entails as an indispensible image the autonomous identity of either the masterful work of art or the masterful artist. It is a model whose relation to the history and culture of its surroundings is either mythologically one-dimensional and provincial, like that of Scripture, or blank, like that of theoretical science. In masterpiece culture, musical behavior is strictly the symbolic behavior of abstract Ideas, idealized Figures, and schematized structures of quantified sonic particles. Music History, the official record of musical phenomena within masterpiece culture, is merely the recorded chronology and taxonomy of these idealized behaviors. It is only when music is seen as something that is done by and among *people,* as a form of *people's* behavior among other forms of behavior, that real-time, people-size circumstances of history, culture, and experience become indispensibly relevant, both as input to, and as output from, our conceptions and practices of music.

If musical thought is to be relevant, if it is to be liberating, if those two conceptions are to be consonant rather than contradictory, a conception of the materials, character, and activity of music broader in scope than that of *Meta-Variations* needs to be pursued. In saying this, I regard myself as the direct beneficiary, rather than the recuperating victim, of the conceptions, constructions, and gropings which carried me through to the "All-Musical" scope of *Meta-Variations;* for the

very exhaustiveness of this scope of conception and construction was crucial to exposing and specifying its intrinsic limits. From within the mind of *Meta-Variations,* a virtually unlimited universe of musics is imaginable; but all these musics are ultimately constrained by what turns out to be a single possible, bounded conception of music, among many possible others. The materials of music under this conception are understood as a vocabulary of sound qualities inferable from sonic particulars. And the contents of music are understood as the expressive experiential output of the cumulative networks of relational time-objects formed among these qualities.

If, on the other hand, music is received as behavior, then our musical and our metamusical behavior both are significant content in the global interpersonal space in which we act upon one another, creating and exhibiting and cultivating messages of social form and interpersonal experience. How we choose to understand music is not passive; it is positive social action. And how we scope the range of what we can count as the materials of some music, how we can learn to embed the sonic data of a musical occurrence within its ontological context as an implicative occasion within a particular cultural vocabulary, traditional or newly being created, will determine our capacity to reactivate our own musical culture, to reconnect our musical thinking and behaving with what is alive in us as questing people, wanting to understand, experience, and cultivate the actual world of our actual lives with our living music.

I end with three soundstretches, each of which is the sound of a significative musical behavior, whose salient qualities as music, the senses in which it is music, are not adequately accessible from the strategies made available by *Meta-Variations,* nor any other current practice of musical thought based on the construal of autonomously structured, autonomously ontologized, sonic formations, however copiously, and even trivially, they may suffice to account for its ostensible data:

[Soundstretch 1: J.D. Short: Train, bring my baby back (from Folkways FTS 31028: Delta Blues)]

[Soundstretch 2: Procession of the colour-bearers/Song of the Alfereces (from EMI-ODEON 064-18218: *Musical Atlas: Chile)]*

[Soundstretch 3: from B. Boretz's *forM. (a music)* (an audiotape convergence of texts and occasions)]

THE LOGIC OF WHAT?

Benjamin A. Boretz

The ultimate act of musical creation is the auditory-mental activity by which alone a musical identity is brought into being, in the only way in which, epistemically speaking, it *has* being: as a consciously experienced *determinate feel;* that is, as an awareness-state of the whole perceptual consciousness of some one experiencing person, an awareness-state which is cognized by that person as a distinct experienced-sound entity within a certain range of such entities, and which is retrievable in principle and therefore in principle—though not necessarily in practice—intersubjectively sharable. Hence 'musical properties' can be identified as consequential resultants of the interactions of acoustic signals with temporally bounded acts of *attribution,* extending from the attribution to a given acoustical signal-span of the 'property' of *being music,* which in turn evokes an embedded set of dispositions to attribute to that acoustical-signal-span characteristics within a certain determinate range. Such music-attributive acts may be either consciously volitional or functionally autonomic. In either case, the configurations of the psycho-energetic attributing process, by which alone the stimuli made available by raw acoustic signals are transformed into experienced-music entities, are the most intelligible denotata of such a [verbal] concept as 'music theory'[1]. Each such 'music theory', like each music-entity created by its operation, is, by this description, explicitly a hypostatization of a particular temporally bounded process—on the model of, say, 'a learning', 'a cognition', 'an experi-

[1] This transformation, which I have called 'semantic fusion', is described in detail in the text "What Lingers On (, When the Song Is Ended)" (in this collection). A fundamental conception here, one which links the conception of 'attribution' with the phenomenon of music hearing, is the conception of 'hearing as' (as opposed to 'hearing that'); thus for any musically meaningful attribute P, to say P(x) is to report that "x is heard as a P", or to propose that "x can (or should, or will) be heard as a P". Thinking of Suzanne Langer, you might think of the experiential output of 'hearing as' as a kind of 'virtual sound'.

ence'. And so, further, by a relevant analogy to [verbal] languages, what are called 'musical properties' in the foregoing text should more accurately be called 'musical *meanings*';[2] apart from the cognitive accuracy achieved by this naming strategy, it has the significant fringe benefit of enabling the distinction of the set of music-existential attributes from any of the conventionally reified 'music-technical characteristics' which are experienced solely as the referents of and as references to a vocabulary of epistemically undissolved 'technical terms'.

Here, then, is a stand-alone model of the musical enterprise: Listening is do-it-yourself composing. Composing is speculative listening. Potentially, the realm of musical experience can be the creative-intellectual responsibility of each music-experiencing (hence, music-making) person. Can be, within the bounds of consciousness and insight, the autonomous property of each person. This is a state of nature. In a state of acculturation these potentials of volition are customarily submerged into structures of conventions which are internalized, buried obscure from access to consciousness: ritual codes, ritual protocols, ritual delimitations and demarcations of medium and message. In our culture, self-conscious metamusical discourse, by displacing 'meanings' onto epistemically unanalyzed 'technical characteristics', has tended to displace the largely subliminal tribal-ritual experience-code in the direction of categorically ordered symbolic structures bonded conventionally to metalinguistic constructs (verbal-linguistic, formal-linguistic), thus creating a richly detailed social-performance code whose texts are easily and unambiguously testable against and quantifiable within specifiable criteria-of-evaluation-structures. The 'music theory' projected by discourse of this nature is a referential system for perception which translates the discriminable differentia of the musical sound-surface field into a field of explicit symbolic tokens, each tied to a metalinguistic token, so as to convert the music-cognitive event into, essentially, a process of hearing the experienced-musical data as abstractions of the metalinguistic

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[2] By the same token, I came to believe (especially after gnawing at the edges of Richard Montague's *Formal Philosophy)* that what are referred to as 'syntactical systems' in *Meta-Variations* and elsewhere in my writing should more transparently have been called 'syntactical-semantic systems'. Despite the fact that the ranges of allowable sonic interpretations of predicates (structural concepts) are explicitly not given, the predicates themselves which articulate all the systematic constructs proposed in *Meta-Variations* constitute universes of 'all the 'things' that things can be', and, in turn, they constrain (by implication) 'all the things that can be a 'thing' '. Such a formulation clearly assimilates in structure to the concepts of a semantics, which may be said to structure interpretations of syntactical predicates without prescriptive implications as to their ordering, which is an aspect of syntaxes explicitly eschewed by the musical systems of *Meta-Variations.* The whole issue is, however, nonconsequential to the usable *musical* output of the *Meta-Variations* systems as formulated therein.

structures. Thus, within the hermetically self-enclosed tribal-experience code, the perceived musical sound-surface clearly has a *sense;* but that sense is paraphrasable only physically or emotively, and hence is sharable only inexplicitly, unverifiably, and untestably; it is, consequently, opaque to discourse, and so inaccessible to reflection and analysis. The normative 'music-theoretical discourse' of our culture, however, does not attempt to create a metalinguistic access to either the tribal-ritual sense or to the state-of-nature potential of music-sound perception, but substitutes a synthetic mode of hearing which, by a mechanism of translation and abstraction, turns the musical sound-surface into—causes it, effectively, to be *heard as*—a symbolic paraphrase of the conventionalized metamusical discourse. Through this means such discourse effectively recruits, appropriates, and regiments the music-perceptual transaction for purposes which are essentially institutional, and institutionalizing. It is this sort of ontological commitment in a music-theoretical subculture which impels it to assimilate what it calls 'musical thought' to the standards, criteria, prescriptions, and preoccupations of prestigious extramusical disciplines within its global culture, especially—and understandably—those disciplines whose practitioners have been allowed to set the conspicuous parameters of intellectual authority for their extended community. A 'music theory' emergent within this subculture will perforce be prescriptive, making claims of right thinking, right methodology, and presumptive universal intradisciplinary hegemony. A composition practice can be erected on such principles. So also can be erected a performance practice, alongside of practices of discourse, pedagogy, history, criticism, and, of course, consumption. As they have been.

From the perspective of the music-theoretical culture just described, virtually everything asserted in the first paragraph of this writing would probably be of scant interest, let alone credibility. For from within such an institutionalized enclosure it is not perhaps even discernible that there might be other music-ontological commitments than its own, arising from quite other intuitions, quite other objectives, and—perforce—giving rise to quite other ideologies.

—Here is one: the maximization of the individuality and autonomy of the experience of musical structures is likely to be a strenuous aspiration of persons for whom musical experiencing (=thinking) is a primary creative-intellectual resource of self-construction and awareness training, and a fundamental perspective from which their personal world-making enterprise is conducted.

—Here is another: such maximization is also likely to be lusted after by persons whose most intense intuitive response to their musical experience is to value the particularity, the individuality of sound and image, receivable from each music-experiencing episode, rather

than to savor its conformity to a predetermined order or its substantiation of a known and familiar paradigm.

Both these 'alternative' musical worldviews are likely to coexist in some persons, and to converge in the music-using habits they are likely to inspire: a tendency to go for adventure rather than comfort; to activate the musical transaction to sharpen identity by aligning with, or distancing from, the concentrated essences of other minds and psyches, rather than to celebrate and confirm with satisfaction the anterior settlement of all outstanding issues of identity and status, the resolution and domestication of messy issues of meaning and existence, under the hegemonic proprietorship of the dominant-cultural status quo.

And to speak as I have of these alternative music-theoretical agendas as representing distinct 'ontological commitments' from what I have packaged as the 'institutionalized' agenda, is to imply that 'music' is something different for each of these two cultures, that the disparities in their music-intellectual strategies are principally motivated by this ontological disparity, and that—radically—the very *referents* of their metalinguistic tokens are not only disjunct but literally opaque to one another. Not surprisingly, the very possibility of such an opacity is inconceivable from within a secure ontological commitment, since all its adherents have known, utterly intuitively and utterly by the light of ground-level common sense and the agreement of all right-minded fellow-creatures, what 'music' is—at least, in even the relativistic sophistication of our cultural maturity, what it is within our own music-linguistic community.

I need the foregoing analysis to explain to myself how people can so utterly misconstrue what I have written about music. Not how they can disagree with it, or take issue with its claims, observations, or constructions, but just flat misconstrue it. But obviously, if you carry certain assumptions deriving from your ontological commitments, certain strategies will issue from those assumptions, and certain readings, inferences, and associations will be given with regard to texts in a certain context, vocabulary of a certain coloration, and verbal surface of a certain rhetorical cast. And anyone I would designate here (for economy of reference) an 'institutionalizer' would be particularly susceptible to this sort of opacity when confronting a text by someone I would here designate a 'contextualizer'.

In fact, I perceive that an 'institutionalizer' is likely to read a 'contextualizer's' thoughts rather as a fascist would read an anarchist's: the ontological assumption (social organization consists of an ordering based on relative power) implicates objectives (a program for social organization is a means to bring its author into a hegemonic position within that society) which automatically locks in issues of strategy, and prescribes a certain intention as to the ordering, formulation, and purpose of each proposal, analysis, observation, and

thought-sequence in that text (persuasion, enforcement, appropriation of the authority of the true orthodoxy[3] are invariant ploys; and steeltrap consistency, irrefutable authority, and ultimate universal prescriptive force and effect are inevitably being sought, or implicitly even being claimed). Let me give you an example of a benign misconstrual of the type in question: benevolent friends of mine, earnest and engaged fellow music-thinkers, strenuously urged me to reconsider my construction of the definition of 'intervals' out of that of 'pitches' in Part II of *Meta-Variations,*[4] on the plausible grounds

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[3]An insight into the orthodoxy-claiming myths of heterodox subcultures was given in Avron Boretz's paper, "Gathering By Night and Dispersing By Day: Chinese Religious Sectarianism in Modern Taiwan" (1987).

[4]In the section entitled "The All-Musical System". This title is, as I subsequently perceived, significantly misleading; I am sure it has misled even good readers into confusions concerning its interpretation (see, for example, Jay Rahn's *A Theory For All Music)*. The 'universality' of the definiential ascension-structure which is described in this section purports to lie explicitly in the *openness* of the space it creates for the invention of sound-materializations of the attributing predicates it defines. Significantly: this openness to creative interpretation is absolutely autonomous for *each* distinct act of musical entification; no such act is *systematically*—in principle—contingent upon any other (however so contingent it may be on account of the psychological conditioning and experiential history of any particular individual). What is specified for each defined predicate is precisely and exclusively a *sense* which may be attached (attributed) to an acoustical signal whereby it is heard as a particular sound, a sense which I considered to be a meaningful and intuitive sub-literal reading of its given name (as, for example, 'interval'); and there is also specified a structure of such senses such that each derives its (logical as well as epistemic) intelligibility from the sense in which it 'reinterprets' its (lower-order) predecessors within the global structure. But no *one* global *interpretation* of the structural universe (that is, no interpretation which might characterize some single musical instance) compromises the interpretive liberty of any other, from top to bottom; thus the system never actually refers to 'all' music in any univocal sense, but rather—crucially and explicitly—to *'any'* music. And thus it is only in the sense of holding for any music that the system offers itself as holding for 'all' music, so it should, clearly, have been named accordingly: "The Any-Musical System". As far as 'mistakes' in the logical-language definitions are concerned, only two that I know of are structural (in other words, of music-epistemic consequence): the definition of 'interval' requires an additional condition; and the definition of 'higher than' requires the introduction of a higher-order primitive, an invariant referential extreme, to stabilize and disambiguate its construction. All other mistakes that I know of are purely technical (in the logical sense) and easily correctable by knowledgeable application of the rules of logic, with no musical issues engaged. I should point out that, since the 'logic' (quotes because: there are no proofs, theorems, or demonstrations within the logical structure; 'logic' is simply an attempt to use a consistent and minimally ambiguous notation to detail and specify a thought process) is subservient to what is being claimed to be the logic of someone's musical intuitions, therefore no mistake of a purely logical kind could — logically

that the logical formalizations could be made much simpler, more economical, and elegant if the ascension were reversed: that is, if 'intervals' were taken as primitive and 'pitches' defined by extraction from them. But my use of logical forms and structures was motivated entirely by epistemic interests: I needed to explicate and examine my intuitions about the relative depths and essential character of musical phenomena; the logico-definiential sequence had to follow, delineate, particulate, and test—not dictate or structure—the logic of my primal musical intuitions. Each step was a means to help me see the path ahead, in strenuous communion with my 'mind's ear', and in strenuous disregard of any issues of logical concision (spelling everything out was my need; what use could I possibly have for elegant short-cuts?). The only precision I required was the accuracy with which the logical language structured and detailed itself in direct imaging of this music-epistemic thought process; the only observational substratum I considered relevant was the content derived from my own strenuous retrospection of my own music-perceptual and music-imaginative experience; the only verification I could use (apart from the verification of the simple intelligibility of the logical sentences in normal logical terms) was the output of what I considered the model experimental configuration for the 'empirical science' of metamusical thinking: set up your head according to your formulation, run sound through the so-constructed head-filter (either acoustical sound or just purely mentalized sound), and make strenuous critical retro-observations of the experiential output of that process. The same model held for assessing 'analyses' and higher level systematic-theoretical construction.[5] It was, in fact,

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— create a terminal illness in the system. But if the cure for some such mistake turned out to have *structural* consequences, the adjudication of this issue would have to proceed from the authority of the musical conception to the formulation of the logical articulation, and never the reverse.

[5] See: reconstructions of 'polyphony', 'order- and content-determinacy', of the 'tonal' syntactic-semantic system, and of a 'free-atonal' referential network (in Part III of *Meta-Variations);* and reconstructive spatial-syntax networks *(not* 'analyses'!) of Wagner's *Tristan* Prelude, of Webern's Op. 5 #4, of the opening passages of Brahms's Fourth Symphony, of the opening of the First Tableau of Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*, and of Schoenberg's Op. 15 #1, for evidence of the music-imaginative output of these investigations. A later writing entitled "Of This and That" includes such other speculative reconstructions as: the 'nine-note referential scale of Beethoven's Op. 110'; the 'eight-pitch-class system of Schoenberg's Op. 25'; the 'cycle-of-fifths/semitone equivalence system of Mozart's Sonata in A Major, K. 331'; and the 'dissonance structure' which opens Beethoven's Op. 2 #3; for me, these and other controlled experimentations with creative music-hearing were powerfully facilitated by the exercise of composing out the text of *Meta-Variations.* (See also the astounding music-hearing- descriptive texts — only a few of which have been published—by J. K. Randall, who has been

precisely the image that such an experimental configuration was the paradigm procedure of personal musical evolution that conveyed (and delimited) the substance of my allegation, in the introductory chapter of *Meta-Variations,* that music, ipso facto, was an empirical science, but—as I stressed—a science of a special, self-determining kind, not either assimilated or subservient in any sense to the objectives, methods, preoccupations, or criteria, of any of the practices familiarly institutionalized under the name of 'empirical science'; nor, for that matter, did I suppose my work to be, in any relevant sense, annexed to any particular practices of any extramusical discipline, philosophical, theoretical, or scholarly, except where these would help me to understand and clarify what I was struggling to think about.

What was I struggling to think about? Essentially, how to think about (and talk about) music in such a way as to reflect and probe, in an adequate and believable way, the thought *in* music which I perceived to be its creative content, its ontological reality. The focus of musical theorizing, for me, was the complex, consciousness-engrossing, fused unity of the creative musical experience, the shining image of the vividly individual musical act: the universalization of imaginative composition as the encompassing way of all musical life. Theorizing was valuable, first, as a tool to empower and liberate my creative-intellectual musical experience with the resources of introspective retrieval, of actual intuitions and experiences, rigorous analysis of the experienceable sense that could be made of any concept, image, or structure—(did its experimental application as a mental filter make a *difference* in the music one would hear?: identity of musical sense is only understandable as identity of a perceived *sound:* this was a commitment entrenched at

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both a guide and a companion through most of my time-sound and music-thought adventures. And also writings of a similar interest by Elaine Barkin, Jane Coppock, Arthur Margolin, and Marjorie Tichenor.) On the other hand, I really have no opinion as to whether reading or studying—as against writing—such texts as these would have any similarly tangible benefits; I remain convinced that speculative music-theoretical texts should be published mainly for their value as communicative human documents, and for their value in giving a community access to whatever thoughts, activities, and articulative strategies are taking form within its bounds. Their instructional value is, I believe, primarily exemplary: here's something I've done my way, which might stimulate and liberate you to do something your way. Writeups of theories are always reports of bygone episodes of perceiving and thinking; there is no really meaningful way to directly 'apply' their constructions to any present or future musical business. Except, of course, if that business is the business of enforcement and institutionalization of doctrinal uniformity, is—in other words—the business of annihilating the very foundations of the activity which my own music-theoretical effort was explicitly designed to protect, for myself and others.

the gravitational center of my music-intuitive conceptual scheme); from this process evolved concepts which informed a series of speculative construals of existing musical texts. Second, theorizing was valuable as an expression and articulation of senses and experiences and concepts of music which were spiritually and ideologically vital to me, and which I needed to articulate into the music-intellectual environment so as to feel that the sense of music which identified and represented and resonated me as a music-thinking person was identified and represented and resonated within the intellectual-musical world I inhabited. Theorizing, then, was conceived both as active input to the creative musical thought experience, as an active agent to its determinate benefit, and as reflective output from that process, in that an adequate mode of contemplating an elapsed musical experience is a way of retrieving it and extending it so as to *have* it more substantially, with more specific identity, with more vivid reality.

I was struggling to mobilize creative freedom in maximal conjunction with, rather than as an escape from, cognitive determinacy, since I imagined that creative freedom was only meaningful as a maximal formulation of some specific cognitive determinacy. And, similarly, to mobilize creative freedom as the beneficiary, rather than the prisoner, of the profoundest transactions of my own music-experiential history, of the profoundest discoveries accessed in the musical traditions of my own ancestral culture. In the first instance, I was greatly moved as a composer by what I then perceived as the futility of the anti-determinate avant-garde, seeking creative freedom by embracing vacuity; I could not imagine forgoing the intensely experienced specificity of the quest for and the reception of the particularized musical-sense-making image. And in the second instance, I was greatly moved as a composer and avid new-music consumer by the rationalistic, scientistic strategies which had deracinated the pro-determinate avant-garde, maximizing literal systemic structural determinacy at the sacrifice of the utterance-contour structures, and the cumulatively time-unfolding sound-images, which I believed were crucial to the incandescence of a musical soundthought, and which I took to be the essential substratum of traditional composed-music masterpieces—and it was out of a powerful identification with, not a rejection of or rebellion against, the qualities of traditional composed music, that I was first moved to compose my own music.

It was necessary to struggle because the texts of metamusical discourse, choked with essentially undefined terms tied rigidly to their literal interpretations, and the pedagogical output of the practices of 'music theory', substituting data-processing and token-identification for music experiencing, were massive impediments to, rather than facilitators of, a determinately liberated creative freedom. What was necessary was to reduce the theoretical superstructure to an absolute minimum by relativizing and reconstructing all of its salvageworthy

predicates through a substructure of 'meanings' whose conditions for determinate coherence were independent of any explicit interpretation, in any particular acoustical signals. In short, the realm of sound-interpretation was opened to the limits of speculative imagination, subject only to the test of believable experience—which I called 'empirical', but the only population necessary to survey for verification was a universe of one—myself; and the determinacy of the predicates was going to provide a secure referential foundation for the free ordering of freely imagined sound-materials in an environment of musical sense-making conceived as the experience of cognitive time-space structuring. (The latter ("musical sensemaking conceived as the experience of cognitive time-space structuring") is, for me at the present time, a principal—and formidably serious—limitation of the *Meta-Variations* theoretical enterprise. See "Relevance. Liberation." (in this collection) for an explication of this position.) Such a practice was to bring listening and composing into vibrant convergence: just as my composing was liberated as the free but determinately constrained imaginative projection of possible structures of musical sense, so my listening was liberated as the free but determinately constrained imaginative construction of received acoustical signals.

Listening reconstructed as do-it-yourself composing. Composing revitalized as speculative listening, inspired rather than repressed by subsisting in the environment of existing other music. The only theoretically necessary constraint on this determinate freedom was the indispensable empirical test: the critical scrutiny of the universe of at least oneself, under the constraints of sanity: the conception of intersubjectivity *in principle*, but not necessarily verified in practice, is, after all, the only adequate explication of a powerful and conspicuous myth of our most revered music-traditional lore: that that which is determinately coherent to someone must be supposed by that person to be ultimately susceptible of coherent attribution in some equivalent sense by creatures whom he has reason to infer are of the same species and culture as himself: it is, indeed, virtually the model myth, in masterpiece culture, of the biography of the masterpiece (Liszt: "Das versteht ihr alle nicht.")[6] And equally, in the kind of personally interested musical experience my work has addressed and cultivated, as in the texts of Freud's theoretical mythologies, introspection is the crucial empirical testing-ground. This is, perhaps, 'empirical science' in a sense radically distinct from that of physics. Such a charge is frequently laid on Freud's theorizing

[6] These days my relation to masterpiece culture is considerably more complex (viz. "Interface Part II: Thoughts in Reply to Boulez/Foucault" *[Perspectives of New Music* Vol. 25 (1987)])—but that isn't a helpful story here.

texts.[7] But that may just be a necessity of the peculiar way that Freud's theories are 'theories'. So if my musical thinking requires a different sense of 'the scientific' to fulfill the purposes of my thought; if the logic of my musical thought dictates logical structures inconsistent with those erected to accommodate the necessities of other kinds of thinking, of the thoughts of other thinkers; if I need to hear and think music in ways that are incompatible with institutionalization, professionalization, or commoditization; there may arise some difficulties in consequence—social, or even intellectual, or even ontological—but, in this one respect at least, I'm not aware of having any choice.[8]

December 1988

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[7] This and related issues were reignited for me after reading a provocatively re-visionary work in progress entitled "Freud's Critique of Philosophy" by my colleague at Bard College, Prof. Daniel Berthold-Bond of the Philosophy Department, which he generously shared with me.

[8] This text was written as a quasi-response to the paper by Matthew Brown and Douglas Dempster which appears elsewhere in this journal [*Journal of Music Theory, Summer 1989*], although no direct references to their text are made in mine. My reluctance to engage issues long since absorbed and emergent in significantly new forms at—for me and my musical and personal development—several successive generations of new conceptual frontiers, was overcome by the enthusiasm, solicitude, and courtesy of my good friend Pieter van den Toorn, for which support I am exceedingly grateful.

INTERFACE

PART V:

ON THINKING ABOUT VARIOUS ISSUES INDUCED BY THE PROBLEM OF DISCOVERING THAT ONE IS NOT A 'COMPOSER' AND THAT THE SPACE WHICH ONE INHABITS MUSICALLY IS NOT 'AMERICA'

Benjamin Boretz

I

A TIRADE (FROM MY DIARY)

1.

... Do I have to tell you about the spiritual cannibalism of the culture, our culture, which has been bombarding us with ultrasensory overstimulation aiming to reprocess us into fulltime consumption machines, stealing above all from us our time (not an inch of time without an imprint of message), and even our very *sense* of time (to be measured in lengths of no more than one message unit each) under the guise of entertainment, and even of 'art', commoditizing the eternal, hyping the primal? Our time is the *sine qua non* of our identity. We need to take extreme measures to reclaim it for ourselves and each other. (3/88: about *("...my chart shines high where the blue milk's upset. . .")*)

2.

Postmodernism in music is premised on the idea that people have to compose, perform, listen to, and review music no matter how useless, pointless, rootless, disengaged, culturally archaic those practices have become. Business, after all, is business. And what is called minimalist music, in postmodernist talk, strenuously and overtly celebrates the pervading poverty of our cultural spirit, and the mechanical functionality which has increasingly become what passes for our relations to one another. On the grounds that we need our music for vital matters of survival and salvation, and that we can't afford to squander it on marginal ego-iconography that doesn't even have the immediate culture-wide expressive bite of popular entertainment, I am—politically—opposed to the stances and practices of postmodernist and minimalist music. And in favor, insofar as I can imagine needing a high-cultural music medium at all, of stances and practices currently striped, historistically, as 'modernist': frontiers are still there; they need to be confronted and extended; they *are* that which people need to confront and extend; symbolically at least, but tangibly, also, in the sense of science, every people in every age has its own assemblage of obsessions and terrors-alienations. These need to be spoken for to and with by activities among one's own kind, activities which strain to articulate the inarticulate inchoate lucidly, which name the unnameable, bear the unbearable, make survivable the affirmative recognition of the terrifying, take the journey for us, within, to the places we desperately need to go to and equally need to avoid the pain and fear of going to, experience with us for us everything we are too vulnerable to experience alone, too alone to survive not experiencing. In our age, for our people, the requisite forms of these practices are in principle always unknown, their perpetual reconstruction the endless task of those whose compulsion—whose obligation to us to which we obligate them—it is to travel to the unknown, to seek and discover and unravel there the endlessly evaporating texts which enable and constitute, both, our life-giving, ineluctable struggle against the inevitable deficit. If we need public-functional musicworkers, it is these public functions for which their services

are required. The person, the monument, which is larger than life, we no longer believe or trust or endorse. Nostalgia will not do our business. The cold metaphors of lockstep windup tin militias may chill our heart but I doubt they scourge our consciousness. Something authentically new is still always going to be needed. As it always has. (4/88).

II

RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE MISUNDERSTANDINGS WHICH ARISE FROM FUNDAMENTAL AND UNRESOLVABLE CONFLICTS REGARDING WHAT IT IS, WHAT IT'S ABOUT, AND WHY PEOPLE CARE ABOUT IT

1. WHY I NEED TO ELIMINATE 'SKILL' AND 'TECHNIQUE' FROM MY EXPRESSIVE AND EDUCATIVE PRACTICES:

To do something you have to be able to do it. That is not 'technique'. 'Technique' is not a fact. 'Technique' is a way of looking at things which creates facts of a certain specific type. Facts created from the 'technique' perspective have a peculiar way of putting together a doing; they construct it as the manifestation of an abstract, meta-experiential, content, discursively attributable to the doing and the doer, detaching the doing from its experiential nature and functional purpose as a fused unitary doing-in-particular. 'Technique' and 'skill' serve not as aids in the effectiveness or substance of doings or of the experiencing, observing, or interfacing with doings, but only in the symbolic commerce of competitive status-acquisition and status-conferral. The power to get and give points, not to be effective or affected. Significance institutionalized, sanitized, domesticated as metric. The regimentable quantity, the disinvolved observation, in trade for the self-determined quality, the uncontrollably involving 'is-ness' of 'an experience'. 'Technique' and 'skill' are technique and skill directed toward the result of calling attention (essentially, *discursive* attention) to themselves, that their presence is (satisfyingly and satisfactorily, or not) manifest, that the candidate passes the test, proves himself and his work worthy

of respect and attention in designable ways, from a detached perspective. To perceive 'technique' and 'skill' this way is in no way to endorse carelessness or mindlessness or random-intentional drift; on the contrary, it constitutes a demand for critical rigor in the definition of what business you're in and requires that you maintain your focus on the purpose and significance of your enterprise of expression. Sloppiness in the conduct of musical doing, and especially music-educational doing, comes from separating out technique and skill from the purposes for which they are employed, not from keeping them fused and inexplicit.

2. WHAT EXPRESSES YOU, PERSONALLY, IS NOT 'SELF-EXPRESSION':

To speak of your identity is to speak essentially of your ontology. It's fundamental: your sense of being sane requires that your intuited ontology be sustained: it's threats to that bedrock sanity-giving sense of what is and happens that gives rise to such strenuous defenses as moralities, standards, judgments, ideologies, righteousness.

So 'expresses you' does not mean expresses any image of your person self-reflexively, but rather means resonates, corroborates, confirms, substantiates your intuitions of what there is and what happens: the ontology that constitutes your identity.

What is 'non-personal' expressing then? Borrowing identities, for one, in the service of some ulterior strategy of public self-creation. Objectifying, for another, your own identity—the image of your person or the contents of your ontology—to enforce it as obligatory upon, or to make it enticing to, the hypothetical or actual Other.

So what's a non-bullshit sense of 'authenticity'?: means identifying an acutely felt, self-interested need to be strenuously *for real*; to open into and out of the deepest layers of your own perceptions and intuitions—finding your own access to your own observation language, your own intuitions and visions (auditions) of what there is, within and without. The familiar traditional (pre-Postmodernist) cultural ethos includes a myth of 'personalness' as a critical role-condition of 'artisticness': your obligation as an artist is not

that you have ideas which are *good* (or true, or deep, or original), but that you have ideas which are convictually *yours*.

So it's a direction of effort, never a result. An aspiration, never a claim; a way of thinking and striving which manifestly gives rise to ideas, observations, awarenesses that have not come other ways, which contrast signally and blatantly with those that have come other ways.

Two ways something identifies you:

1. you identify with it as a 'rightness' in harmony with your intuited ontology;

2. you identify against it, locating yourself in some specific alienation with respect to it; not just 'otherness' but some specific content of otherness; not just 'alienation' but in some specifiably locatable geography of elsewhere.

3. WHAT I UNDERSTAND TO BE THE ESSENTIAL DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF ENTERTAINMENT ART AND HIGH ART:

Entertainment surrogates our time; relieves us of it for a spell; lives through it for us while it's on loan; does what it takes to keep it for just so long as that feels nonconsequential, not threatening our ultimate reappropriation; returns it refreshed but otherwise intact, unsullied by any lingering tarnish or blemish of content; cleansed but not altered, corroborated but not invaded, renewed but not re-formed.

High art surrogates our time exactly so also; but aspires to not only surrogate our time but also to transform it permanently and substantively: purports to return it to us comprehensively reconstructed: such that not just immediately during or following, but always thereafter, and even with cumulative effect, our time (= the world) will not be the same. Its intentions toward us are serious (as is our use for it) and sinister: something is invading our psychic space with the intention of appropriating our identity and remaking it at its will; or it is we ourselves who appropriate ourselves to it so

as to have it do this to us: 'take us over', make us more thereby, give us by surrogation the authority of its own visionary grasp, of its own devouring subjugation of us ourselves.

4. WHY INTERFACE IS A PROBLEM:

Our survivals depend on one another's. Trouble begins the moment you try to persuade me (and thereby yourself) that your struggle is *my* struggle too; or even—especially even—when you try to persuade us both that *mine* is yours too. And yet, of course they are. And yet, that's never what we're addressing when we're operating the institutionalized ideology that they are: The spiral of incoherence is perpetual: Self-assertion is the problem; self-assertion is the only means we have available by way of which to attempt a solution. The problem is, obviously, insoluble; also, inescapable.

Is there a way of acting that converges the personal and the 'political' needs? That expands awareness to the size of the issues, reduces the sizes of the issues to the sizes of persons, works to harmonize rather than to conquer the immovable contradictories which not only trouble but define our existential identity?

zero theory anthem

Theorizing is, right, creative work. And like all creative work, it has no relevant literal direct applicability to anything else. Rather — like all creative work — its use is to be experienced, absorbed with experience, and suffused nonlinearly into the network of awareness. A person thus transformed will of course see and think differently from before, being of course a different person as a consequence of having a specific creative-intellectual experience. This is the exclusive beneficial potential of creative-intellectual theoretical work. Footnotes, citations, canons, paradigm assignment, and other such devices do not belong to the intellectual process in its intellectual significance. They do, of course, function powerfully as the social artillery of institutional-political hardball. To lose this distinction is to imperil your rationality.

Benjamin Boretz
1989

The Inner Studio

(strategies for retrieving reality in music experience and practice)

A talk for the music department seminar, University of California at San Diego, 26 April 1990.

(Interface Part VI)

Benjamin Boretz

[There is an amphitheatrical indoor space. Black mostly, with blackupholstered chairs on blackpainted risers, the chairs rimmed with silvershiny chrome framework. Two midsize video monitors, left and right, a chair center with musicstand and microphone, at flatfloored bottom of the amphitheatrical slope. Large numbers of persons who have entered the amphitheater from both sides fill the left and right thirds of the seatspace—along the video sightlines—leaving the center swath facing the speaker near dead vacant. A video—an interactive documentation of the Barrytown Orchestra in a soundmaking session at home—runs silent on the monitors behind the speaker, for as long as he speaks.]

FOR ME PERSONALLY, this is no gig. I accepted John Silber's invitation to talk here now because there are some things I needed to try to articulate—and they have a lot to do with the issue of a person communicating their personal thoughts or expressing their personal musical ideas in an environment of people they don't know. I imagined and materialized an occasion recently that dealt with this problem in one way—it was a multitextual environment including videotext, slidetext, oral-verbal vocal text, and realtime ensemble musictext, called "The Purposes and Politics of Engaging Strangers". In a way, this, for me, needed to be that sort of occasion also—but instead, I've gotten interested in the idea of trying to articulate for a group of people I mostly don't know some thoughts I've never articulated and really don't know how to articulate, or even whether I can. But one of the points I need to make, if I'm going to come before you in this highly symbolicized configuration, is that I'm not a lecture jock with a prefabricated routine or even a preconceived message. There are some things I want to think about that only make sense to think about in a situation like this. I wrote them down to read to you. That's why I'm here. I hope you have a good reason for being here too.

If I want to understand how to do music, I need to understand why I do music. Or, better, what I'm doing when I'm doing music. What I'm doing, that is, for myself—whether it be the indulgence, or expression, of some peculiarly personal, or interpersonal, energy; or the purposeful, or even conscious, cultivation of my own development, or the pursuit of my own mental health; or, the conditioning in some form or sense of my surrounding environment—however locally or globally I conceptualize it toward some condition in which I anticipate I will feel more at home, more normal, more safe, more sane, or something like that, within it. I have to try to know, accurately and without self-deception, where I'm coming from doing music (or anything, for that matter) so that the direction in which my activities are evolving in relation to music making, music thinking, music talking, music learning, make satisfactory sense in themselves, and, maybe even more poignantly, make satisfactory sense in relation to one another. And from my point of view—and all through, I'm going to be speaking of myself in a concrete sense, not as an abstraction standing for you and me both as well as everyone else, recast into my image—I need urgently to know what I'm doing when I'm doing

what I'm doing, most especially when it involves my primary and deepest-lying personal and interpersonal actions—music—because I need to take responsibility for myself and for my actions, in relation to myself and to my surrounding world of other creatures. I need to be responsible for myself because I am the only one who can be, because without that responsibility being taken by me for me I am psychically in freefall in an empty universe. And that wouldn't be good news for any hope I have of sustaining sanity, of, that is, keeping my focus on the effort to survive, personally.

Why do I think I need to articulate this stuff, why do I need to think about and try to understand what I'm doing when I'm doing what I'm doing? It's an important question, right here and right now, because it involves the issue of me being right here right now talking to you in your room: what am I doing here, and what's in it for you? Unless I'm so narcissistic that I think that everything and anything about me has got to be inordinately fascinating to you—or, unless I'm too crazy to be aware of your place in this transaction or your presence in this your own space—I've got to put together for you and me both how what I talk about handles the distinction of me from all of you, from each of you, and even more especially, of each of you from each other of you. This kind of issue doesn't usually come up in one-on-one conversation—but you know what it's like when someone comes on to you alone like they're talking to a crowd, to a solid mass of collective onehood, whose main characteristic appears to be its reproduction in the huge of the individual personality of the speaker. No moral issue, here—it's just that that effect would utterly defeat my purposes, and if I'm going to risk using the intrinsically absurd situation of me, personally, putting out thoughts to you, collectively, I'd better try to get it right, or at least to keep it straight. And I can't manage to do that, and still worry about being eloquent, or entertaining, at the same time.

So what it is is that I need to think and talk explicitly and consciously about what I'm doing when I'm doing what I'm doing because things going along in unreflective space start to not feel right. Because it feels like just doing what comes up, going for what seems plausible to go for, doesn't work out right—feels like a problem down there where there wasn't supposed to be one. That's the only reason I suppose that I think, because something's not working right in a holistic unselfconscious way; there's a problem that needs to surface, become exteriorized consciously,

identified, understood, responded to. So anything I think about is my problem, right? So what's your interest in it? Well, first of all, despite all the personal, cultural, generational differences between me and any of you, I imagine there are significant things we have in common—maybe these aren't them, in any given case, but my hope is to uncover unknown connections, to mutually identify with kindred spirits who care about the things I care about, so we can think and work and do music for each other's benefit, give each other the support of mutual permission and mutual validation.

OK; here's how I understand what I'm doing, these days, when I'm doing music: my most intense personal need for musical expression I *don't* experience as a need for *self* expression, or even for something felt as "expression" as such. What I do experience is an acute need for rationality—for sanity. For, that is, the verification of the validity of the reality which is intuitive to me. The personally impersonal, the only objectivity available to an individual consciousness. My identity doesn't rest on the constant reflection and re-reflection back to me of images of myself. That way lies non-sanity, really, not just the closure of vanity. My personal expressive identity is the identity of the world I perceive as real. From that emerges the complex web of world-building entities and phenomena which ramifies and stretches and expands torrentially and limitlessly—and includes, crucially, you and your independent reality, as components of my reality. Empathy—the most crucial characteristic of expression in a social context—comes only from a critical operation of sanity from a secure ontological base. It's the only way any kind of altruism, commonality, sharing, loving, and—at the other extreme—arguing, disaffecting, hating, make any sense. To begin with, and to end with, such interpersonal transactions are never really you doing something for or against me, or me doing something for or against you, but always you doing something for or against yourself, me doing something for or against myself. Somewhere in the middle, though, there are other transactions that mediate the ontological issues at the extremes. These transactions reflect the tensions and problems that engender structures and concepts, like: moralities, judgments, codes, forms—things that enable people to perceive and respond to hostile *alien* realities such as threaten to overwhelm and annihilate their own reality—to respond with social-symbolic acts like rejection, condemnation, dismissal, or even submission, rather than by sheer defensive overt violence, by, that is, physical murder. That's how I see music-socializing transactions too. I see every music-doing act by a

socialized person as an act heavily implicated in social energies, processes, and intentions: me doing something for or against me; you doing something for or against you. At the very least, I need to articulate my thoughts out loud among you, to put my music sound out there where others are, to disseminate my articulations of word ideas and music ideas, so that there will be some resonance of my reality, or my ontology, for me to hear coming back at me from within the world I inhabit, too, not just the resonances of everyone else's, or some generalized resonance of everyone's.

But I inhabit that world with you together. And my output, if it has genuine ontological energy, is probably implicitly aggressive—in principle, just because it's mine, not yours—in relation to you. So we have a problem; a mutual problem if mutual survival is what we both want. And we'd better come up with some social structures within which we can try to build a solution. I don't think that the intensely competitive, skill-oriented structures for doing and learning music which have mostly been institutionalized in our culture are going to help us deal with the problem of mutually wasting each other, because the problem arises precisely in a competitive form: each of us seems to need all the psychic world-space there is; and, therefore, we need to devour and subsume everyone else's space within our own. That's what our conventional structures mostly promote in fact; and I don't know about you, but that is the principal killer of personal and social-expressive value and sanity for me, in my world, as I experience it. And if what you want to be doing when you're doing music is anything like what I want it to be, you're also going to need to evolve some different kinds of music-doing structures, and even to invent some different kinds of music.

One reason for that necessity is in a sense historical: I don't believe that, at this point in our culture-time, the practice of high-art music is anymore believable or even available as an alternative way of expressive life, as a way of actively resisting participation in, and reinforcement of, the collectivizing and commoditizing structures of mainstream culture. What it seems to be these days is just flat a tool of mainstream capitalist culture providing leisure-time entertainment for the conspicuously acquisitive. It used to seem—I mean when I was your age—that there were actually gaps in the institutional structures, legitimate possibilities of countercultural resistance, built into the principles of the institutional structures themselves. And it seemed that, explicitly, it was in particular

high art, along with serious intellectual activity, which bore within their natures both the implication and the responsibility of such resistance—even if in practice that implication seemed not always to be realized or the responsibility fulfilled. It seemed back then that what you called "art" was precisely something whose very identity implied resistance to personal repression and rejection of social oppression—that it was its very superposition of the ever-threatening, ever-present backdrop of oppression and repression that made it be, in fact, "art." That it was that quality of defiant persistance in the face of the overpowering institutional counterforce that gave high-art music its sharpest expressive significance, its edge and depth and intensity—not some admirable exhibition of athletic skills, or of some elusive genetic "talent," or the ability to construct and control monster complexities of structure or texture.

But retroflectively, I can now see that even back then our high-art music was ultimately compromised in its ostensibly individualistic, countercultural message by the fact that it always internalized, in its very sonic and aesthetic and *physical* structure, the principle—and the intention—of hegemony: expressive value equals moral virtue equals personal superiority equals the right to dominance, at least symbolically. That ultimately counter-countercultural message was carried equally by high-art and frankly commoditized music, by traditionally crafted music, esoteric intellectual modernist music, outrageously irreverent funky avant-garde music. And when in the sixties the valorous individualist stance of high art was unmasked as an elitist scam—as, that is, a snobwise road to gross hegemony—that not only cleared the ground for the legitimation of everyone's music, it also destroyed the psychic foundation—false, as it proved—which the image of high-art composition had provided, for an expressive musical practice based on an intense quest for the particular and the authentic, as not only indispensable personal values, but as possible social values as well.

If we could separate the counter-elitist insights of sixties culture from its hegemonic legacy which took the form of the universalization of commerce and of commercial values, that could give us some real benefits in the task of putting together new structures for the mobilization of musical practice to articulate and confront the predicaments of our contemporary lives. We could, for example, greatly profit from the structure of the rock band as a medium, detaching it if possible (though maybe it's not possible) from its embedding in the culture of

commoditization and mass-unitized response. The reduction of the elevated imagery of "composer", "virtuoso", "maestro", "expert"; the recognition of the participatory relevance of actually present listeners on actually happening occasions—an adaptation of a deep aspect of black blues culture into the terms of modern urban life—the irreverence toward such symbolic intra-musical etiquettes as: stylistic purity, sonic elegance, or any other kind of surface hygiene, in favor of a radical expressive pragmatism going for nasty, or whatever could be deployed to get the point right—the modern relevance of modern instruments played by modern-looking people in modern styles of stance, movement, and idioms of address, and maybe even the escalation of the reference-volume level of music to approximate and maybe cope with what's coming at people from the everyday world they live in—take away the surface-musical invariants of "rock 'n' roll" that only provide the instant recognition that maybe is essential only to commoditization, substitute the possibility of not even knowing what kind of music you're going to make until you discover what's materializing out of your necessities, open up all the possible configurations of people in which music might be meaningfully made, exchanged, experienced, and you might have a revolutionary sociomusical tool available if you have purposes for which it might be valuable. I think the realtime improvisational soundmaking and allmedia textmaking sessions, from solitary meditations to multiperson interactions, exemplified by the INTER/PLAY cassette documents, are a direct exploitation of benefits made available by the structure and sensibility of the rock medium—having, actually, almost nothing directly to do with the surface particulars of rock music itself—though we in no way rule out any of those particulars from the range of musicmaking possibility.

Now from what I've said up to here, you might have inferred that reality is what I perceive and look for in music. And reality is what I want to retrieve from it. Reality from reality. That's my musical intuition. And my lifelong music practices have focussed on that issue: What's really going on here, below the bullshit: that's been the urgent question I'm forever straining to get hold of. Bullshit's the main enemy, music's the main resource to see through it with, to penetrate beneath it, to give me a shot at functioning at a more believable level, in touch with my own base nature. What's that base nature? Not likely I could claim any authority of rigor, so as to give you an assured answer. But I need to take a crack at some view of that issue so I can think about it. And I think Ludwig Wittgenstein understood that the more rigorous a discourse, the tighter

the web that it weaves, the more likely it is that the universe it covers like a blanket would fit on the head of a pin. I think that's how come a lot of discourse these days, at the entropic endstage of an age for which rigor and technochops have become the leading metaphors, can only talk about texts, among texts. But rigorous discourse, and purely intertextual discourse, are going to squeeze out a lot of the swarm of details, particulars, insights, issues, that are indispensable and compelling to think about and talk about and do something about. So I'm going to talk nonrigorously and nonintertextually, more in the spirit of Sigmund Freud than in the manner of Jacques Derrida, more by introspection than by detached objectification, about the circumstances of our existential predicament.

Along that line, I would say something like this: it seems that it is our primal nature to be suspended, permanently for life, between powerful but irreconcilable contradictories. Primally, our pendulum of innerness swings between the extremes of each of our bi-polarities. From which issues violence, our innate violence. Following René Girard, I would say that violence is ritualized, made symbolic, to regiment society, enabling a human collective to form, evolving a culture. But at the personal level, in a post-physical-survival world, collectivized culture, symbolic ritualization, itself becomes a problematic, not a resource. In such a cultural environment, creativity, understood simply as such, individuates the process of ritualizing violence. Creativity is, for us, at present, the most powerful tool we have to use in striving to harmonize being among our contradictories. Though futility seems to be ultimately our fate—existence is, evidently, a deficit operation—we still have to deal with being alive: it is, precisely, what it is we have, to deal with, and what we need in order to survive as far as we can survive is what we call our sanity.

Different people have different ways of dealing, musically or otherwise, with their reality/existence problem. A long time ago I would have felt that a valuable outcome of my ideas would be that they would be appropriated widely by other people—not necessarily in my name, but at least on their own account (I wasn't so aware of the hegemonic activism implicit in this aspiration). But now I believe—with no sense of retreat, but more a sense of advance from that old place—that the main value of my ideas is rather to create a space within which I, perhaps, can survive, alongside of everyone else working out their survival in their own ways. Survival and sanity make a lot more sense as aspirations to cultivate for my mental health than do hegemony or dominance. Not just that

hegemony is not required for the value and significance of my music and my ideas—it is positively counterproductive to their value and significance in a world I can imagine surviving in, where my example is an example of being responsible for myself, for working out my own issues and strategies, not a model for what issues should be worked out by everyone else, and with what strategies. I have two friends, with whom I've interacted in soundmaking sessions, to our perceived mutual gratification. But each of these people approaches the problem of harmonizing existence and experience in a radically different way, radically different from my desire to retrieve reality from reality, and radically different from one another. The young one's way is to derive transcendent fantasy from grungy reality: everywhere he goes in the world, he experiences the ordinary or extraordinary data of experience fully and meaningfully as an imaginary life of an imagined creature in a transcendental world. No accident that he adheres to religious practices which stem from the perception that the external senseworld is illusory, and which posit another world, unsensable except through strenuous detachment, discipline, and visioning, as real. The older one creates an intense reality of his own for himself, creates himself as himself in intense real experience, out of a white-hot processing of grungy bits of fantasy material: in a cleared-out hermetic space, mostly contained within the space of his own house, transactions with a sound, a thought, an image, a dog, a teddybear, become transformed into deep and transcendent realities, can create experience to be experienced as and by who he, himself as himself, really is. For me, it's different. I come into every situation in my own name, on my own account, as my actual normal self, as myself experiencing sound, experiencing you, as yourself, and discovering with you what, unexpectingly, we each can really be, and what we can actually be for one another.

The crucial point is that as far as I am concerned there is no way that their habits are not as right for them, as rational and demanding of acknowledgment and support, as mine are for me. Nor does any of our ways have anything implicitly to do with energies of hegemony, or selling anything within commodity culture. Moreover, the medium of interactive soundmaking sessions seems to enable all three of us, concurrently and interactively, to pursue our divergent agendas in mutual harmony and even with mutual support. This is the most acute and particular principle I have taken to guide my activities as a maker of social structures for music doing, thinking, and learning. It is the main guiding principle of Music Program Zero, our program of holistic music study at Bard College.

It precludes judgment. It precludes predetermination of content, style, and direction of energy flow. It precludes hierarchization of persons and the enforcement of authority or status. When I ask what kind of a world I want to live in, and how my music, and what kind of music it is, relates to and contributes to building some kind of a world, I know clearly that I should be using particular rather than universal pronouns, first person and second person singular and plural: me, you, us. For the sense I am making, if I am going to make any sense, depends crucially on exactly who—what real, individual persons, that is—I am directly implicating in my attention, and addressing with my thoughts.

I end with a videotape, which documents one recent configuration of sociotextual occasionmaking structure:

Though it happened in a public place, it wasn't a performance.

There is no composer.

What it is is a setup for an occasion of interaction: four people given a stimulus space for realtime painting, a way of responding to, interacting with, listening to, some sound on tape. The initial tapesound is a solo session done on piano in my house, thinking about and imaging Sarah Vaughan right after I heard she had died.

The videotape was made at Bowling Green State University in Ohio last week; three of the people painting are from Bard College (members of the Bard Composers' Ensemble); one is a student (Paul Winkler), one is an alumna (Penny Hyde), one is a professor (Chuck Stein); the other painter is an art therapist who works in Bowling Green (Carroll Weaver).

thoughts on an airplane, words at a conference

Benjamin Boretz

1. Rochester, November 1987, Society for Music Theory Conference: to introduce a group of texts on the subject of narrative structures in music, by Fred Maus, Patrick McCreless, and David Schwartz

The perception that music is an art of time seems to have come to notice slowly in a world of inveterate score-readers. An important feature of this paper session is that its governing focus embeds temporality within the generic concept of musical structure. We, as listeners to these papers, might be interested in such an issue as, how we can distinguish, in music, between narrative structure in particular and temporal evolution, or even temporality, in general. The two most conspicuous forerunners of our panelists present radically divergent perspectives on this issue: Edward T. Cone, in his "Three Ways of Reading a Detective Story — Or A Brahms Intermezzo" recommends, essentially, that we listen to all music in a narrative way; these listenings will then distinguish the singular nature of each musical work. All the narratives, however, are individuals of a particular narrative type. And Ed Cone's own story, although it describes narrative passages, is itself composed in the traditional cumulative structure of rational discourse. J. K. Randall, in "How Music Goes", in contrast, explores a diversity of distinct narrative structures, one for each of the Variations in the first act of Tchaikowsky's Sleeping Beauty, and the distinctive verbal configurations of his text are, precisely, both the specification and the description, as well as the moment-by-moment experiential re-creation, of each of the narrative images he excavates. In the great imaginative space opened up by even just these two texts alone, Cone's and Randall's, one can conceive not only of ranging over the territory of existing literary narrative possibilities, from Arthurian romances to Jane Austen to Dostoevsky to Robbe-Grillet, but envisaging also narrative structures wholly indigenous to music, unreferenceable to any existing verbal models, offering even the possibility for new, music-inspired verbal adventures — and certainly evoking at least as much verbal adventurousness as is minimally requisite to capture extra-musically, interpersonally, the sense of some particular music-narrative adventure.

2. Oakland, November 1990, Society for Music Theory Conference: In response to a group of texts composed by four younger British musical thinkers (Jonathan Dunsby, Craig Ayrie, Jonathan Cross, Anthony Pople)

[the airplane]

Each person has the obligation to construct music theory according to the being which they experience as saliently music, or as any given music, and according to the attributes of that music which they most acutely identify as most crucial to that identity. This is the absolute rigor on which truthful music theory is dependent, and the strenuous pursuit and precise articulation of this truth — everevolving and evertransforming for each person as it must inevitably and desirably be — is the only rigor which a responsible community of music-needing persons can relevantly demand of those of its citizens who arrogate to themselves the role of public utterance on issues of musical thought and experience. I don't exactly know what the communal good of music theorizing is — as against its personal good for me — but I'm fairly certain that careless, unreflective dismissal of other people's serious efforts to find the precise linguistic and conceptual registers for their development of an access to a music-expanding and music-deepening configuration, is no more likely a public service than is any other form of gossip or name-dropping. For the professional academic, committed more to peer-group etiquette and methodological hygiene than to concerns of stickier substance, the mere attributability of confusion to a thought enterprise suffices to stamp it as misguided, or, worse, contemptible. There have even been those whose field of attention is something called "music" — an artform, or at least an expressive-language form in many of its familiar manifestations — who use the word 'poetry' as an epithet of opprobrium, in referring to metamusical texts of unconventional or non-formal appearance — as if epistemology were nothing but the study of science, scientific behavior, or science-motivated behavior. Claude Lévi-Strauss says, "Space has its own values, just as sounds and perfumes have colors, and feelings weight. The search for such correspondences is not a poetic game or a practical joke (as some critic has had the audacity to say it is. . .); it offers absolutely virgin territory for research where discoveries are still to be made." (from *Tristes Tropiques*).

In the public space, on the other hand, I recognize two very distinct characteristics of music as a whole which have to be part of anyone's scope of attention if they want to address music as a global phenomenon at a foundational level. One is that, as a social phenomenon, music is, first and foremost, behavior, the behavior of individuals and groups of people in a variety of environmental circumstances, all the characteristics of which bear on the meaning of the music in question, and — crucially — on its ontological status. That is,

all the behavioral codes operating in all these situations are interdependent in ways utterly crucial to the very identity and signification of the distinguishable music-behavioral entities which they contain. The other is the simple fact of the enormous conceptual, functional, and structural diversity of the musics of different cultures, and even of distinct subcultures within a given single society, as, between country (say, Mississippi Delta) — or even Chicago, or Detroit — blues, and, say, the high-art music of Duke Ellington, John Coltrane, or Harrison Birtwistle.

[the conference]

Thinking about these writers' preoccupation with recent literary and other post-structuralist theory: It seems to me that the main bite of Post-Modernist theory for music has to do with the ontological issue which emerges out of a progressive series of engagements with observations on musical and metamusical behavior which rapidly expose a vast universe of relativisms — an unhierarchized, many-faceted, multiple diversity of relativisms in the observation of music as practiced, perceived, and reported on. In particular discourse— which seems to be a principal preoccupation of these writings— must be seen (even as we bias it fatally by nailing it with the epithetical label 'discourse') as behavior relative to an individual agenda arising from individual intuition, anxiety, ideology, cultural location, alienation, or whatever intense expressive need. I wonder if my impression that there is an assumed ontological status of music texts, and an assumed purpose for music theory and analysis — such that the only issue is how it is to be accomplished adequately and unconfusedly — if that impression about this set of texts, is wrong. Relativism, of course, is not indeterminacy — or, rather, it is indeterminacy in a global structure which empowers a much deeper individual determinacy in the provincial structures which are thus disencumbered from one another in whatever ways and degrees are constructed as relevant.

It seems to me, too, that the technical grammatical aspects of post-structuralist theory are much less interesting for music than are some of the purposes which in Jacques Lacan's and Jacques Derrida's originary work seem to have motivated the fashioning of these descriptive-analytic tools, which later, and more particularly by later writers, seem to be applied as method rather than regenerated out of necessity. As always, the main value of originary thinking is the model of originary thinking itself — the revelation of the depth to which it is available to be responsible to the exigencies of your compelling individual perceptions, and to the issues you really care about. So I think the usable resource of recent originary thinking outside of metamusic itself is the self-relativizing model for the texts of discourse themselves. And another, especially in the register of Jacques Derrida's palpation of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Claude Lévi-Strauss, is the embrace of expressive texts as behavior — both in their composition and in their interaction with persons. Clearly, a quantity of confused, pseudoartistic metamusical texts has been composed in the strong and compelling light of

awarenesses akin to those of the more recent metaliterary explorers, especially in the regions of ontological creativity, awareness about the insidious deceit and falsification in the rhetorical action and coloration of discursive language, and a lust for reality under the glaring light of a thoroughly relativized conception of truth and experience.

I'm interested in Anthony Pople's point about real-time music and metamusical texts; he is on the verge of an indispensible insight, but takes a wrong turn: the issue of musical thinghood is not real-time excitement as against out-of-time reflection, but rather that the real-time experience of music makes available the unique experiential reification of 'a time' with unique consciousness-inhabiting characteristics, which metamusical texts generally fail to conserve, and are powerless to convey in the rhetorical and behavioral mode — of, for example, experiential detachment — which they employ.

One last thing: the view of music listening as compositional implies that music description is inescapably creative. And this in turn means that higher-level theoretical generalities which rivet the musical surface in a reductive way are very bad ear training, stifling rather than liberating the faculties of music-expressive depth and precision. But yet, as far as I know no theory of music so far on record has ever discovered itself to be inapplicable.

DIALOGUE

for live speaker and prerecorded sound

Jim Randall says,

What follows is a beginning.

And then,

starting now from here, a question arose

I ask,

Does experience sharpen experience or does
experience blunt experience?

And then,

A. I've heard it all before.
B. I've learned to hear it as never before.

: two ways to use imagination.

That was 1971. The question remains. It is about ontology. Being about the ontology of music, it is about the ontology of experience. And it arises under the observation of music experience as ontologically relative, as, in poignant fact, ontology creating: you can tell, from the compulsion to neutral placeholding names for things—what, here, now, it—to be given content by what follows or what fills: history determining ontology.

Jim Randall says,

(now: not a moment but a bandwidth)
(here: not a point but a bandwidth)

(starting. . . . . .from: continuing
in a direction
to be constructed)

And then,

starting from whatever bandwidth of now
most nicely mirrors the bandwidth of here
that most nicely echoes the bandwidth of now
that most fully contains an elsewhere and a future

Somewhat later, I say,

what is about, is also of, also is :

within :

allso everspecious metapresent worldnow,
somewhere, metabounded nowhere :
utterance within nascendent sempiternal,
being, about to be of; coming, contained;
elapsing, incontinent; unshaped, urtexturous,
unextirpreted hereplace, anytime
immemorial, a leading edge of a vanishing
act, uncatalogued hoards of phenomenal
finds, allcomprehended within (without
benefit of theory). . .

William Gass says,

. . . very early, the philosophers kicked quality out of science. Aristotle insisted that qualities were accidents and could not be a part of essence.

And then,

> The campaign against quality was a campaign against consciousness, because that's where quality was thrown like trash in a can.

Georges Bataille says,

> The expression of inner experience must in some way respond to its movement — cannot be a dry verbal tradition to be executed on command.

And then,

> Inner experience not being able to have principles either in a dogma (a moral attitude), or in science (knowledge can be neither its goal nor its origin), or in a search for enriching states (an experimental, aesthetic attitude), it cannot have any other concern nor other goal than itself. Opening myself to inner experience, I have placed in it all value and authority. Henceforth I can have no other value, no other authority. Value and authority imply the discipline of a method, the existence of a community.

The question arises and intensifies because the subjective reality of music, insofar as it's what anyone gets off on musically, is stubbornly disjunct from the intersubjective realities attributed to it, whether they be structures of expressive qualities or stories. Looking at it this way, technically, ontologically, music is always, necessarily, a 'mystery'. But people actually have mystical experiences. And they actual1y have trances. And they actually have transcendent inner experiences of music, which are, frequently, what they index when they think of music as personally meaningful and valuable rather than, maybe, as professionally defensible. Experiential mysteries are explained as to their probable causes and likely significations — structures of means and structures of references — but what characterizes *them,* ontologically? That is to say, what characterizes their quality and being as *experienced* by those

who experience them? — rather than, what surgically circumcizes them by explication in a causal-structure or referential-structure language. If, being "purely subjective", they are "not-real", what, then, is the ontology of "not-real" when it is vivid, specific, and tangible to consciousness? — maybe we don't want to talk about a determinate "not-real", anyway. But if these experiential entities have a tangible determinate identity in consciousness, but are nonetheless "purely subjective", are they to be dismissed nevertheless as ontologically vacuous? If I'm not a convinced mystic, if I don't especially believe in the paranormal character of these experiences, must I therefore deny their tangibility — their "reality" — *as determinate phenomena* of experience in the awareness of their experiencers?

Jim Randall says,

(vaguely;
(timelessly —

(certified by leftward-passing signposts —)

A dull redbrown glow
would have had to have passed
(— suffusing the inconstantly lifting, yellowpurpled darkness —)
across a patch of vision,
soliciting resonance across a mask of mind
somewhere in a tangle between purple and yellow.

(Anticipate.)

had solicited coordinates of dimension;
had solicited resolution into functional parts:

(Return.)

— (shapes perhaps;

perhaps things)

: a patch of vision (— framed in a trainwindow) —
straining to become seen in a stretch of mind bounded by
purple
and yellow —

(straining vaguely, as glow might;
(timelessly, as inception might —
: bounded by purple eye and yellow hair.

(Stop.)

Jacques Attali says,

> Exteriority can only disappear in composition, in which the musician plays primarily for himself, outside any operationality, spectacle, or accumulation of value; when music, extricating itself from the codes of sacrifice, representation, and repetition, emerges as an activity that is an end in itself, that creates its own code at the same time as the work.

I say,

> Theorizing is, right, creative work. And like all creative work, it has no literal direct applicability to anything else. Rather — like all creative work — its use is to be experienced, absorbed with experience, and suffused nonlinearly into the network of awareness. A person thus transformed will of course see and think differently from before, being of course a different person as a consequence of having a specific creative-intellectual experience.

David Burrows says,

> People are their own most loyal listeners, for the sound of their own voices is a message to themselves as well as to others, a message of self-confirmation and self-sufficiency.

And then,

> Hearing the sound of their own voices returns vocalizers to themselves in a new form, with benefit to their sense of consequentiality, for the sound, while completely unlike themselves in its radical immateriality, still is uniquely their own and is heard only as and when they cause it to be heard.

And then,

> People who sing to themselves, in or out of the shower, are self-enfolded in resonance that leaves appearance and location behind. They sense themselves as a diffused happening that does not depend for its validation on this or that outside event or object or consideration, a flow with no pronounced sense of before and after, of first this and then that. In Hinduism, intoning the mantra Om is achieving union with the universe; but people who hum and whistle to themselves can achieve a temporary omniscience, since they are provisionally both self and other, or, what perhaps amounts to the same thing, they achieve a temporary return to that stage of infantile consciousness in which no division is made between within and without and the world is the resonance of itself.

The experiential ontology of music is not in its material facts or in its referential resonances but in its effects transforming consciousness. That is, the facts which are discernible within the spatio-temporal-mental field of a phenomenal episode designated as an occurrence of some music, the facts which are saliently the facts of that episode as music, are the specific successive states of awareness experienced by someone explicitly registering that event as an articulated, continuously evolving single-whole state of

awareness, or of experience, or of being, whatever vocabulary handles it best.

Transcendence, then, is not at all restricted to ecstasy, devouring passion, undifferentiated oneness with the universe, all-suffusing peacefulness, blinding sensation —Precise, vivid, specific, as experiential quality, the total replacement of the state of normal consciousness with a distinct state. Terrified of so much significance—that is, so much distinctness of identity in one's own experience as to be utterly isolated from the external world as a consequence of the most vivid act of experiencing it—people seek objectivity in and about their music. They invent an abstract ontology of qualities which are intersubjective—perceivable and denotable—on the order of green—pitch, say—and then talk about music as the composition of these qualities; sometimes they try to teach themselves, or are even taught by others, to actually hear music in this countersubjective flat empirical way, as if it were like discourse in its neutral rhetorical transparency.

But—just like compositions of pieces of normal language into intense expressive literary texts—music composed this way alchemizes under intense projective-compositional pressure, and is heard under comparably intense receptive-compositional pressure to re-materialize at another level of being—extra-intersubjective—that is, transcendent of its own pervasive intersubjectivity, of its assertible means, and unencompassed by its own heavily pre-intentionalized referential stories. It is, exclusively, ontologized as the sense which is sensed.

I mean, is Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony about B minor or is it about loneliness? Pushing to the extreme of contextual specificity on both ends, the most contextually unique construction of that music's B minor intensely constructs the *means* of its experiential character; the story of loneliness, carried to its most intensely non-generic detailed extreme, reports the *references* of the experience. Neither text captures the experience itself, anymore than anyone has described the experience of trance, or conveyed the ontology of mystical experience. What they are, at their highest pitch of vividness, are swinging doors into and out of focused music-sensing episodes, one structuring a concentration of attention on the way into an experience of a sensed sense,

the other envesseling the contents of a debriefing on the way out. How the sense which was sensed was about B minor can in no way be determined by, or determine, any sense however extended of anything which could be described as B minor, nor be captured under its terms or in its name. Picturing how the sense which was sensed might have been about loneliness is virtually to wipe out whatever meaningful cognitivity might have seemed residual in the word loneliness—and yet that word is a relevant intersubjective reference for the story of the experience, for the exterior behavioral resonance of that sense which was sensed.

Impervious to discourse, certainly; and impervious in principle to any one-to-one verbal or symbolic metarepresentation. But not, in principle, impervious to transcendent forms of creative representation whose own ontologies are outside the realm of one-to-one cognition—outside the realm, that is, of linear, normal-logical, cognitive-scientific thinking.

Kenneth Gaburo, in a text by Jim Randall, says,

> What if a given composition was in your life?
> What if your life was in a given composition?
> What if the object to which you addressed yourself
> would be a subject which addresses you?

Marianne Kielian-Gilbert says,

> Discourse about structural relationships in music nearly always tends toward a separation of people and art, of mind and body. The structural is set off from its connections to the non-structural, the symbolic and metaphoric are cut off from the literal. The great and the exceptional are made larger than life, and therefore distanced from the human and personal. The structural/formal has the scientific status of repeatability and verifiability; the non-structural assumes a defensive position often at the mercy of logic and reason. The passionate is suspect; it is permissible in art and in the artists who make that art, but not in

the descriptions which communicate that art. These divisions extend further to the chasm between what we feel can be experienced subjectively and what we are able to establish empirically. Crossing from one side to the other is hazardous and rarely institutionally sanctioned.

Jacques Lacan says,

> That a *Gestalt* should be capable of formative effects in the organism is attested by a piece of biological experimentation which is itself so alien to the idea of psychical quality that it cannot bring itself to formulate its results in these terms. It nevertheless recognizes that it is a necessary condition for the maturation of the gonad of the female pigeon that it should see another member of its species, of either sex; so sufficient in itself is this condition that the desired effect may be obtained merely by placing the individual within reach of the field of reflection of a mirror. Similarly, in the case of the migratory locust, the transition within a generation from the solitary to the gregarious form can be obtained by exposing the individual, at a certain stage, to the exclusively visual action of a similar image, provided it is animated by movements of a style sufficiently close to that characteristic of the species. Such facts are inscribed in an order of homeomorphic identification that would itself fall within the larger question of the meaning of beauty as both formative and erogenic.

John Rahn says,

> . . . Following this line of thought reveals that the temporal experience {a, then-a} is itself abstract in an essential way: a-for-Mary is not a-for-John. According to the ontology referred to above, the notion of Mary-for-herself is Mary's ongoing project of abstraction from the temporally open set of all x-for-Mary. Such a set always has a most recent member, and may have an earliest member (though determinacy fades in that direction), but never has a final member—or perhaps just once, if one can be said to

experience one's own death, as opposed to the events of one's dying.

And then,

The abstraction of m involves the problem of intersubjectivity. How can John know m-for-Mary, or Mary know m-for-John, so that either person may abstract m? This is the domain of music theory: the construction of the interpersonal m. Mary and John negotiate some agreement about m. Language (natural or formal) is essential to this process, and m is spun into being out of language in the linguistic space between Mary and John. Any intersubjective entity is essentially linguistic, since only communication connects "subjects".

I say,

Think of the ontology of *"oy"*. You can analyze it, and even generate it and successfully perform it as a sequence of *"o"* plus *"ee"*. But its experiential ontology is not a composite of *"o"* and *"ee"*, but simply remains *"oy"*, ineluctable, integral, indivisible, impervious to analysis and to discourse.

The core problem of intersubjectivity is: how can I know my own experience? What means of mental exertion or interior formulation can I invent to acquire compositional and performative access to what I have already undergone, but not, as I wish it, fully experienced? Communication with others is a fringe benefit. Find the right practice, the right story for yourself and you have what you're looking for. Ontological paranoia will impel you to defend its interpersonal virtues with passion and aggression, but that's defensive: your reality is at stake. Metamusical texts in the rhetoric of discourse are highly unlikely candidates: because the issue with words—with voice—is the same as the issue with music: whatever natural sympathy I feel for the people who are trying to characterize music by way of narrative-structure models, it seems to me highly problematic to try to explain

something by reference to something else which is ontologically even more obscure. Better, probably, to recover the ontology of verbal-expressive phenomena by analogy with music—or, even better, in the form of music—that is, by discerning the non-verbal meanings which are the force and effect of significant encounters with significantly composed expressive verbal texts—such as poems, novels, works of transcendently reinvented discourse, or the writings of Jim Randall. The experiential ontology of a poem is an *extraverbal, extrapoetic* phenomenon indissolubly tied to the words discerned as the poemtext. The experiential ontology of a music is similarly an extrasonic, extramusical phenomenon tied to the sonic particulars discerned as musictext. Think of poetry as just one mode of a species of utterance, language become transcendent under compositional pressure, which could be called 'virtual language'; metamusical utterance, transcending language and the rhetoric of discourse this way, attaches at minimum to the territory of experiential sense which is sensed as music. Metamusical music, similarly transcendent in being nonreferential, nonmimetic, non-one-to-one, nonlinear, autonomously time- and ontology-creating in relation to its objects of reflection, too. Jim Randall's "How Music Goes"? well, that's just Jim Randall's experience of the *Sleeping Beauty*; yes: what else is there?

Jim Randall says,

now and here

layered to whatever depth
heard in the remote foreground
through layers of shaped and tinted glass
(each layer shaping and tinting
the compositely shaped and tinted composite)
layers tailored to my choice, mixed to my metaphor
tinted shapes not given but chosen
given by my choosing, by a construction of mine
(whoever I am—
if I am)
chosen by me whom I am constructing to mirror my choice
(framing some echoed thought of ours)
((me not given but chosen))
constructed to echo a foreground I wish to see
shaped and tinted as I wish to see it
deeply layered as I wish to see it
maximal diversity maximally cohering
maximally cohearing

the tinted shapes of now and here stuffed full
holding much that was deeply you
(echoing me whom I am constructing)
stuffed
shaped
tinted
layered
tailored to my choice
so that I may learn to choose
so that I may learn to learn
so that I may learn what wish to choose to construct
so that I may learn how to learn to sweep clean

(Revolutions
can wait—
and start now
from here)

I say,

[a 5' metatextual reflection in pianosound]

11.4.90
for a symposium in Oakland, California
on the writings of Jim Randall during the 1970s

reply to M_____

March 1991

I like your idea of finding or inventing new modes of relationship among musical qualities. But I always wonder about the implicit, as well as the manifest, Procrusteanism that results from the conjuring of musical qualities on the models of extramusical discourse. Why isn't it first and foremost that new musical qualities and relationships would emerge directly and without mediation of (at least) problematic relevance from the characteristics of musical experience itself, expressed in terms invented explicitly to capture the contents of that experience? And—further—I have for a long time felt that the most fruitful relationship of musical to extramusical discourse would be the other way—*from* music, rather than *to* music—and I have come much further in my own thinking and writing lately to offer what seem to me fundamental criticisms and revisionary hypotheses concerning extramusical theories of perception, knowledge, learning, and thinking, on the grounds of the musical observations which clearly point to insights of a radically particular character. Imagine, that is, a contribution to the theory of human interpersonal relationships—or, perhaps, of the possibilities of such relationships—on the model of what is conceived and projected and materialized in music. Or, say, some suggestive hypotheses as to what it means—or what it might, or could, mean—to be a person—or, to try to become one as a life-developmental enterprise. Listening to the music of various of our great masterful musical-artifact creators, you might get a really mixed bag of observations on these issues. But the implicit possibilities lurk beneath the conspicuous surfaces—and I don't know, but maybe you're on the track of some of them (frankly, I'd be surprised to discover *programmatically,* as against *symptomatically* interesting relationship-mode properties in most of those towering-celebrity music-structure masters you mostly write about; has it occurred to you to wonder whether human-personally relevant music might necessarily form itself on a

human-personally relevant scale, modest rather than grandiose, domestic rather than public, habitational rather than monumental?).

So it's these ways that I find your intensely sympathetic gropings saturated in ambiguities—they are, undoubtedly, the real ambiguities of you as a real person—therefore they belong in your discourse. But they also—like every other characteristic of your (I mean *one's)* discourse—could elicit precisely the perception and clarification of ambiguity for which discourse is worth formulating—for oneself at least, and even, perhaps, at most.

Some things I've been noticing, some things I've been doing, some things I'm going to need to think some more about *

(Interface, Part VII)

Benjamin Boretz

How music flows from power, how power flows from music, how power and music can redefine each other: these are first questions which can arise only within the sound of some musics going by: Here are three; their accumulation raises most of the issues I am preoccupied with here:

[tape: first three cuts; ca. 10 minutes: Prelude to Act III of Wagner's Parsifal; *Buryin' Ground (Angola Prison, Mississippi); "Amazing Grace" in a Western Kentucky Baptist church]*

As the world gets more and more crowded, as our society accelerates its transition from a confederation of provincial cultures of familiars to a globally conceptualized culture of strangers, in this contemporary ethos of disillusioned idealism, and its harvest of appearances and attitudes, of accelerated fragmentation in the perceived grounds of group identification, and the consequent acceleration toward a climate of unrelieved interpersonal hostility, as artists and intellectuals increasingly project a road-warrior vision of future human interactions by escalating the tendency in the presentational surface of their productions and their personae toward the hostile combative models of the terrorist, the vigilante,

*For "Music and Power" a conference convened by John Rahn at the University of Washington, 5 May 1991.

the litigant, the biker, the gangster, as "FUCK YOU" becomes the ultimate devolution point of the counter-culture's opening of the free public expression of true inner feelings about real human issues, and character assassination and slanderous gossip become the reductive residue of the ideal of "relevance" in the life of the intellectual-academic community, the terminal output of the insight that within each act of expression and thought subsists a piece of holistic human behavior, replete with all the variably fragrant complexities in respect of self-awareness and other-direction with which the behavior of persons is infused, as the image of creative thought becomes buried in an orgy of analytic exposés of subterfuges, masks, metarealities, myth fabrication, symbolic assault, and sleaze concealment, it seems natural to organize a conference of us around issues of power and music, rather than, say, "Music and Universal Brotherhood", or, "Music and Spiritual Fulfillment", or, even, "Music and a Person's Reality". Because this issue crystallizes some of our own most poignant current anxieties; and the real truth of any discourse, its principal and permanent value, is the truth of its access to a given state of a given person's mind at a certain time—most particularly, of course, the access it gives us to ourselves. And the issues of music and power are meaningful just insofar as they bear upon our functional range of awareness, decision, and action, in relation to things in our world which vitally impact on us, and to behavior of our own whose impact on our surroundings we have become sensitized to.

So the idea of attacking the persons engaged in egocentric elitist composition for doing what they do, because of the perception of that as a macho power trip, is pretty silly, given the most superficial observation of the actual socio-political potency of such activity in the real world. The idea that egocentric elitist composition is implicitly a power trip of one of a few general kinds seems on the other hand a quite dead accurate observation, a fact interesting and potentially important to look into and examine and come to terms with—that is, if, precisely, you are someone intimately interactive within that activity and personally impacted in a serious and tangible way by the outputs of such behaviors. Those for whom the issues are just speculative abstractions are likely to have a quite different relation to them, and a quite different direction in the output of their energies in relation to them. For where theorizing and

analyzing and criticizing are terminal acts, not tied to an active-creative feedback interaction with the subject-expressive medium, personal-expressive energy tends to evacuate itself discursively as voyeurism, and interpersonal-expressive energy tends to assert itself polemically as politicization. The action of such discourses in the hermetic dialogue space we inhabit is devastatingly inflationary—polarizing complex issues, blowing them up to the absurdly irrelevant global size and shape of newspaper problematics, and thus, simultaneously, trivializing them at the domestic sizes and shapes where they do quite materially and significantly impact our lives as expressive activists—a designation which I in no way restrict to professional practitioners of artwork fabrication. For the noise and pressure generated by the monumental inflations of essentially intimate issues are psychosocially powerful despite their feebleness with respect to both the intellectual core and the political shell of the issues they co-opt. Gratuitously, they occlude us from a clear field for detecting, pondering, negotiating with the difficult and often extremely uncomfortable issues underlying the root assumptions of an entrenched way of musical life in which we are enormously invested personally, and in which we are inextricably enmeshed. The gender police, the language commissars, the ideology watchdogs for whom acts of creative text-making seem mostly to be cartoon-image manifestations of medical, legal, or sanitary problems, can't help us to get serious about our own personally real and poignant sociopolitical problems—of which the most poignant, the deepest, are, of course, the ones we can perceive ourselves as causing (for ourselves, for others) in the course of pursuing in a supposedly direct and appropriate way the practices which we have learned to valorize as conflating the most valuable and worthy uses and senses of us as people, among people. But chronic creative errants, who undoubtedly are now and always the principal and only real victims of their own egregious errors, are conspicuously not among the people whom the militant guardians of people-caring hygiene exert themselves to care about. Thus Susan McClary: "Who cares if you compose?"—as if my own caring what I do was some kind of irrelevant absurdity that couldn't possibly weigh in imaging the social or personal meaning of music-doing. She quotes with apparent endorsement Philip Glass's characterization of some of his fellow creatures (the competition, to be sure) as "creeps"—as

if that were an observation with a thought process rather than the raw operation of the gangster-power strategy: blow them away without the pretense of compassion—the final entropic residue of the ideology of "let it all hang out". And she says, "For all the rhetoric of survival and attempts at eliminating other forms of musical productivity by simply refusing to acknowledge them, these [she means elitist] arguments have had very little influence on the musical world or ultimately, I would predict, on music history." So far from being a critique of power situations within music culture, this passage fully internalizes without examination the depersonalized institutionalized power-symbol constructs which function as the principal stonewall screening people from the real-life, way-of-life, day-to-day, person-to-person impact and implication of interpersonally extruded expressive behavior—which surely includes public article writing as well as public music-perpetrating. And what is uncritically propagated is, in fact, the principal self-defeating psychosis which infects the practitioners of public music and public discourse both: the terminal renunciation of themselves as expressive persons responsible to other persons for the implications and consequences of their expressive acts, in favor of their institutional images as celebrity personages, detached from any interpersonal responsibility other than the creation of a favorable self-magnifying media myth. For what those who dream the dream of celebrity are dreaming of is the perpetuation of the state of infantility, wherein all attention in the world is centered on the One, where that one person has to be reckoned with by everyone else but has to reckon with no one else in exchange. Since not everyone aspires to such a condition, not everyone drives to construct their expressive lives on the model which is oriented by the quest for celebrity, or for the favorable verdict of music history.

Neither does it strike me that those who use popular and exogenous culture models as anti-elitist political clubs are conveying any true sense of appreciation, let alone serious participation, in the expressive cultures in whose names they militantly advocate at us: You don't find among their number any Lester Bangses, or Georges Batailles, or Antonin Artauds, or Conlon Nancarrows, or Colin McPhees; the multiculturalism being advocated is strictly and simply a pre-emption of names and symbols and tokens belonging

to other people under terms and concepts entirely controlled from the academic-critical center.

So, in the name of a critique of hegemonic power and of obscurantist elite-establishment tactics, there seems to be happening an operation of precisely the same species of power-seeking and power-assertive behavior, albeit in the service of different people (McClary smoothly works in certain academic-professional high-culture people whom she describes as "those we might call postmodern" onto a certified good-guy list of vibrant twentieth-century music-makers on the "outside", saying that the "unruly explosion in the twentieth century is the coming to voice of American blacks and latinos, of the rural and working classes, of women, and ... of those whose training in those creepy institutions did not quite take." But the culture which is actually being propagated by this text is not the complex of many-voiced, divergent, mutually exclusive, provincially isolated, unself-conscious multiplicity referred to in it, but rather a quite familiar kind of competitive academic-professional symbolic culture, in which to not like what someone does, to see a problem in it, means to abjure any concern for their welfare, or even their personhood. Well, if they're creeps . . .)

The pity of all this diversionary noise is that it seems to disenable these contemporary critics of "power" in music and cultural life from perceiving that what they are unearthing might be, first, something extraordinarily fascinating and compelling about the music they are doing their lugubrious autopsies on—as peculiar and special human documents, and as experiential phenomena which can, under these recontextuatizations, be reheard within a significantly new ontological context. And, second, that these neoperspectival observations on and experiences of mainstream-culture musics might create the ground for deeper insights into everyone's selfhood—especially the selfhoods of those who respond deeply and intuitively to these preternaturally power-loaded musical transactions—who perhaps respond even most particularly to the very aspects of them which would be most vulnerable to power-morality criticism—what does it tell you about yourself that you're a modern American adult woman who vibrates profoundly with Wagner's *Parsifal,* say, or with Robert Johnson's

Dead Shrimp Blues, or with Brahms's *Liebeslieder*, or Philip Glass's *Einstein on the Beach*, or a group of black men in Angola Penitentiary singing *Buryin' Ground?*

Just thinking about *Parsifal* and *Buryin' Ground* on the same power-model filter dramatizes the futility of reducing expressive behaviors to a simplistic comparative hierarchy: Wagner's music expresses power, symbolizes power, asserts power, claims it, denotes it, displays it, *flaunts* it. *Buryin' Ground is* the *only* power its singers have, and they know they have it only in and by virtue of singing it together. That *Parsifal* and *Buryin' Ground* are both simply called 'music' is—in at least the power context—a frivolous name-pun game whose exploitation to enforce a particular political position within the privileged power class verges on the sadistic.

Working backward through some of these thoughts, I can image self-conscious Western high-art music composition as comprehensively power-oriented, on one of a few pervasive ego-centric power-assertive models: a typically Germanic one (I was talking about Wagner) is the implicit appropriation by absorption of the Many (or of each of the Many) within the expansive identity of the One, a transsubstantiation being enforced by the totalization of the mind, sound, and body space of the music-transacting occasion by the transcendent world-recreating energy and substantiality of what is unleashed within the environmental temple. Such a concept as Karlheinz Stockhausen's "unity of musical time" situates clearly within this ethos of remaking the universe in the image of, and as part of, the insatiable Self. Schoenberg says, "The laws of genius are the laws of mankind"; the Five Pieces for Orchestra devour us forthwith. But in our tradition there are also the virtuoso-conquest model, in which you are pulverized into abject submission under the irresistible domination of the Masterdigitator; the siren model, where you become just a will-less plaything of every languid tweak of your neuro-sensory surface; and the grimmer dominations of the relentless grinding machine, the cosmic big brain complex-structure manipulator, the ideological-enforcement intimidator, the spiritual emollient—you can continue the list off your own experience. Analyzing into all these power-models of musical composition, what I can see is a lust for a fantastic kind of ultimate control, divinely—or, just as

good, diabolically—fulfilling at maximum the polar-opposite primal urges for safety and for significance—the same lustful fantasy I discern in the academic critics' appropriation of the simulacra of authoritarian psychoanalytic expertise to surmount, demystify, and thus both suppress and possess a potency in others which is simultaneously feared as threat and desired as substance.

And, indeed, music is going to overpower you only in that you inwardly desire to be overpowered. You lust to go into bondage under the virtuoso's lash. You slaver to be terminally disabled by sensory-neural overkill. The future-shock machine is going to terrorize or outrage or do whatever to you with your active strenuous collusion. In fact, these manifestly nasty operations count for a considerable percentage of what we—all of us—go for in going for music and other expressive-language productions as consumers. Doing it those ways as a producer mostly evolves out of the experience of being an avid consumer—the M and the S are familiarly the complementary nodes of a single psychic tendency.

But—further—what this suggests is that the power model is not best addressed as an issue of public morality—or one of private morality, either, if what you're talking about is someone else's expressive probity. What the power model does that is valuable is raise awareness about complex things that are happening within a conditioned situation which has become for most of us smooth, monolithically intuitive, one which tends to be taken at its own valuation and as carrying its own interpretation as to what issues are, in fact, being engaged within it. And thus issues are raised for us as active practitioners and propagators and preceptors of expressive-language-behavior structures, complex and vibrant and difficult and interesting issues about—observationally—what we signify by our own behavior about what we want from one another; and—programmatically—how what we might strongly prefer to cultivate in ourselves about ourselves and about our relations to others, for reasons which we perceive as entirely non-virtuous, non-altruistic, self-interested, might suggest that we pursue alternative structures and concepts to guide the evolution of our own expressive behavior:

I have my house, I have my sound, I have my ontology; not as preconceptions, but as after-facts of evolving consciousness.

Working out the world—not in the image of my person, but in the image of my perceived ontology—the world as I experience it as real, that I make by so perceiving it, that I make further by retrieving, articulating, and processing my perceptual experience of it. If my ontology feels non-identical with that projected by the articulations coming at me from others (yes of course as I perceive and experience them), if their houses speak a slightly foreign house-language to me, if their sounds coming at me put together an alien sensibility, then my ontological imagery is forced inward, onto the surface of consciousness, becomes my oppressively self-conscious inner identity, my burden of alienation, vivid in me but invisible, intangible, inaudible in the external world I inhabit. The expressive pressure to relieve such ontological angst drives me to make my own house, fulfilling inside and out my need to materialize my own sense of reality, my sanity. I make my own sound, make my own sensory-linguistic articulation of what I perceive, what I think, what, simply, is the identity of what, for me, there is. You can say, in the context of this meeting, that I empower myself. But—and crucially to the context of this meeting—you are a major part of my reality too, but you are that in a highly special and peculiar and equivocal way, as a potentially accessible kindred consciousness, as a potentially annihilating substitute identity. And just because you are a like-me non-me, in this special way, I crave access to you, in the equivocal spirit of threat and promise. Access for reassuring safety's sake, access also to that terrifying significance which can only come from entering the space of unknown otherness. Here, we are always negotiating the activated energized power space, always as a two-way flow. I identify with you, I identify from you; our ontologies are shared, our ontologies are discrete, our ontologies are antagonistically incompatible. I sustain a poignant consciousness that you are in my world, and I in yours (that's a bit more tricky in my psyche), that those worlds are the same and not the same, that we can almost enter each other's differentness but that destruction and violence lurk inexorably in that transaction, which yet we yearn to negotiate, as much because as in spite of the deadly peril. Sound is the sensory medium of interior, of inner life in process; the ontological material of the consciousness of the realities within. And sound is thus the symbolic medium for intimate interpersonal access. I need to engage you not only in your sound space, or in public neutral sound space, but also in my sound

space, making being in the environment that confirms my reality, that articulates our shared world with the particular inflections of my text. The power-negotiating transaction on this model is bilaterally symmetrical, and as such is starkly distinguishable from my one-person dominating takeover of some public space which happens to include you, or the exhibition of my house, or my sound, so that I at a distanced remove can observe you, paying attention, you, admiring.

And, still thinking strictly about power-relevant questions—they obviously aren't the only ones driving my quest for alternative expressive structures—I think about how I might do music, as a social-expressive project for myself, if I authentically don't just want to reconstruct the power-enforcement model in some insidiously clever self-deluding form under, say, the guise of a strenuously urged, conspicuously powerful antipower statement. What I need to do is identify simple, rational, believable, practical needs for my expressive energy and its form-composing drives, needs which do not benefit from manipulating and coopting the public-institutional attention-getting mechanisms. Such as, for example, finding ways to investigate what actually does work within me and other people in relation to the question of attention, about getting it, about giving it. Such as, to what extent and in what ways do I have use for sharing my expressive space, and exposing my ontological commitments, to the invasion of other ontologies and other expressive energies. Such as, what would it be like to address my energies in a space of strangers to activating their preoccupations without appropriating them or exploiting them or otherwise defrauding the need expressed in the experiment. Such as, finding new modes of composing which engage and energize other people's imaginative enacting energies without regimenting them, contributing rather to their expressive lives, in their name, and on their account, and to mine as either a coenactor or as a listener uniquely positioned for a vivid particularity of experience. Such as, to learn how to get out of my own way, unblock my own access to my own expressive interior (assuming I want to confront it) by developing situational structures or mental practices which smoke out and minimize my discovery-limiting kneejerk habits (such as internalized conditioned impulses to pursue relentlessly every shred of idea, internalized images of "good" structure, "good" sound,

"good" drama, or a tendency to edit—to launder—the allowable appearances of myself as behaver or interbehaver). Such as, the discovery of substantial gratifications that are only available in circumstances where composition or performance credit in the familiar, institutional sense are as grossly inappropriate as their absence would be in familiar institutional settings. Such as, discovering how to position myself in a co-expressive situation so as to learn how to experience and value my intimate access to the expressive interior of another, to explore the ranges of my own expressive potential which can only be discovered under the active-attentive influence of an expressive coexplorer. Such as,

[tape: last (fourth) cut (Penny Hyde & B.A.B. from a group session at Bard College, 1989; ca. 2 + minutes]

I have, finally, nothing verbal to claim or report, as an outcome of any of these practices, since their sonic, social, and psychic effects I understand as entirely the activation of ideas and possibilities in particular people at particular timespace junctures, and nontranslatable as models for anyone or anything else. You don't have to tell me that every kind of screwed-up familiar power-trip possibility lurks unimpeded within any of these neobehavioral configurations; a context for experimentation cannot also be a method, least of all a foolproof one, any more than a live process of awareness can survive being institutionalized as a program for enlightenment. But purposes such as these are sustainable where the need for accomplishment is intuited as a need for ongoing discovery rather than for the accumulation of a stockpile of marketable artifacts or gigworthy exhibitions. And in fact, most of the things I need to think some more about are cumulatively contained in the problematics of the sound I hear myself and others producing in our actions and interactions. At their most cogent music-cognitive levels, they are stubbornly non-verbal things, yet they speak, well below the level of lexical articulation, to the issues touched upon in this word-bound text. But I do have something verbal to exhort: that it is extremely important to what many of us feel urgent about—Susan McClary no less than I—as the indispensible enterprises of personal and cultural reconstruction, to leave every possible expressive-language outlet open, for the practice of every non-lethal, non-abusive way for the actual things

about people to be accessible to awareness, as openly as can be imaginably tolerated, so as to maximize our responsible learning in a difficult and treacherous environment by minimizing what we are obliged to posit as taboo. For the problem I have with taboos, about institutionalized limits on being an experimental person taking interpersonal risks, is not that they limit my liberty—that is a purely symbolic limit—but that they limit my learning. Whatever is given by authority or taken on faith becomes, as far as I can see, part of our problem. It is hard to imagine where it could contribute to our evolution, or—especially—to our sanity.

[Reader's Report to The Graduate School of Princeton University concerning Ph.D. theses by Eliot Handelman and Douglas Henderson entitled, respectively, Music as Secondary Consciousness: An Implementation *and* A Mica Bunker: Improvisations Where and How. *(Curiously, although both theses were accepted, the Report wasn't.)]*

Sirs:

These two theses, on unrelated subjects, were produced independently.

Since I recommend that they be published as a single volume, I am taking the liberty of reporting on them together.

I.

Doug and Eliot are conspicuously gifted writers about music, who write to generate response in kind rather than "evaluation" by some agreed-upon standard.

They seem to say: Here's my relation to music — What's yours? (—not: What's your opinion of mine?)

They engage me [you] as an already compromised collaborator in some no-man's land of current concern, where none of us is an "expert" or "authority" who's been somewhere and back.

They speak to the reader as much as about a subject: not by attractively packaging the subject, but by peeling away the insulation that a subject (i.e., a neutral public object) provides for a reader's private feel of his own mind or of his own personal relations.

Each confronts a persistent interlocutor with whom to proceed in dialog.

This interlocutor is, for Eliot, reactions and anxieties rendered computational and manipulable – in the form of programming for private gedanken-experiments with imaginary quantities called "sounds";

for Doug, public occasions of social experiment in the ostensible form of musical performance;

for both, an indefatigably groundshifting tester and questioner.

Neither in the end "proves" anything or wraps anything up.

Quite the contrary.

We might in clear good faith pick up from where they leave off, or start over.

II.

Doug faces a special problem: the musics at issue in his thesis are not widely known; are ephemeral; and are inextricable from their milieu.

Hence the preliminary painstaking documentation by tape and diary, well-sampled in the cassettes and vignettes which together form the thesis.

Hence the unflagging evocation, description, and explication of the milieu: not just to help the reader disencumber herself of social concepts and values which deeply inform more familiar musics and our ways of discussing them;

but also to show wherein the music itself intends (or draws Doug's fire for failing to intend) to absorb whatever is "extramusical", not symbolically by

"representation" but literally (as real worldnoise) by expanding the sense of "music performance" to embrace it.

[Given the discussed varieties of "audience" (:participatory, conditioning, ignored), one-way transmission is not the automatic reject we might have anticipated: even one-way transmission, after all, can reflect, process, and redirect our attention toward, the pressing life out there.

More to be feared: the Admirable & Amazing Exhibition, which diverts our attention toward Its candidacy for enshrinement; allows, encourages us to look away.]

In this milieu of unfettered individuals, groups and subgroups are in fact as ubiquitous as individuals; and foremost among them are the "facilitator" music-performance subgroups whose presence defines an occasion.

(Stirner it's not. Nor Thoreau? We're probably closer here to Kropotkin; or to the (Spanish) FAI.)

Not the community of dispersed individuals; but the community assembled, aroused, activated, even galvanized, and hence (for the nonce) collectivized.

Freely. Facilitated.

(The reader needs the milieu not just to interpret the music; but more fundamentally to grasp the sense in which it's music (social revolution) at all.)

Doug's thesis is like an anthropological study done by a member of the tribe for a readership of anthropologists.

The preconceptions and language of such a reader (:composition; performance; music; intention; standards;.....) must be continually and over again engaged,

abandoned, refashioned, blindsided, dissolved, all in the hope of eliciting in her some feel for the tribe's sense of itself.

Doug's deft fastshuffle sequencing of his narrative-reflective vignettes maintains and services this voracious, I trust, need to reconceptualize.

And he handles this quite heavy traffic in a prose that seems downright colloquial; — but in a colloquiality of tone and rhythm, not of vocabulary; — a colloquiality in which the slangs of the street (:"gonna") and the academy (:"compositional"; "fuck") effortlessly commingle; — and that nicely supports the cool distance at which Doug ruminates on his lifedeep commitments.

III.

Like Doug's fluid colloquiality, Eliot's arrant provocation fails to conceal an intense sobriety; an earnest affection, in Doug's case, not so much for the free that's "truly" (unimaginably) free as for the genuine that's noninvidious; in Eliot's case, not so much for technologized rigors as for intellect unabashed.

Eliot writes sparklingly and thinks relentlessly and gallingly as he converts, no doubt against our will, base to gold, the preposterous to discomfiture of the obvious.

[A "listener" driven solely by Fear, who wants only to quit listening as soon as it's safe, is provisionally foundational.

We do wonder whether Consciousness is a Sound.

Or Grandmother a Vibration.

And how many highbrow works about music take off from the Haunting Melody?]

Unlike Doug's existent self-defining social milieu, Eliot's milieu is a private mental gathering of oddments from (we had supposed) despised, trendy, antiquated, peripheral, beetlebrowed enterprise – not excluding rumored methods of musical composition and qualities of musical objects: an idiosyncratically farflung conglomerate, of shards of old culture awaiting the transfiguring new.

[An instrument which emits silence.

Child development.

Old Form & Analysis manuals.

Germanoid bullshit.

Ds (or is it As) in the Lark, and life as Bohor 1.....]

Is Eliot's decision to "compose" the listener rather than the music really so absurd? Might we not just as well – perhaps even equivalently – compose listeners to suit music as music to suit listeners? (He does "compose" a composer for us.)

(Eliot contemplates the most invasive one-way transmission since Chinese Brainwashing.)

Perhaps Eliot's claim to "compose" even his investigations is intuitively more plausible if we think Beethoven: the Beethoven in which shocks, pratfalls, reversals, prefigure the sweat and range of the envisioned (and eventually hard-won) trajectory.

(Doug claims to "compose" his thesis in a manner articulative of the values of free improv; not instead but for starters, I like to think Stravinsky.)

Nor is it in a rare outburst of modesty that Eliot seems to "compose" everything unblushingly except his composition.

IV.

Nor is "the listener" that stock figure of musicpedagogical imposture.

While luxuriating in underexplored fields rather than soliciting place in known, these theses harbor noteworthy, in fact outrageous, designs on this elsewhere stockfigure "listener": Doug will incorporate your noise, your vibes, you, into the composition (the free community); Eliot will implant a surrogate mind in you (—but then, good music always did.)

Both envision musicformed communities in which the Appreciated Sonic Art Object plays no privileged, in fact no, role.

Music and composing are a field and method, for Eliot, of knowledge and speculation; for Doug, of social interaction.

Eliot dissolves the Appreciated Object inward and composes Mind; Doug, outward and composes Society.

Measure how far "music" has strayed from Appreciated Sonic Objects:

Doug seeks and weighs compositional virtue not as relations among sounds but as virtuous human involvements and interchange. In a sense which Grateful Dead fans could surely get next to, music is society (— or if not, then

lamentably not —) – or is at least its central sacrament, but not bounded, not circumscribed by any nonmusical, nonsacramental Other: its penetration is thorough. (Its condition is thus Everyday. Secular. Ordinary.)

Eliot hypothesizes a sonic transmission of mind so one-to-one with the mind transmitted, as to repel any prurient attachment to its constituent sounds: thus it will radically fail to attain objecthood. Music shows up as the biological core of mentation, and as its externally appliable control – and therein as model: for cognition, investigation, and manipulation – remaining the while an all-permeating substantial (communal?) substratum, a sort of (collective?) unconscious accessible by an indefinitely vast repertory of yet-to-be-devised OM's.

V.

From the viewpoint of my own formative immersion in 18th and 19th century German music, I notice another deep divergence:

For Doug, the most salient quality of German Masterworks and their canonical listeners is their rapt, reverent, self-important, high seriousness: a pretentious if uninteresting social offense which perverts humane commitment.

For Eliot, most salient is the sense of a Work as a virtual world, a totality, which is (for the nonce) me, whom I am enacting: a quality which Eliot wishes to purify of its Appreciated Sonic Object and inject directly.

In this as in so much else, the post-'60's jam session has served Doug as crucially as the German Masterwork has served Eliot.

And just as Doug's thesis hinges upon images of musical actions which worthily shape and reflect anarchist communities of freely interacting-or-not

individuals; so Eliot's hinges upon images of power and control which nominally reject the potential tyrannies they openly wallow in and search to enable.

(Perhaps it figures that the spectre of fascism should lurk precisely where the virtual world which is (for the nonce) me has been purged of its Appreciated Object and hence of its virtuality.)

VI.

Unlike Doug's, Eliot's composition is separate from the thesis – and in a way contradicts it: a bristling compound of extremes, it symbolically (and therefore nonrepellently) internalizes quintessential Handelman as qualities of an appreciable object of sonic art.

I.e., is a piece. Which is to say, a copout.

By contrast, Doug's taped documentation of his milieu includes some of his own sonic contributions to it, which perforce illustrate and elevate germane senses of "composition", even as their exile to audiotape deracinates them, abandons them, entrusts them [—like any fetching efflorescence from irrecoverable, or unshareable, or noncompatible sociopsychic roots: like Mozart, say, or Xenakis; or Handelman. –Like music.—] to recovery and nurture by us, on our own ground.

VII.

In a sense the authors must shun, these theses are accomplished, well-polished works; and should of course be published:

to reach, in Doug's case, theorists and practitioners of the good life (in the Tolstoyan, not the Miller Lite, sense); and in Eliot's, philosophers and technologers of mind:

but especially, in both cases, to reach composers, to shake them awake to their own aims, or lack thereof.

In these theses, *music (, what it shall become)* is important.

I would advocate publishing them together as a single volume, on the model of an impending publication thus of Boretz's Meta-variations and my Compose Yourself, two works of screechingly disparate appearance and orientation which powerfully illuminate each other.

In the fleshmarts of baseball, one speaks of "impact" players; in the field of music, Doug's and Eliot's are impact theses.

JKRandall, 6/91

Experiences With No Names

Benjamin Boretz

[For a conference on interdisciplinary perspectives of music, "Resonant Intervals", at the University of Calgary, 9 May 1991]

I HAVE SOME PERSONAL questions about music. They seem to divide into ontological questions, and questions about discourse, although both species of questions are essentially ontological. They are questions about the bottom-line identities of the phenomena we experience determinately as music, and determinately as some music in particular. But given the peculiar ontological character of music, and the peculiarity of its expressive purpose and value, my questions have to probe further into the ontological character of music in the sense that we care about it *as* music. It seems to me that some of the epistemically analytic but ideologically neutral ways I have over the last thirty or so years been exploring issues of musical ontology and its discursive entanglements have perhaps remained slightly but significantly suspended somewhere above absolute music-ontological bedrock. And that that gap may be the result of a lingering epistemic shyness, a reluctance to invade theoretically the sacrosanctum of individual music-experiential substance. That reluctance has not been the output of any moral scruple, but is rather a matter of theoretical rigor: that is, a matter of needing metamusical thought to not just remain faithful to music as already experienced, but also for it to be significantly functional right where the musical action really is, to be an actual potent contributory resource in a person's self-determining, evolving creation of their own music — as listeners, inventors, players — in the service of their own needs and uses for music, at the highest — and most relevant — level to which awareness could be raised. This conception of theorizing is on probable collision course with the practices keying on autonomous detached "understanding". I shudder — more with compassion than with anxiety — when I read that Roland Barthes said:

> . . . we constantly drift between the object and its demystification, powerless to render its wholeness. For if we penetrate the object, we liberate it but destroy it; and if we acknowledge its full weight, we respect it, but restore it to a state in which it is still mystified.

Dick Hebdige, reading this, reflects on how his own study of style "ends by merely confirming the distance between the reader and the 'text', between everyday life and the mythologist whom it surrounds, fascinates, and finally excludes".

These are abject surrenderings to the psychic distance which is regarded in them as an invariant effect of discourse doing, but which is fatal to the possibility of immediate and total interpenetration of text and consciousness (as if text was anything outside of consciousness); immediate: that is, unmediated by any supervenient content of consciousness; and total: that is, leaving no part of the consciousness of the experiencing being sentient of its own self as other than the content of <u>having</u> the experiential output of the interpenetration of the text and consciousness. The implication in Barthes's and Hebdige's laments is that expression is only possible as an authentic inner experience if it is over the outer boundary of consciousness, beyond the possibility of specificity — as if only passion, so out of scale as to obliterate any features of particular feelings or qualities, were the only possible <u>expressive</u> content of sex, the only alternatives being clinical data-observation and autonomic mechanical physiological functioning. But for me, the whole purpose of thinking, whether in relation to sex or music or anything else, is precisely to deepen and intensify the particularity of fully organically involved expressive experience. And I have been convinced that the same faculty for imagining and abstracting that can lead us to psychic anaesthesia, to safety and immunity from intense and — let it not be denied — scary experiences, can equally be mobilized in the opposite direction, of self-directed sensitization and strength in the service not only of creating our own experience, but of making it more real, making it more substantial, and more particular and specific for ourselves.

The first thing that both inspired and scared me about experientially directed thinking — about music and other expressive transactions — was that its action was essentially attributive — that it created what it looked at and listened to, by looking at and listening to it, in just the particular ways it did those things, through the

particular receiving-filters those acts automatically created, as even the most innocent-seeming, passive denoting term creates attributes of what it denotes, like, say, "major triad", or, "adulteress". The way I understood it, the configuration of perceptual filters whose interaction with incoming sonic stimuli (or mentalized sonic stimuli) create the perceived phenomena for "music", are the "theory" of a given music-perceptual enaction. The temporally evolving act of "thinking in music" constitutes the simultaneous ongoing creation and music-entity-productive action of a fluid but determinate set of syntactic mindwarps which at any juncture could be described as determining, for every possible soundthing, the range of music-meaning things it could be, and the configurational geography of possible music-relational things which any set of sound-things could be. The verbal or symbol-systematic designations of these things I called "the description of the theory"; this description might be done, depending on the specific quality of the "theory" the describer wanted to capture, by the logician's method — the offering of a box of parts with instructions for assembly — or by the novelist's method — the composition of a text whose aim was to capture and convey the sensed sense of a music. Either way, the description of the theory could be either descriptive of a determinately cognitive music-receptual episode, or generative of one by its interaction with someone's mental music-configurative network. The transaction by which the music-syntactical things merged with sonic stimuli to produce experienced music things I called "semantic fusion". And a music thing's identity is identified, sufficiently and necessarily, as a "determinate feel" — a distinct, retrievable awareness-state in the consciousness of an individual person.

I understood discourse and theorizing and describing as ontologically generative for music: that the data of construction or description would not so much account for as engender the experiential contents of musics merging into semantic fusion, and that, essentially, and in principle as well, a comprehensive and deep description from either the structural-surface ("logician's"), or the expressive-surface ("novelist's") mode of articulation, would — in principle, that is — comprehend the ontology of musical experience.*

As I emerged to live the creative and receptual musical life which this awareness-refining and -expanding process of thought opened

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*Two texts from 1976 developed such thoughts: "What Lingers On (, When the Song is Ended)", and "Musical Cosmology", both in the present collection.

to me, the natural outcome was an enormous enlargement in my sense both of what could be music, and of what music could be. This seemed to open ever wider the ontological gaps among what is captured, what is defined, what is conceived, and what is experienced. And observing the music-making and music-learning effects in myself and other people of interactions with theory, discourse, and description, I noticed that creative consciousness-transforming acts of theorizing and discoursing and describing have no analog in the operational histories of formulated theories, discourses, and descriptions in the typical cases where, fixed as canonic texts, they are applied as explicit programs for one's own or someone else's music-hearing or music-doing or music learning. It was apparent that the model of music-theoretical evolution as a series of specific cumulative steps in a deepening and widening conception and construction and entification space was wrong; and that an action-reflection feedback model of cognitive evolution did not seem to work to account for the experiential learning process that seemed to be taking place in at least my own musical consciousness. On this latter point, two convictions have strengthened: one, that both theorizing and musical consciousness are entirely processual in nature, having no meaningful steady-state referential applicability except retroflectively, as in efforts to capture and articulate elapsed experience, efforts which themselves become parts of the onflowing awareness-generative process; and two, that cognitions, at least musical ones, do not flow in a linear-logical chain, but as a sequence of independent autonomous states of being — "determinate feels" — whose retroflective connections as logicized relational successions, or as "virtual entities", are just additional distinct "determinate feel" quanta.[1]

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[1] ["virtual entities": the fictitious inhabitants of the specious presents of the "virtual time" of a music-experiential totality. I note that there is no way for discursive/terminological language to articulate/determine a crucially time-unfolding process, since each word or term has a temporality which counteracts the temporality of a music phenomenon: e.g., "prolongation" can capture nothing of the temporality of a prolongation, or of the particular (crucially) moment-to-moment cumulative character of a particular prolongation; it merely denotes a time-sweep phenomenon with a covering unimeaningful state description — essentially a characterization at most of one gross endpoint sense of a process which is ontologically an elapsing accumulation of changing sense — and every sense along the way is part of 'the music', but falsified by being named as a characteristic of the music as if it remained fixed after it happened instead of as is the case continuously metamorphosing.] (Added January 1992 in response to a question of John Rahn.)

So suddenly, I begin to see the issues of discourse, theory, and even ontology as social-ideological problems, rather than problems of analytic grasp. There was a vivid clue in a sketch I wrote in 1971, but I missed at least some of the latent point until recently; it went:

> Does experience sharpen experience or does
> experience blunt experience?

And then,

> A. I've heard it all before.
> B. I've learned to hear it as never before.
>
> : Two ways to use imagination.

While I certainly was noticing the ultimacy of the effect of how you used your head, I didn't quite unpack the whole extremity of the implicit scope of this situation, namely, that discourse and theory are fundamentally relationships, ontologically: that is, that the fact that something is a discourse is entirely an output of how it functions in a given transaction, how it is being used in the course of a mental-active episode. And my "A." and "B." opposition, the utterly opposed results of applying the identical imaginative- cognitive capacities in polar-complementary ways, translates into a reductive act of theory reification for "A." ("I've heard it all before"), and an expansive, perpetually in-progress compositional act of theorizing, for "B." (which I would now write as, "I'm learning to hear it as never before"). What "it" is, for "B." is obviously a historical-geographical core for a cluster of cognitions: determinate episodes of your experiential history which you, in a retroflective quantum, overlay on each other, to produce a cumulatively evolutionary "It".

Let me here go into a certain depth in the matter of descriptive discourse; the questions are about what is the relation between what is predicated of music and what is experienced as music; and, in particular, of the relation between structure-surface imaging and expressive-surface imaging: are they images of the same thing? — which, musically thinking, means, are they generative and/or descriptive of the same music-experiential "determinate feel", or is the essential music-ontological totality expressed in their union?

If we infuse our descriptions with adequate epistemic depth, coming from either the structure side or the expression side, shouldn't we be able to at least enter the ontological space of the contents of musical experience which we care about?

Last November, speaking to a meeting of music theorists and composers about metamusical writings by Jim Randall, I said:

> . . . is Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony about B minor or is it about loneliness? Pushing to the extreme of contextual specificity on both ends, the most contextually unique construction of that music's B minor intensely constructs the means of its experiential character; the story of loneliness, carried to its most intensely non-generic detailed extreme, reports the *references* of the experience. Neither text captures the experience itself, any more than anyone has described the experience of trance, or conveyed the ontology of mystical experience. What they are, at their highest pitch of vividness, are swinging doors into and out of focussed music-sensing episodes, one structuring a concentration of attention on the way into an experience of a sensed sense, the other envesseling the contents of a debriefing on the way out. How the sense which was sensed was about B minor can in no way be determined by, or determine, any sense, however extended, of anything which could be described as B minor, nor be captured under its terms or in its name. Picturing how the sense which was sensed might have been about loneliness is virtually to wipe out whatever meaningful cognitivity might have seemed residual in the word loneliness — and yet that word is a relevant intersubjective reference for the story of the experience, for the exterior behavioral resonance of that sense which was sensed.
>
> Impervious to discourse, certainly; and impervious in principle to any one-to-one verbal or symbolic meta-representation. But not, in principle, impervious to transcendent forms of creative representation whose own ontologies are outside the realm of one-to-one cognition — outside the realm, that is, of linear, normal-logical, cognitive-scientific thinking.

Here are three musics, each followed by a reasonably time-transformational and experiential-quality-sensitized descriptive passage, the first departing explicitly from an expressive-surface perspective, the second from a symbolic-structural-surface perspective, the third from a strictly material-surface perspective:

[*tape: first cut:* Parsifal *3rd-act prelude*]

what does it mean, Wagner's ACT III PARSIFAL PRELUDE beginning with spindly stringlines in fakecanonic pseudoserialist mode spreading out bighollow widespace with thinedged boundwalls, & only a shadowy soundtrickle exhaling within — what does it mean after we've had hefty robustulous Ab-major muscularpushy what passes for Spiritual I mean Geistlich in fatVaterland in marbleized sculpturated puffblocks instead of musicgoing onflows under the guise of a metaPrelude for the Act I Grailhouse sceneset, and some scrabbly agitprop scuddery blackmouthing but b-minoranchored spookedoutsetup in front of Klingsor's hangout for an Act II intro, that we not get nothing now but uninterpretable weirdchords, not even coming on like chords at all, but just oddly angled lines oddly slithering at wayoff distances from each other, oddly polyphonizing some increasingly ominous nowhere sound — every sustained sound a question not an answer — what does it mean to draw deeper into a self-multidimensionalizing weavery of snakeslithery slithers, slithering on no ground and with no snakes but leading on, sliding into further denseentangled nevertouching unmaterial multidimensioned slimy ooze with no slime no ooze — what does it mean to assert something almost definitely and with many voices speaking as one but each entirely contradicting or unimaginably disoriented in relation to each other, many speaking all right but speaking as none, speaking nothing but making the sound of speaking energy but no resonance or vibration of energy, shaping out meaningful movement but creating no translation in space, no wake, no shadow, no accumulation or even the stasis of still being, just sound dematerialized, desonating, evaporating palpably and in tangible shaping purpose and meaning and declaration and life and energy and interplay and question with no tangible substance of any of those things accumulating a residue of anxiety pure and simple, soulsickness as the Thing tangible, rising up to the almost lucid shape of what the question would have been were it possible any longer for there to be a question, shaping the Glorious Answer which might have been the Answer to the Question had it been possible any longer for there to be a Question, shaping glorious celestial Substance (Remember? No.) as the image of energy which would be struggling to release its power were it still possible (was it ever?) for there to be really any energy any substance rising in shape alone to the glorious Answer of answers at the moment of the universal dissolution of all Substance, anxiety ultimized in the moment of ultimate depression, emptiness ultimized in the ultimate chaos of inchoate density ultimate substanceless denselessness, great masses in utterly impactless massive multiple collision without impression, an impenetrable morass of no

qualities, accumulated out of an agglomeration of no substance deleting itself, dedimensionalizing in strident whimpering declamatory collapse, the what does it mean now to have not been anything anytime anywhere but to be a sense of that still shaping the Question, still dimensionalizing the insubstance of the nonissue in edges that have no cut, in plausibilities that have no subjects, shaping the subsiding of action from the height of nonaction, imaging the ebbing of energies from the height of enervation, dissonating a complexity originating out of a space devoid of even a scratch of simple, dissonancing in a world never ever inhabited by consonant, despair deleted of substance in the voidance of any trace or memory or even shadow of the even the very concept of hope, the residue of what does it mean in the arrival at absolute Nowhere, the sound which dislocates the whole world of sound, the resonance which dissolves the whole ontology of resonance, the definition which is the infinite regress and death of all identity, what does it mean is the sense in which we end by going on from there, in the voice of Gurnemanz shaping a lifeless simulacrum of someone saying something . . .

[tape: 2nd cut: Mahler 4th Symphony, beginning of 1st movement]

What strangeness. An instantaneous onset of chirping, or is it twitching, animation, chink-chink-twittering G-F♯ over B-D ambiguities, cheerful-nervous little flute-tune fragment like a smiling that tries but can't hack it, twitching down to droop, clarinet picking up the droop and easing it down to settle as violins wind up to sing: ***G****; a mini-melody trying to dance but losing heart almost before it hastily puts the best face it can on collapsing back to:* ***G!*** *— two 3-measure fraction-phrases, their energy to color and move enervated before its time, falling back always to* ***G*** *— basses try — 3 measures:* ***G!*** *— horns: 2 1/2 measures:* ***G!*** *— violins and basses together struggle up to a wrenching weirdchord in 3 measures before they quit to let the woodwinds try to straighten it out, get back in on a still weirder weirdchord, rev it up, 3 measures:* ***G!*** *— the whole history of this initiation is cut-short phrases coming on with rhythmic verve timbral spirit and harmonic color then falling, being instantly dragged, enervated, almost before they begin, back to* ***G*** *(Or did it at length become D? No,* ***G!****). And at what would in the traditional classic dramastructure of symphonic form be a*

high-energy point of kinesis, the expository development hinge of action, this music runs completely down and lifeless, flat and quiescent and utterly spent, enervating itself a decelerating 11-measure G; and keeps struggling to rerev: this is, harmonically, phraseologically, formally, an accumulating drama of cosmic frustration, the constant enervation and ennui and world-weary disillusion always short-circuiting the bravado and animal- energetic surging: the images of bright cheer and warm sentiment and animation always just trite travesties, essayed, dreamed-of, noticed happening all around but unreachable, and unreal and tawdry anyhow: finally, this music turns on itself, turns its rage and frustration into a hysterical spasm of self-loathing: you have to hear the whole first movement to traverse this narcissistic display of formal-harmonic-contrapuntal-timbral virtuosity in the service of a theater of the thwarted and mega-insatiable, meta-unfulfillable cosmically all-desiring, con-sumed with need for everything that's out there but able to experience nothing except the devouring grinding of the devouring need to devour the ultimate futility of macho-phallic megalonarcissism narcissistically macho-phallically displaying itself with ferocious exhibitionist force and self-importance on precisely fashioned compositional structures building sense within an extending and fully resourced tonal-systematic structuring.

[tape: 3rd cut: Beethoven Piano Sonata, Op. 2 #3, 1st 4 measures]*

But how make it glow, right from start?

Chord of Nature: maybe the harmony of the universe; the underlying resonance of all, maybe even; but deadly to music: null as image (replete unto itself; data of structure):

(Beethoven Opus 2 No. 3):

right from start,
the shape of surface
is a simple
image of a
complex
landscape:
E

C

G

C

the Chord-of-Nature image:
E

C

G

C

C
is only
a hairsbreadth different
but that crack
is the universe
of Opus 2 No. 3:

---

* See "Mirage" in the present collection.

G, an 8ve too near,
wedged between Cs,
setting up then
its own upward space
not resonated;
the 2nd C made
not confirming
the lower but competing:
G blocks the1st C's reach to the 2nd:

C

G

and E is altogether out
C

G

of joint:

E	D	
C	B	
G	G	G
C		

unconfirming upper pushes into parallel
competition with unconfirmed lower.

(what's consonant?)
(what's dissonant?)

C G/C E : halves of a broken Chord of Nature, broken to crunch with a competing, dissonant Chord of Nature, dissonantly neighbored:

E	E
C	C
$\overline{G}$	G
C	$\overline{C}$

(Crunch:

E		D
C	is pulled down to	B
G		G
C		C

but	E	is, at	D	still carried by
	$\underline{C}$		B	
	G		G	
	C		$\overline{C}$	

C, fully crunched: two competing planes, simultaneous, incompatible. . .)

All three of these descriptive texts are — continue to be — music-experientially meaningful to me. But what I notice about the way I engage them is that none of them is used, or allowed, to invade and holistically pre-empt and remake the ontological interior of what I, at any time, experience as those musics. I am careful with my language here: the operative concepts are *used*, and *allowed*. At the time of the Tchaikovsky paragraph, I was perceiving the stub-born resistance of the music-ontological core to resolution within any referential-descriptive intertext. Implicit in that is a narrowing of the range of descriptive modes which could possibly be regarded as relevant to meaningful musical experience. And a virtual closure of the possibility of a discourse being actually contributory to rather than impoverishing of a meaningful musical experience. And in fact, while it does not at all trivialize the act of musical discourse formation, that text does strenuously marginalize it as an active factor in the music-experiential transaction.

But what I know now is a little, but significantly, different. It has to do with using and allowing, and with discoursing as a variable relationship at its ontological core. It has to do, first of all, with some things that occurred to me as I was reading about Paul Ricoeur on the subject of metaphor — or, really, the metaphorical relation. I noticed that I followed happily his idea of semantic irregularity as long as it remained an unfixed, unfixable, dynamically onflowing process of inscrutable co-existence (where existence is travelling, and co-existence fellow-travelling) intensely activating the sentience-space between the persistently ontologically distinct objects/texts stubbornly resistant to semantic fusion (as in: "the named bearing the name. . .the name calling the named. . ."). And the moment the metaphorical relationship stabilizes into a specifiable localized determinate quality-conferring effect, it seems to collapse as a metaphorical relation, and to turn reductive, reductively ontological. So I began to imagine that every mode of musical description, from neanderthal chord-labelling to Jim Randall's amazing verbal compositions rendered out of deeply specific, intensely creative music-hearing, had some value in how it captured something potentially believable about some music; and I perceive that the problem is always that of reductiveness, the substitution of less for more, of structure hearing for music hearing, or of story hearing for music hearing. In short, music descriptions can be ontologically imperialistic if they are allowed to be, if they are used that way. I want to think of the discourse-action-relational transaction as oper-

ating in two complementary directions, which I want to call descriptive and ascriptive, respectively. The ontological implications of both are formidable, but opposite to one another: in the descriptive use-mode, a discourse flow and a music flow are held apart from one another, in a mutually metaphorical relation: each with its distinct integral time-evolving ontological autonomy, strenuously forced into ongoing energized relational confrontation, strenuously constrained from collapsing or merging into one another, the force field between them exuding an awareness-content which is ontologically enriching and expansive to both; but the instant the ontological barrier crumbles, or even stabilizes, the moment one text denotes or defines or otherwise accounts for the other, an ontological transference occurs, the transaction becomes static and reductive, ontologically substitutive rather than ontologically specificative and expansive: that is the ascriptive mode.

Still, I haven't become a mystical platonist, despite what may be appearances to the contrary: the ontological "given" of music is still always and comprehensively for me a "chosen", by conscious or non-conscious action of a perceiver's perception, by ascription. But the choosing, the mind-composing action of ascription, takes place entirely in the language and on the ontological ground of the music-experiential universe, in music thing-language. Thinking in music, the creative-relative do-it-yourself ontology-making ascribing activity is fully liberated, and fully determinate, if terminally occluded from the verbal-cognitive kind of intersubjectivity by its untranslatable, unparaphrasable selfhood.

So my social-ideological problems with musical theorizing really arise entirely in the mistaken ascriptive use of texts whose coherent relation to musical experience is, on my account, descriptive. This problem is probably at its most lurid and blatant in the music-devastating ontological transference that typifies traditional ear training, and most other forms of traditional music-learning, music-studying, music-understanding, music-theorizing practice, all of which lead inexorably — and familiarly — to musical expression-destroying experiential reductiveness: hearing analyses, hearing serial structures, hearing complex time-pattern relationships, hearing motivic transformations, hearing adumbrations internally and intertextually and historically, hearing ideologies, hearing anything which is ontologically in the verbal — or symbolic — referential-linguistic domain rather than hearing music in its own fully ontologized experiential-intellectual language, is not only to freeze and paralyze the cumulating evolution of a person's inner mu-

sic-experiencing history, but threatens to annihilate the entire intuitive music-experiencing history a person may have already accumulated. The intuitive listening mode by which a person has evolved a personally coherent natural music language is replaced by a data-processing procedure in which music-sound tokens are translated one-dimensionally as symbols referential to some intersubjective extramusical qualities. Musical things are psychically fragile, because of their inability to fortify themselves against the referentially explicit verbal and formal-language arguments carrying maximum psychological weight and force in an overwhelmingly social-directed, music-institutionalized, interpersonally saturated environment. In that world, the drive for a metalanguage in which to transact the supervenient business of power relations and status-structure reproduction in which music-expressive texts are just tokens of symbolic value and meaning is far more operative than the deeper, but utterly real, spiritual need for the kind of expression, articulation, interaction, thinking, imagery which music uniquely makes available. So if, and insofar as, we need music, we need to be careful, precise, and aware how we make and use metamusical discourse, how we surround and assault ourselves and our students with environments of metamusical activities, methods, and attitudes, lest we musically and spiritually and intellectually and epistemically impoverish ourselves and them in the plausible name of musical understanding, performative competence, and ideological rectitude.

CROSSOVER ISSUES:

A response to Angela Gilliam*

Issues about crossover touch a number of acutely sensitive cultural issues, in which musical behavior is embedded, rather than merely being only questions of commerce or aesthetics referenced to music in isolation from its total social context. The contention could be made, in fact, that essential characteristics of the aesthetic (in production and response) of public musical activity (including all its dimensions, from high art across to popular culture and indigenous expressive behavior) are rooted in (frequently subconscious) attitudes and needs which are not only culturally determined, or even just expressions of cultural identity, but are actually active modes of cultural assertion and are used—at least implicitly—as tools of intra- and inter-cultural action, either aggressively—as enforcement or invasion—or defensively—as code for self-protection, self-identification, self-empowerment. So there are musics, musical behaviors, and musical attitudes which act out the assertion of hegemonic power, the corroboration and support of the sense of power of those social subgroups which perceive themselves as dominant. And there are the musics, behaviors, and attitudes which constitute the identity and power—in, frequently, the only form it can have—of a social subgroup which sees itself (usually accurately) as disempowered, oppressed, or otherwise subjugated (as, in an extreme case, a group of African-American prisoners on a Mississippi prison farm).

But the trickiest case—since it pervades the cultures of popular music, especially the culture of rock—is the self-identification by members of one cultural subgroup with the traits of another—or even not only with its traits but its actual texts; alternatively, an extreme symbolic sentimental valorization surrounds the traits and texts of the exogenous subgroup in the discourse and body language of the indigenous group. The issue arises acutely in the adoption by the American white middle class adolescent subculture of the musical (and linguistic) manner of African-American groups as well as other "outsider" groups (as, Native Americans, Asian Indians, British proletarians, Appalachian rustics, cowboys, Latinos, etc.)—sentimentalizing them much as high-culture groups appropriate and sentimentalize (and try to

identify with) exotic peoples and phenomena which express their self-image and aspirations (as, emulating, displaying, admiring, advocating the manners, appearance, taste, and cultural artifacts identified with British aristocracy and Continental sophisticates, a process in which "great literature", the correct beverages, and appropriate etiquette such as behavior at a concert or a cocktail or dinner party or classroom discussion are all indiscriminately valorized as indivisible components of a seamless cultural texture).

What the complementary adoption by "outside" cultures of dominant-culture styles and artifacts implies is more commonly recognized as a form of "colonialism"—I suspect that this is as simplistic (and culturally slanted) an angle as the notion that the collecting of African religious and ritual artifacts by wealthy Americans is a form of identification with oppressed peoples.

But the relation of the rock culture to its exogenous models is of particular interest to us right now—what is the socio-psychic energy of the subgroup central to that culture, the people who define it culturally and aesthetically, what aspiration, need, or action is being implemented here, how does the appropriation of exogenous tokens of the expressive behavior of disempowered strangers express this energy and act out these needs and effectuate the subtextual agenda? Such questions arise from a perspective complementary to that of Angela Gilliam's work—her paper* deals with these issues from the perspective of the "outsiders" themselves—but they arise directly under the inspiration of her discourse.

B.A.B./1992

*"The Ideology of Crossover and its Relation to Gender"; at "Music and Power" conference, University of Washington, 5/91.

telegraphic responses to Catherine Schieve's tape for a Scratch session, which included two piano concertos by Serge Rachmaninoff, a symphonic poem by him, Flamenco music by Manitas de Plata, and Bulgarian village music:

Rachmaninoff's piano concertos—I've never understood what they were doing
when they were doing what they were doing (always sounded just GREAT,
but...)
now here It Is: they are the ultimate appropriation of noise, violence, horror,
eroticism, density, vastness, complexities of size, scale, location, direction,
energy
—into comfortable, manageable confirmation of our security here in this our
listening place: everything's well under control (not to worry).
on our behalf,
at our service,
for our benefit,
not to worry.
energy and physicality
appropriated by
pure sensibility
(not your nasty
superrationality, or
psychoanalytic self-confrontation, or
technovirtuosic terror management,
but
music
as
psychosocial
pseudoliturgical
damage control

and hey, with
Bulgarian village plowwomen as groundlevel people,
and with Manitas de Plata selling snake oil,
here's
Rachmaninoff peddling a
metaphysical vision
predicated on the belief
in
the existence of:

the tooth fairy

(yes)

1992/B.A.B.

Statement to the NJ State Assembly Environment Committee, 8/5/93

[SCRIPT (as read from):]

Legislators!

My Name is Jim Randall. This Statement takes 4 minutes.

My Son, And one of my best friends, in Separate accidents, had their Cars Totaled by Deer.

Another good friend was incapacitated for Months with Lyme disease.

My backyard Tulips disappeared Years ago. As Deerfood.

I'm a Longtime Resident of New Jersey, and I've got Something I'd Like you to Do.

Not right Now; but Soon. And Especially while Wildlife is an issue, Repeatedly.

What it Is, is a Spiritual Exercise.

You Do it with a Deer.

(don't Worry: no Guns. No Bow & Arrow. Not Even a Camera.)

you Do it Whenever you catch a Deer Watching you.

In your back yard. In the woods. In a field. At the edge of the road. They're All Fine.

What I'd Like you to Do is Hold Still. Freeze,

My Friend: Keep looking In to Those Eyes.

(those're Deep Pools. And I Mean Deep.)

lock In. what do you See there?

(go On: Be a little Sappy, if That's what it Takes:

Bring your head to a Point: Put your Soul Into this.)

Don't Fidget: be as Quiet, as Still, as Deep, as That Deer.

Don't Glare or Stare: Look. Gaze.

Do you Connect? Not Just Eyeball-to-Eyeball, but Core-to-Core?

Is there Something like Trust? Or Equivalence? Or Mutuality? In the air?

The Sense that you're Both Here?

An intuition that That Creature - which Leaps in front of Cars, hosts Lyme-ticks, and Eats your Tulips - is every Bit the Marvel that You are?

If Yes: Please Cherish this moment - over Anger, or Distaste, or Indifference. If Yes:

Please Cherish this moment - over Killing for Fun. (or Revenue). If Yes:

Please Cherish this moment - over Pest Control. If Yes:

Please Cherish this moment - over Killing as Public Service.

And If Yes: let your Laws Nurture this Fragile, very Human, Stake in Felt, Resonant, coexistence.

BUT: if our Spiritual Exercise strikes you as Unseemly, or Silly, or a Mere Sentimental Wallow;

If nothing Clicked;

Then I'm Concerned For you:

Then it's You, above All, who Need it Bad.

Then it's You who should Not Engage a wildlife issue Quite Yet:

You're Not Ready.

{LONG PAUSE}

I thank you for your attention.

Regretting John Cage

and

Kenneth Gaburo

a gathering of texts

Benjamin Boretz

I: An Epigraph for John Cage

II: Virtual Unreality

III. Fragment from "The Purposes and Politics of Engaging Strangers" (a sociomusical occasion)

IV. Thoughts on a transcontinental train, Thanksgiving 1989

V. The Responsibility of the Arts in the Dialogue About Educational Reform

VI: (1/81)

VII: not for kg

I

AN EPIGRAPH FOR JOHN CAGE

What John Cage is about is not Zen; it is experimental existentialism. It profoundly uses onsite trashing conventional ritual occasions and forms and systems through which social substance is infrastructurally bolstered to force pitiless confrontation with out-there voidness. Listeners composers performers undergoing extreme exertion or even more extreme nonexertion under the unyielding imperative of strenuous rigors meticulously detailed, stringently demanding, random-processually generated, globally undecipherable. Anticulture not alternative culture. Sound you have to hear, that you can't exactly hear; sound that you strain to grasp and that leaves you coming up poignantly empty. Once you know the reality of silence, content is up to you. Existence is not a career opportunity. If you escape from that, what is it, precisely, you are escaping? Nice is not what John Cage is about; what John Cage is about is more like the real-life sense of what you might mean by Serious. Probably John Cage would not have said any of these things, so maybe they're completely wrong.

(written April 23, 1987 in his presence;
written again August 12, 1992 in his memory)

II

Virtual Unreality

There is being, there is going.

For music, going is being.

For music, not-going is not-being.

For a sound, being is being; being is not going; going is not being.

The sound of music is the sound of sounds going, not the sounds of sounds being.

Listening to sounds being is not music.

A music which listens to sounds being is a deeply radical music; that listening to sounds being is cognized as music deeply radicalizes music.

Listening to sounds just being sounds is a common and familiar aesthetic experience in almost everyone's life.

Listening to sounds just being sounds as a conscious musical artform deeply radicalizes a common and familiar listening-to-sound behavior.

Listening to sounds just being sounds as an output of a particular composer's recontextualization of sounds just being sounds deeply radicalizes music-compositional behavior as well as deeply radicalizes listening-to-music behavior.

In such a radicalized state it becomes possible to imagine recontextualizing musical or nonmusical soundmaking and soundlistening as individual or collective expressive behaviors, or as individual or collective nonexpressive behaviors, in which the proprietary category of "composer" is indiscernible, not only as a fact, but as an issue.

The extreme radicalism of these results resides in their direct relevance to ineluctable issues of sensemaking, worldmaking, lifemaking in the present moment.

(1993; to the memory of John Cage)

III

Fragment from

"The Purposes & Politics of Engaging Strangers"

(a sociomusical occasion)

I wonder not what composing is, but what composing might be. I wonder what issues composing raises, or what issues it addresses. I wonder what motivates composing, in you and in me, such that we devote so much of our time and energy to it, and derive so much of our identity from it. I wonder not only what does underlie the surface of our composing behavior, as well as what's on the surface of it, but also what we might find and cultivate as motivations for composing behavior, and what surfaces of it that might lead us to invent and discover. We, here, today, are composing in the hope of finding something out about our own composing, the issues it raises, the issues it addresses, for us as individuals, and as a community. This saying is one sound in the sound of this space, one behavior in this polyphony of behaviors, in which your presence is a voice also.

Think how fundamentally inexpressive art music is, as a medium.

Structure is always an alienation of expression. The very purpose of structuring is the alienation of expression. Not necessarily in a negative sense: reflection is alienation too: to engage by distancing, to access by mediation; safety from directness to enable the channels of reception to receive without the paralyzing fear of annihilation, of immolation.

Is rationality a description of the real, or a resistance to it? Does rationality make claims about the real, or claims against it? Is rationality in compliance with the real, or in revolt against it? Is rationality explication or is it denial? Is it justification or condemnation? Is the real world that which is rational, or is the rational the attempt to create the real world? Is real equivalent to rational or incompatible with it?

If describing accepts, and analyzing rejects, what might composing be, and how can music be imagined without it?

IV

Thoughts on a Transcontinental Train, Thanksgiving 1989

1. about Claude Lévi-Strauss's *Tristes Tropiques* (esp. pp. 33-34):

Lévi-Strauss cannot participate or seek to participate in the experience of actually being alive – the lament he laments is essentially a lament against the condition of being actual in an actual world in which certain circumstances obtain – that that is the universal and ineluctable reality of being alive in the humanly real world is utterly invisible to Lévi-Strauss who always posits an ideal which his analytic prescience invariably reveals to be unrealizable – which leads inexorably to an intellectualized pessimism (ideal in that it is virtually defined by the unrealizability in any actual world of that which it posits as sought) about any actual experience of actual life in an actual world, and thus – inexorably – to a withdrawal to a Euclidean world of detached forms – abstract and ideal in principle, essence, and substance, and hence not subject to disappointment, disillusionment, or despair.

2. Deconstruction, the most cannibalistic form of thought, is the most perfect expression of and repository for the contemporary jungle-entropic ethos.

3. Fetishizing the machine: in western classical music playing and singing are not projecting imagery of peoplesound (or for that matter godsound or creaturesound or spiritsound) but powersound – impersonified mechanismsound – the cosmos imaged not as person but as machine, not anthropomorphic but mechanomorphic – the person empowered by appropriating the puissance of the superpersonal Mover, Fabricator, Generator. . .

(1992)

V

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ARTS IN THE DIALOGUE ABOUT EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Academe has two equal and opposite problems, both life-threatening, and together virtually terminal: academe cannot survive into the contemporary world and its contemporary predicaments without coming up with genuinely new *ways of thinking;* equally, academe (at least in its liberal-arts/humanities aspects) is structurally incapable of either engendering or supporting or even tolerating truly new ways of thinking. (Science is in better shape: its problems are *somewhat* less purely self-defined; and it is blatantly obvious that those problems cannot even be addressed, let alone "solved", *except* by developing new ways of thinking (viz. *n*-dimensional space in current particle physics/cosmology)). In particular, purely verbal thinking has hypertrophied into a fixed ritual game of escalating finesse, ingenuity, and polish, creating formidable and challenging textures without any content of new thinking—as, for example, not only defining new issues, but rethinking *what an issue is.* This is one reason why technology, especially in the arts, holds so much potential for significant repositioning of purposes, concepts, and issues—although of course that implies as much terminal peril as hopeful promise—but that risk cannot be avoided if a tool is to be made available and freely experimented with on a scale and with a power adequate to making even the slightest real difference in our conceptual/practical schemata. And the much larger domain of which technologically-based thinking is only a minuscule part is the area of non-verbal (and para-verbal, and supra-verbal) cognition and thought—which people in the arts are most deeply practiced in, of course, but which everyone knows as a native natural language, albeit one which gets obliterated, or, really, indiscernibly

backgrounded, by the power and prevalence and—to coin a term—hegemony of verbal language, the overwhelmingly privileged status of verbally defined issues, and the authority of verbal denotation, the exclusive significance of verbal theorizing. It is not inevitable that this stranglehold will be broken—no one says that a culture can't go belly-up (we're always sliding entropywards anyway, which is why cybernetic theory is constantly less an intellectual/expressive/recreational luxury and ever more a desperately grasped lifeline); it is far from probable that a culture so advanced can be so fundamentally reconstructed—but it is equally obvious that the need for the effort to do so is non-negotiable.

Consider, in this light, just one issue: consider the evolution of social structures designed to "improve" the status of (human) life on earth (i.e., one's own), which have evolved from paleontological times in terms of strategies which had survival value under those circumstances. For a long time now, the—at least—*physical* —circumstances under which human life is being pursued have progressively rendered those strategies, those structures, 180° out, counterproductive to produce the effect of "improving" human life, in anyone's terms we know of. So every structure within our (recently metastasizing) social fabric is in need of re-examination and reconstruction, most especially at the seat of self-conscious social reproduction, the school. Of course, it can't be done. Of course, it's foolish and pompous to think of one's work in such global and grandiose terms. But we do have some responsibility in our work, namely, *our* responsibility.

OK, so what is it? What are those strategies, structures, roles? If we don't think about this, then there's hardly any need for a curriculum at all, because there's hardly any reason to be a school.

VI.

(1/81)

A score is a stimulus. to specific expressive events. to, that is, experientially realized creative activity.

There are primary and secondary creative activities. depending on the depth of expression elicited from you.

A stimulus to creative activity you value for its specificity. The greater its specificity as a stimulus the more potent its capacity to engender and participate in an episode of creative activity associated with it.

Stimulus specificity. which, liberates ideas in direct ratio to its distinctness. is easily confused with coercive specificity as to literal detail. If a stimulus has the effect in a given episode of creative activity of being coercive as to literal detail to some extent: to that extent, its stimulation is specific, but of something other than primary creative activity. at most of some form of secondary creative activity.

To the extent that a quest for 'correctness' ('compliance') replaces a quest for the maximum awareness of specificity of stimulus in the interest of specificity of response: primary creative activity is unavailable.

That you might value knowing a song or a piece must be that its recollection and recomposition in performance creates an expressive outlet. Its presence in your awareness is a potential for expressive development within your selfscape.

If psychologically you are able to respond to the specifics of traditional music in notation with the liberty of being freely stimulated at closest range to primary creative activity: then traditional music in performance could already be stimuli to primary creative activity.

But, psychologically, you are not.

A score to which your response is powerfully specific (in the form of 'ideas') but not coercive is a creative musical medium. in a profounder traditional sense.

Each must discover which scores are musical media of primary creative activity.

VII

not for kg

"A noun is a placeholder for an adjective" (JKR):

EXPLAINS HOW 'IS'

EQUALS 'EQUALS':

DISSOLVES 'IDENTITY' INTO 'PRESENCE'.

DISALLOWS (OR ONLY ALLOWS) PRESENCE WITHOUT REFERENCE.

(Keeps no records.)

dissolves a song into an absence.

[song that was, is it still song that was?]

NEVER WAS. EVER IS. HERESPACENOW. NEW. something gone.

(aftersound.) then only has presence. is not present. the sense of anything belongs to anything but not to it.

listen: what you hear is absence.

dissolves presence as absence.

SAYS.

IS.

EQUALS.

IS NOT.

GONE:

(THE SONG.)

(3.3.93)

TEN THOUGHTS (1993) ABOUT "LYRIC VARIATIONS FOR VIOLIN AND COMPUTER (1965-8)" *—JKR*

1. Of this lovingly constructed, totally canned piece I once wrote, truly, that half of it retrogrades the other half; and that all of it germinates in any bit of it, each bit being astonishingly pregnant.

2. And I truly cared.

3. But what was it that I truly cared about?

4. Just the art of the thing, surely; but what else? What was I after?

5. Certainly not what I wanted a listener, even myself, to "follow" or dope out. On the contrary, what I wanted then (and still value now) was flux – the flux, say, of intense utterance, of internal vocalisation even, to which the term "Lyric" was intended to point.

6. Was it justification? – a sense that no matter how hairily tangled the "surface" (and the hairier the better), this surface after all emanated inexorably from deeply ordered depths?

7. Or more strongly, was this fiercely organic structuring (– precisely in such musically skewed packets of acoustic data as subcollectionally generated, temporally distributed pitchclass collections –) my means and guarantor, the very engine, of hairy tangle, of bizarre (when musically heard) utterance? – utterance beyond cavil because so deeply, so complexly, so organically, so compactly, rooted; hence: justified?

8. (No doubt my thinking was dominated by a schenkerish deep-structural (background-nugget-to-foreground-profusion) proclivity nurtured by my preoccupation with the German Classics of the 18th and 19th centuries, the transcendental utterance of whose "foregrounds" is notorious.) (I considered deep-structural Linguistics theory an unaware or unacknowledged ripoff of Schenker.)

9. In any case, a question "Can we perceive this structuring?" never seriously arose, since I've never thought of music-listening as perceiving or identifying. (A listener undergoes, or becomes, or simply is, the music, the utterance: is within, happening – not without, observing.)

10. And across 25 years, how much can you expect to really add up?

thoughts in an email, 10/93
(to Marianne Kielian-Gilbert)

. . . "frontiers" are for me an extrapersonal perspective—what occurs to me is entirely apart from that external sense of where "the world" or any part of it is at—and thus my own thoughts are "frontiers" only way after the fact, when they are viewed in the landscape of "things in the world", just like any other extrapersonal things. Therefore, the issue of frontiers is more relevant to my perspectives as a teacher, editor, or discourser than as a thinker in or about music or any other creative/expressive/ communicative language. My citation of "frontiers" in my note to you was re Perspectives; that is, the editorial activity of Perspectives must for me be perceptive about and cultivating of thought contexts which may be perceived to be frontiers of all kinds; for me, right now (this is my answer to your question) this consists of primarily the appropriate linkage of experiences and realities across the boundaries of the languages in which they are expressed, maintaining an incredibly treacherous balance between the isolation of "specialized" languages (which cannot be reality), on the one hand, and "generalized" issue-mongering on the other hand (which can not only not be real, but also loses the special form—content, really—which is uniquely residual in each expressive-language indigenously—hence, the easy translations of "musical" events & expressions into, say, psychoanalytic, deconstructive, or "political" (i.e., "newspaper-political") languages is not wicked but wasteful, in that it loses the motivation for expression in any and each and all of the distinct language-forms in which behavior is manifested). And, yes, a massive frontier issue for me is to perceive "music" not as residual artifact or phenomena only or even primarily, but as expressive behavior—expressive meaning effectual as "action" in any way that "non-physical" behavior constitutes "action", interpersonally, socially, politically, personally, privately, but specifically in the unique language of its nature, and therefore "about" things in ways that are particular to itself, and about things that are perhaps not things except within the particular expressive-language context itself. The difficult part is under these conditions to integrate the "special" and the "general"; a first step is to understand the particular kind of "scientific" which is not like "natural science", but like the creation of new ways of thinking to address new things to think & think about—as Sigmund Freud, for example, invented a new kind of "research" which was utterly "non-scientific" in the sense of natural science (introspective, non-verifiable, non-logical) but utterly suigeneric in putting forth cognitively what uniquely it had to say—which does not speak to its "truth" but only to its meaningfulness. While I don't mean by this to say

that Freud is a "model" for the frontier thinking I am descrying, but only an example of new-thought invention to provide a context for the articulation & "having" of essentially new ideas, nevertheless I believe that our horizons are merged with those of psychology & philosophy precisely in this area of perceiving the possibility, and necessity, of new ways of thinking & formulating that are not scientific in the sense of natural science or the rather impoverished metaphorical simulacrum thereof which seems to have suspended & paralyzed the "social sciences" as well as the "music-theoretical" and "music-historical" fields of study, but scientific precisely in their precision and specificity of relevance to the nature & content & context of their field of interest, as defined by the experiential core of what's interesting & compelling to people about them (not compelling only by virtue of the synthetic accumulation of self-referring commitments to "knowledges" and "standards" and "theories" as institutionalized within a professional community—see Marianne Kielian-Gilbert as quoted by B. Boretz in "Dialogue for JKR" on this point).

This means that the "technical" discourse on music may be perceived as having lost its trenchancy on the frontiers of musical thought because its truths have been passed through, like all truths of this kind, and are no longer true in any present-tense sense, however true they still are as representations of personal truths as of the time of their expression. I personally have *always* (you can look it up) been appalled by "technical" discourse that was not conceptually guided ("epistemically shy" was what I called it in Meta-Variations)—as being vacuous in any respect of being "about music" rather than empty schemata which were indifferently "about" anything, or essentially not about anything.

This does not mean that I would not publish such discourse in Perspectives; but as the latest forum on "complexity" symptomatizes, it has evolved from terrific intellectual potency to a sadly unmotivated & uninspired (by any new, compelling, or deepening ideas) dogmatic "position", manifestly taken mainly in "political" response to a perceived threat by a competitive "school" of thought.

One should recognize that all "schools of thought" are relative to interests, and not born out of theoretical objectivity—in fact, theoretical objectivity is rather to be skeptically viewed as perhaps irrelevant to the reason for which one thinks—namely, to deal with problems of unclarity or insecurity in one's identity or one's intuition or one's perception or one's motivation or one's "program" for activity or behavior or interbehavior. "Objectivity" is therefore without a subject or a purpose and of all modes of thought most prone to self-referential irrelevance. (You could argue that a "field" consisting of "objective" thinking develops its own internal energies; but that is precisely what unmasks such a "field" as being relevant only to its

own internal economy—an analysis which I believe would not really be congenial to the practitioners of most such fields.)

For me personally, thought is not objectified, but simply the name for some of the episodes of inner and outer experience, sometimes spontaneous, sometimes sought for, sometimes concentrated on, through which my consciousness passes. Rarely is it a discourse in a "public" space; but frequently it is a response within a "social" space—the "Interface" texts explore this "gray" area most particularly, both in what they deal with and in how they deal with it; none of them is "personal", in the sense that Elaine's texts always are, yet they all expose issues which are preternaturally "personal" on the conviction that these issues are the "real" subject matter which needs to be acknowledged & confronted if I am to be true to the issues that are actually present as "musical" in my reality space—not as confessional, but as analytic, observational, and non-polemically (hence, non-self-congratulatory or self-flagellatory either) "political".

I could talk more about other things happening in the world that strike me as "frontiers"—I would very much think that the line of observation which is so raw and partial in Susan McClary's writing needs to be supported and taken very seriously, whatever its naive characteristics (which are not to be used as an excuse for dismissal or patronization, but as an invitation to even more strenuous and strenuously contextualized dialogue). I do think that the "feminist" contextualization is highly relevant—perhaps somewhat outside its gender-issue motivation—precisely because it promises a highly non-arbitrary but essentially radical "new way of thinking" about lots of things including music.

Stop.

Ben

October 1993

NOTES FOR OPEN SPACE CD 6 (1994):
("a score is a stimulus..."); The Purposes and Politics of Engaging Strangers

I

information is not imagery.
data is not resonance.
duration is not time.
time, back-ordered but never reset after start, created by
timesound, recreated by cumulative everevolution,
not accumulating masses everaccumulating mass,
not accreting only information data or duration . . .

(b.a.b., 1993)

II

There are scores for players, there are scores for composers. A score for players you read as an invitation to enact, creatively, an intention, an idea, an image, a narrative, a sound, a structure, a quality, a complexity, a feeling, perceived as pre-existent, as implicitly in the score-code, however many sonic details are inscribed, or must be invented in the playing. A score for composers you read as a specific inducement to discover within yourself, to converge upon with your co-players, to invent, without preformed expectations, an intention, a meaning, a sensibility, a trajectory, a vision, a landscape, a music unknown before and unimaginable ever except under the influence of the scoretextimage. A score is a score for players or a score for composers strictly by virtue of how it is being read in a given playing; any score can be read as either, though some are more likely to be read as one rather than the other. The first two CDs of this volume document playings of scoretexts which were conceived and engaged as scores for composers. The third CD documents the live creation—with the presence of a gathered audience—of a socioexpressive occasion, converging and materializing texts and sounds of various kinds—including scores for composers, scores for players, and documents of sound- and word-making sessions—for a shared contemplation of issues and phenomena perceived as emergent, and urgent, therein.

(b.a.b., 1994)

Wiska Radkiewicz's 60 Minute Exercise : her video images

Benjamin Boretz

Times around. Time going around. Angle of time angling around. Spatial diffraction as time angle. Attitude translation. Tension of attitude translation becoming time colored and quantified in that refracted dimension. Time moving not space not moving in space of space. Climbing is turning, time turning, attitude translating intensionally self-eradicating incremental pulses (not trajectory, not orbit, dimensional repositioning in incremental nudges each eradicating the imprint of the previous [unoriented not disoriented] tension of self-eradicating states of location); rotation: time around circumventing time. Incrementing no accumulation. No one should be allowed to witness a linear journey through curvilinear space. It is a knowledge available only from a forbidden perspective, an observation point held as sacred taboo because the knowledge of the qualities of this mystery are dangerous to the underangement of the limited perceptual-conceptual organs of the ones below; they are never allowed to go above, to know the secret of spatial absurdity, that all roads lead to nowhere, that the journey is eventless, that linear is circular, that accumulation is evacuation, that horizon is origin, that beginning has no successor, that end has not arrived, that location is death, that trajectory is chaos, that curvature is loss, that a clock has red hands and an airplane in odd planar orbit for seconds marker, that the universe is, after all, bounded by a purple ring with several functional and/or decorative protuberances thereon, and needs to rest on a swatch of crinkly grey matter (firmament no doubt) to subsist in such stability as to maintain time around incrementing in planar diffractive attitude translational trajectory circumventing content and form both without flying out of space altogether causing the all of everything to fall apart, or in, or down, or out, or up or all or none of the abovebelow. And now fellow wanderers we are

arriving at 8:25, right on space, red handed, silver bodied, bathed in the shadow of our sunlight, refracting light as time as plane of orientation—tick. Next time Marienbad. Tock. Look up, all the way up, through the globular continuum encircling ever outerly. Time was, tower is, clock elapses, architecture crumbles, standing up firm and going around eccentrically and creeping on imperceptibly, skewered in the skewed perspective, the town towers way up there, up ahead, up tall and tiny and massive and dissolving (also crumbling), deep up ahead beyond behind above red above silver above creep above twist mono planar still footed above nondimension above omnidimension accumulating without incrementing above changing pure and simple above (beyond, below, to the leftright of, before, at the same moment or spot as) elapsing refracting translating eradicating rotating time around belly upping backdowning within global bound of purple ring with functional decorative protuberances upon obligatory resting pad of crinkly. Grey. Crinkly grey infirm. The universal solvent dissolving the universe. (Including the clock tower, the apartment house, the Mediterranean Sea, the Institution of Marriage, the Concept of Anxiety, the father of the man, some rice pudding, the mother of all battles, the utter depravity of human nature, the dust on the carpet, the origin of species, the growth of the fetal tissue, the cancer on the presidency, the gene pool of the Dutch, apartheid (and legalized gambling), laughter, imprudence, statuary, the continuing viability of sonata form, ethnocentricity, plaid, baldness, metamorphosis, ecology, the concept of determinism, the difficulty of climbing clocktowers after the age of 55, the flow of water, the shred of respectability, the fragment of Parmenides, the snail's pace, the serpent's tooth, the stone's throw, the eagle's beak, the earth's crust, the airplane's dive, the clock's time, the town's crier. Ringed in purple keeping it in. Sealed in glass keeping it out. Looking in at time looking in. At space looking forward: the timeplane dance. Soon. Got sometime, at long last. Oneway — there is only one. (nine there). Now(where?). Protube.

Funcdel. Orational. Uproun d. Downcross. Handjob. Flatspire. Fishbowlworld full of fishfood (time, tower, eat planar refractory attitude translator (very nourishing if nowhere's where you're headed)). Nineohfive. Go back. Your procedure is contrary to accepted practice, which permits of translational attitude eradication, universe annihilation, and town photographing (including purpleringed functionally and decoratively protuberant clockscapes) only in a counterclockwise direction, the seriousness of the infraction in question (underscored by the constantly evolving tease of the plane-redhand angle of approach, convergence, and departure) disenables leniency; the density of the lower half as a consequence of nine-fifteen having arrived (where from?) is the ultimate devolution of nonterminable unstructure. It's where we've come, densely not arriving, having not yet gone. But when?

: her sounds

From the inside of Aguirre's head as the end approaches : in memory is the persistence of desire; in coherence and order is survival of the unendurable being undergone; in return is escape; in pain is spirit; in the forms of feeling is the alienation of feeling, agonized as the noise of what goes unslaked, unappeased, finally, unrepressed and not deniable. Nor is the beauty of formfeeling incised, detained, inflected, or deterred; it drains no material swamp, has knowledge of no material degradability, burbles beyond the bloodbath imperturbably certifying the certainty, denying the torrent of certainties ingushing, outploding—the multifrazzling contrapulses of the ineluctable, rejected finally ultimately overwhelmingly not ever

ADVERTISEMENT:

music/consciousness/gender

This event desires to create a space inviting shared contemplation of such person-centered matters as the ontologies of expressive experiences, of episodes of consciousness transformation, and of the evolving introconstruction of gender identity, as refracted through the lenses of music-perceptual and music-expressive phenomena, and in particular in the perspective of one person's insular cognitive history. The idea—for purposes of 'sharing'—is to expose a diversity of materials, both 'discursive' and 'expressive', which may offer anyone present the opportunity to consider and encounter relevant experiences. What is composed is a conversation among new and previously existent discourses, new and previously existent word- and sound-texts (including new and previously composed music, as well as borrowed episodes from the recorded literature); and a composition of visual imagery. Barring lasthour changes, you can expect to encounter (word-) texts by Gregory Bateson, Suzanne Cusick, Susan McClary, Adrienne Rich, Gilbert Rouget, and sound by John Coltrane, Jimi Hendrix, Gustav Mahler, J.K. Randall and Richard Wagner, as well as by me and several creative collaborators. And although my voice is the only one heard 'live', other voices (Elaine Barkin, Noel Bush, Penelope Hyde, Mary Lee Roberts, Gavin Russom) are acoustically present too (computer sound-processing resources were indispensible to the formulation of this event).

Benjamin Boretz, 12.94
First Performance: 7 April 1995
Princeton University

To the Reader: A Request

The following pages contain a guide to a multi-media event. This guide identifies the (sonic) contents of an actual performance as well as offering what might be called a "libretto" for such a performance — in which some verbal passages are spoken alone (as indicated) while others are the verbal surfaces of fused text-music episodes. There is also a video: a succession of faces interleaved with stretches of black. The reader is entreated to perceive the text as suggesting, rather than realizing, the events it inhabits.*

*a fully realized performance is recorded on Open Space Video (DVD) 1; a cd for use in live performance is also available.

music/

/consciousness/

/gender

texts, musics, textsoundmusics, images

a score

for

live speaker and prerecorded speakers,
musics and images on audio and videotape

Benjamin Boretz
august/december 1994; february/april 1995

time: 00:00
speaker:

a text

This text consists of prerecorded sound, live sound, and prerecorded video images. The voices you hear on audio tape are reading texts of mine which they chose as meaningful to them, although I of course decided which of their readings to use, and how. What you hear in my voice, live, is a text composed for this occasion, including verbal patches of diverse characters.

The voices on tape are Elaine Barkin, Noel Bush, Penelope Hyde, Mary Lee Roberts, Gavin Russom, and me. The music, some of it new, some of it old, some of it invasively recontextualized, is, in various senses, by Jill Borner, John Coltrane, Jimi Hendrix, Gustav Mahler, J.K. Randall, Mary Lee Roberts, Richard Wagner, and me.

The video behind me was realized (in collaboration with Noel Bush) from a relentlessly inflexible scenario.

The performance lasts approximately one hour and twenty minutes.

music/

/consciousness/

/gender

We could say:

we are going to be thinking about music consciousness as gender consciousness.

We could say:

we are going to be thinking about gender consciousness from the perspective of music consciousness, of, that is, someone in particular's music consciousness.

And thus also to think about consciousness, and of the languages of experience and of its metalanguages as well.

gender:

We start as female and male,
but where do we go from there?

Here is the feminist music critic Suzanne Cusick:

". . .each of us speaks for sure only for herself, each of us from a unique situation born of multiple identities layered each on the other . . ."

In what follows I will be speaking as if I were speaking of gender, yet not for the most part thinking of gendering as a binary distinction of female and male — primarily because those are not — in me — the intuitions of gender I most vividly experience in music, but also because — perhaps as a crucial consequence of my musical experience — they are not my principal working gender-intuitions in life.

But if you decide that what I'm engaging here is not really gender at all, but something else for which I'm using its name, I defer to that decision without hurt or rancor, though I offer to you the sincere assertion that that of which I speak — whatever it is, really — is inscribed intuitively for me in the universe of gender as much as other (overlapping) qualities appear to be inscribed in the discourses

of power,
of terror,
of striving,
of yearning, . . .

consciousness:

What I call consciousness is perhaps better called the totality of mind, insofar as it not only includes the kind of consciousness which Gregory Bateson describes as "[talking] about things and persons, and [attaching] predicates to the specific things and persons which have been mentioned", but also what he (using conventional Freudian psychoterminology) calls "primary process":

here is Bateson:

"These algorithms of the heart, or, as they say, of the unconscious, are, however, coded and organized in a manner totally different from the algorithms of language. And since a great deal of conscious thought is structured in terms of the logics of language, the algorithms of the unconscious are doubly inaccessible. It is not only that the conscious mind has poor access to this material, but also the fact that when such access is achieved, e.g., in dreams, art, poetry, religion, intoxication, and the like, there is still a formidable problem of translation."

music:

There is a species of imaginative phenomena which consists of the imaginative creation and experiencing of entities and events whose identity consists of having their being by virtue of having been created by being imagined.

The natural state of music is dissolving episodes — only by a bizarre act of arbitrary hypostatization is it reified as monumental artifacts with persistent and verifiable entityhood — the musical 'work' is an essential fiction of materialist culture which requires object-permanence and measurable quantitative substance for the assignment of value since the paradigm of all value is material value.

'Music' and 'the work of music' are far from co-referential; in some plausible perspective they might even be regarded as antonyms.

music and consciousness:

Music —
in one way of hearing it, the way which might be called
'hearing it' —
engulfs you; you're within it and it's within you — no
outer, no inner —
the variable shapes in (n) dimensions are happening *to*
you not *being observed by* you.

Music —
in one way of knowing it, the way which might be called
'knowing it' —
is a transaction where we find our internal reality
resonating externally at us and we re-experience it from
the outside in with reality-transformative effect —
as the sense of the inner is re-created by being made
outer and reprocessed so.

imagine that music touches gender externally and internally, that the qualities arising in those touchings may be best cognized if they speak their own discourse, not they are projected onto the grid of predetermined gender-characteristic possibilities.

In discourse that occupies itself with the gender properties of music, it seems always to be supposed that music enacts gender-role behavior, configuring it as action/interaction, as visible behaviors, mimicking the trajectories of exterior sense and act, rather than inscribing the inner trajectory and character of gender ontology, the definitional experience of interior gender, self-awareness, the inscription of gender identity apart from the enactment of gender assertions and behavioral interfaces.

We could say:

that the aspect of musical meaning
which can be successfully paraphrased
is marginal;

that the aspect of consciousness
which can be logicized
is fractional;

that the aspect of gender
which can be successfully named
is trivial.

time: 09:46
GenderMusic for computer (BAB, 11/94)
(source voices: Mary Lee Roberts and BAB)

incorporates:

time: 14:08
Kivapiece (BAB, 5/91)
playing: Mary Lee Roberts; reading: BAB (12/91):

Score for a Kivapiece
For And Of John Silber

To have located the bandwidth of here
with only the feedback of reverberation
signifying
elapsing presence
in everexpansive unfillable darkhollow;
To be losing the bandwidth progressively
in evacuant unaccumulate undersound;
To circumsense an inner tissue of subface
soundtasted not feeltouched or lickshaped
in deep fall still unreverberant spread amorphic;
To undo here to uncohere now, to go moreunder
to depth no density
—allow: not do
(fractally dissipate):
no containment no return
undersound in freefall
weightless volume;
anechoic volumeless weight
wherenow
submerge
below what
to hold:
wait.

time: 20:07
Lament for Sarah (solo piano improvisation)
playing: BAB, 4/90

incorporates:

time: 24:20
not for kg (BAB, 3/93)
reading: Penelope Hyde

not for kg

"A noun is a placeholder for an adjective" (JKR):

EXPLAINS HOW 'IS'

EQUALS 'EQUALS':

DISSOLVES 'IDENTITY' INTO 'PRESENCE'.

DISALLOWS (OR ONLY ALLOWS) PRESENCE WITHOUT REFERENCE.

(Keeps no records.)

dissolves a song into an absence.

[song that was, is it still song that was?]

NEVER WAS. EVER IS. HERESPACENOW. NEW.

something gone.

(aftersound.) then only has presence. is not present. the sense of anything belongs to anything but not to it.

listen: what you hear is absence.

dissolves presence

as absence.

SAYS.

IS.

EQUALS.

IS NOT.

GONE:

(THE SONG.)

time: 27:56

Speaker (with tapesound):

As music enters me, it touches me in places of gender. touches. probes. opens. explores. sculpts within. suffuses: Present-being, other-being, new-being. genderful. degendered. new-gendered. dimensions of genderbeing in no form of binariness. whole-body sensing genderself, becoming unigendered, polygendered, neogendered, the who am I an everchanging identity of selfgender. As music enters me, as I enter music, we are both — music and I, both, entering one another — together transforming receiving penetrating gendershaping. Or are we ungendered mutually, gendershorn, fused and purified to become the Sacred One, within, us together as one, gendered or not or unnameably in the material language of gender-name-rituals of ritual-gender-naming? Together opened, filled, to the brink of not-other-being, this music, this I, in our own undefinable interprocessing (is it gendering?), are we not discovering un-beknown illinguistic multiunitary gender-identities, within each other, within ourselves? To be moved, by music, or with, transported ontologically, inhabiting a new-perceived world, resonating a new-composed music, being thereby a new-created new-being, of unsignifiable but saturately selfspecific gender: Was I male, within myself? Was I female, within myself? Was I person? Am I still? Have I been some resonance, some inflection, some reinvented creature alchemized out of the base matters of male and female? (Yes, if I remember correctly, . . .)

As my music enters you, it seeks to touch you in the place of gender, in the place where transmission of meaning is fused with the creation of presence. . .

As my music emerges from me to you, it seeks to find you in the place where conversation may transform, where my voice speaks within your ear, where my speaking is a listening from within you to become presence within you; the possessing sense I have of 'expressing myself' is just a sense of possibility, the touchable possibility of co-inhabiting that which is reality to me, with you together and with you within it, from which we both might carry in ourselves a resonance of my ontology as it came to belong to us both, might indulge the ontological fantasy that, by virtue of my voice having been received empathetic within you, and having been emitted empathetic of you, we are not altogether ineluctably alone.

time: 33:56
from: *If I am a musical thinker. . .*(BAB, 3/81)
reading: Elaine Barkin

Listening is the primal expressive act;
listening is primal composition;
the music we hear, the sound we hear,
moves us to the core not because of the
external things and persons it expresses, but
exactly insofar as it expresses **us**, ourselves,
the listeners.
To listen tangibly is to be mobilized, as a total
consciousness, to be present to an occasion of
sound experience.

Listening is primal composition

time: 35:50

Wagner: *Parsifal*: Prelude, Act III: Hans Knappertsbusch,
Bayreuth Festival, 1956

text: BAB, 2/91
reading: Noel Bush

what does it mean, Wagner's ACT III PARSIFAL PRELUDE beginning with spindly stringlines in fakecanonic pseudoserialist mode spreading out bighollow widespace with thinedged boundwalls, & only a shadowy soundtrickle exhaling within—what does it mean after we've had hefty robustulous Ab-major muscularpushy what passes for Spiritual I mean Geistlich in fatVaterland in marbleized sculpturated puffblocks instead of musicgoing onflows under the guise of a metaPrelude for the Act I Grailhouse sceneset, and some scrabbly agitprop scuddery blackmouthing but b-minoranchored spookedoutsetup in front of Klingsor's hangout for an Act II intro, that we not get nothing now but uninterpretable weirdchords, not even coming on like chords at all, but just oddly angled lines oddly slithering at wayoff distances from each other, oddly polyphonizing some increasingly ominous nowhere sound—every sustained sound a question not an answer—what does it mean to draw deeper into a self-multidimensionalizing weavery of snakeslithery slithers, slithering on no ground and with no snakes but leading on, sliding into further denseentangled nevertouching unmaterial multidimensioned slimy ooze with no slime no ooze—what does it mean to assert something almost definitely and with many voices speaking as one but each entirely contradicting or unimaginably disoriented in relation to each other, many speaking all right but speaking as none, speaking nothing but making the sound of speaking energy but no resonance or vibration of energy, shaping out meaningful movement but creating no translation in space, no wake, no shadow, no accumulation or even the stasis of still being, just sound dematerialized, desonating, evaporating palpably and in tangible shaping purpose and meaning and declaration and life and energy and interplay and question with no tangible substance of any of those things accumulating a residue of anxiety pure and simple, soulsickness as the Thing tangible, rising up to the almost lucid shape of what the question would have been were it possible any longer for there to be a question, shaping the Glorious Answer which might have been the Answer to the Question had it been possible any longer for there to be a Question, shaping glorious celestial Substance (Remember? No.) as the image of energy which would be struggling to release its power were it still possible (was it ever?) for there to be really any energy any substance rising in shape alone to the glorious Answer of answers at the moment of the universal dissolution of all Substance, anxiety ultimized in the moment of

ultimate depression, emptiness ultimized in the ultimate chaos of inchoate density ultimate substanceless denselessness, great masses in utterly impactless massive multiple collision without impression, an impenetrable morass of no qualities, accumulated out of an agglomeration of no substance deleting itself, dedimensionalizing in strident whimpering declamatory collapse, the what does it mean now to have not been anything anytime anywhere but to be a sense of that still shaping the Question, still dimensionalizing the insubstance of the nonissue in edges that have no cut, in plausibilities that have no subjects, shaping the subsiding of action from the height of nonaction, imaging the ebbing of energies from the height of enervation, dissonating a complexity originating out of a space devoid of even a scratch of simple, dissonancing in a world never ever inhabited by consonant, despair deleted of substance in the voidance of any trace or memory or even shadow of the even the very concept of hope, the residue of what does it mean in the arrival at absolute Nowhere, the sound which dislocates the whole world of sound, the resonance which dissolves the whole ontology of resonance, the definition which is the infinite regress and death of all identity, what does it mean is the sense in which we end by going on from there, in the voice of Gurnemanz shaping a lifeless simulacrum of someone saying something . . .

time: 40:59
Speaker:

Here is Susan McClary, speaking of Beethoven:

". . .the point of recapitulation in the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony unleashes one of the most horrifyingly violent episodes in the history of music. The problem Beethoven has constructed for this movement is that it seems to begin before the subject of the symphony has managed to achieve its identity: we witness the emergence of the initial theme and its key out of a womblike void, and we hear it collapse back twice more into that void. It is only by virtue of that subject's constant violent self-assertion that the void can be kept at bay: cadence in the context of this movement spells instant death — or at least loss of subjective identity. Yet the narrative paradigm the movement follows demands the eventual return to the beginning for the recapitulation.

". . .for the subject of the Ninth, to return to the beginning is to actually regress to a point further back than its own conscious beginnings; it is to be dissolved back into the undifferentiated state from which it originally emerged. And if its hard-won identity means anything, the subject cannot accept such dissolution. . .It is the juxtaposition of desire and unspeakable violence in this moment that creates its unparalleled fusion of murderous rage and yet a kind of pleasure in its fulfillment of formal demands."

And here is Adrienne Rich, on the same subject:

A man in terror of impotence
or infertility, not knowing the difference
a man trying to tell something
howling from the climacteric
music of the entirely
isolated soul
yelling at Joy from the tunnel of the ego
music without the ghost
of another person in it, music
trying to tell something the man
does not want out, would keep if he could
gagged and bound and flogged with chords of Joy
where everything is silence and the
beating of a bloody fist upon
a splintered table.

As gender is a way of organizing the world, so, too, can music be heard that way.

If gender is also a way of experiencing being, one's own and others:

are the two ways divergent?

are they exclusive?

are they two disjunct ways?

Psychically, where is gender located?

In what experience, in what coloration of experience, in what quality of experience?

Is it strictly or simply the quality of sexuality, its attendant energies, and all that emerges from and clusters around that?

But, since we think we can distinguish our sexuality from our gender-identity, as interdependent and convergent rather than as identical, can we not converge the location of gender with that of psychic identity itself?

Is there a place of gender which is other than the place of identity, a place of identity other than the place of gender?

Discursively, then, perhaps we can speak of gender as an 'aspect' rather than as a 'component' of identity, a particular angle of refraction from which to contemplate and experience identity, rather than a detachable fragment or a different coloration of personhood.

Expression: is it 'sexual'?

I would say, no, expression is not 'sexual', except where it is explicitly received as metaphor, symbol, or signifier;

Otherwise, I would say, expression is not 'sexual', I would say it is *sex,* just not sex of any definable variety, but sex, nevertheless, of utterly knowable sensation. Sex that maybe we can look straight on at, not need to avert our gaze from, because sex that is literal yet inexplicit, specific and intense yet without exterior reference to make it confrontational, sex fully absorbing within yet unsignified without, interpersonal yet unsocial, medically safe, socially covered, but maybe risky in obscure ways not yet identified in the sociotheoretical literature.

time: 46:47
("...such words as it were vain to close...") (J. K. Randall, 1977)
solo piano: J. K. Randall

time: 47:24
Speaker with tapesound:

As your music enters me, as you play it for me , or as I play it for myself, and as I open within myself to receive it, and as I open within it for it to receive me, I navigate to find the posture of interface, to sample by twisting and bending my angle of reception, playing or listening, the distinct poignancies of each convergent resonance, to find myself somewhere encoded within, possessed or exorcised, loved or derided, acknowledged or denied, understood or disregarded, saved or doomed, caressed or abused, tremulous in desire and fear, intensely wound between terror of dissolution and glow of exaltation, not just straining to hear if there is to read to anticipate what it is a message for me encoded there, but needing it wanting to know it to be it to be what it means. . .

time:48:59
Speaker:

Here is Suzanne Cusick:

"Music, an art which self-evidently does not exist until bodies make it and/or receive it, is thought about as if it were a mind-mind game. . . We end by ignoring the fact that these practices of the mind are nonpractices without the bodily practices they call for — about which it has become unthinkable to think. . . .

". . . Metaphorically, when music theorists and musicologists ignore the bodies whose performance acts constitute the thing called music, we ignore the feminine. We erase her from us, even at the price of metaphorically silencing the music.
"...Let me give an example that is not explicitly feminist, a passage from the "big" chorale prelude on "Aus tiefer Not" ("Out of the depths I cry to Thee"), in Bach's Clavierübung, Part III . . . This is far and away the most physically challenging moment in the piece. Neither foot can rest long enough to balance the body. For these few terrifying measures (terrifying in the organist's experience), one might as well be floating in mid-air, so confused and constantly shifting is the body's center of gravity. . . ."

And for Gilbert Rouget, writing of music and trance, the 'transcendence' of music is entirely behavioral — he explicitly eschews describing trance experientially — and the 'transformation of consciousness' he allows to it is entirely tied to overt bodily enactments.

Here is Rouget:

"Music is in essence movement. . . .Even in its most immaterial aspect — sound totally isolated from its source — music is perceived as movement being realized in space. . .To dance is to describe music in space, and the inscription is realized by means of a constant modification of the relations between the various parts of the body. The dancer's awareness of his body is totally transformed by this process...[In this way] music does appear capable of profoundly modifying the relation of the self with itself, or, in other words, the structure of consciousness."

So the body is musicalized; but also music is corporealized — its ontology is objectified as one's own identity or as the situation obtaining between one's self and it, or its identity; such an objectification is like an extralinguistic reconfiguring of the expressive event, a turning it over in your mind and body — re-living and re-doing pieces of it — not only experiencing what you are doing, but also doing what you are experiencing.

'Body language' — but in an internal feedback system rather than exclusively expressive without — 'knowing' is a mode of activity, namely, of 'body language' (a 'movement' of the psyche) internal to the corporeal ecosystem.

Think of all the effectual and determinate conditions for the identity of an event which are 'present' in a given transaction without being spatiotemporally palpable in the literal physical/social facts of that situation; such conditions may be regarded as symbolic, but they are certainly cybernetic.

The body, yes: but what <u>is</u> the body? Is "is" an equivocation on physicality — is it not an explicit re-fusion of the retro-divided psycho-carcass dualism? We find the body only by extrapolating it from perception, from perceptual experience — namely, from 'mind' — we find the mind only by extracting it — abstracting it, really — from the sensations of being a body. It's not a question of how we know, but of what we know.

In that undivided and continuously transforming world, the logical model of interior experience is describable as a 'unary arithmetic' — all ones, no relations, no operations, i.e., all content, no form. . .just ontological quanta in an everchanging world in which transformation is merely the (temporally or in some other mode of ordination) next 'determinate feel' state-of-being (=awareness-state); and relationships are an ontological entification having the character of retrieved entities re-entified as n-thing things (multiplicity happening within the unary space as the character of the current — experientially the <u>only</u> — 'one'). Of course, a memory is a 'one' also, as is the entire network of retrieved (hence, retrievable) phenomenal traces — every 'one' is thus in some particular shape — dim or distinct, foreground or vanishing point background, wide- or narrow-angle-y hierarchized — in every 'next' 'one'.

time: 54:51
John Coltrane (*Expression*)/Jimi Hendrix (*Purple Haze*):
fragments recontextualized (BAB, 12/94)
Speaker with tapesound:

— you want gynophobia, and you want it from Ludwig van Beethoven no less? OK, but pretty wimpy 'n' chaste if you ask me — how about this music for hardball standup studstrutting? Isn't gynophobia the real hardcore of its violent inexpressivity, its virulent hyperkinesis?

— , says: you can't enter me nohow, noplace, impenetrable energetic wall, — genderneutral?

— , and say, fuck symbolism, fuck fake phallic punking stage imagery, smoke, hey it's just smoke, and electricguitar in a Papageno suit's no clincher neither — cheap thrills, say, pay no mind — check out the real stonewall number's being done on you, blueswise, jazzwise, yeah, even rockwise — how's that music the music of those lyrics, anyhow? Sadeyed or devilcrotched, the pasteon frontzippered dustjacket's a scam cover for the real number nine hollow nowhereperson rattling within — totally gendernull. (Rock: the blandest harmonic/melodic configurations at the most ferocious volume: crazy, but expressionless, and utterly asexual, right?)

So what is that expression?:

:

— The sexuality of the oppressed. — no, the sexuality image through which the image of oppression is embodied.

— Is the image of thrashing suffocated furious nonpresence (jazz) or malpresence (blues) or dyspresence (rock).

(Deconstructed till fuckinmothernaked.)

Today! Now! Think of Beavis! Think of Butthead! (Is 'think' the right word?)

Maybe not, but think too of the pitiless transparencies of Joni Mitchell, the cooler Coltrane named Alice, the sacrificial confidings of Janis Joplin, the devastating lucidities of Laurie Anderson, the bedrocking homefacts of Tracy Chapman, the demystified athleticisms of Meredith Monk, . . .

time: 57:41
don't be so polite. . . (Jill Borner & BAB, 2/82)
(from: INTER/PLAY 26B)
Speaker with tapesound:

As our music enters me, as our music enters you, as it inscribes us within our space, as it entwines us together within itself, as it enfolds itself within us together, as we inscribe ourselves within our music, within each other, together within it, it within us together, interpenetrates each of us by the other by it; involutes each of us within the other within it; replaces each of us both with itself . . .

or, brutally estranges, walls our space between us: you as mega-you, pervasive-you, as ur-you, I as invisible-I, inchoate-I, mute-I, stifled-I, infinitesimal-I, or you, blindingly unimaginable Other, and I, intensely distinct Other-Other, or most ambiguously, you, verging on, blurring, the I/Other boundary, I, passing within, transgressing, dissolving, renegotiating the both-, the I-, the Other-spaces, . . .

time: 59:31
"TEXT OF A WITNESSING" (BAB, 9/88)
reading: Gavin Russom

TEXT OF A WITNESSING

A SUBJECT

TO BE TAKEN UNDER DISCUSSION

BY THESE TWO

ONE OF THEM TRYING TO REMEMBER THE NAME OF THE SUBJECT

ONE OF THEM TRYING TO FIND THE RIGHT DECOR AND ARRANGEMENT OF FURNITURE IN THE ROOM TO MAKE IT A SUITABLE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO PURSUE A DISCUSSION OF THE SUBJECT

UNTIL SUDDENLY THE SUBJECT IS KNOWN:

EMPTINESS

YOU TOUCH THE OUTER RIM TO GROPE A SENSE OF WHERE ITS BOUNDARIES ARE.

IN A PROFOUND HUSH, OF TRAUMA OR IS IT WONDER,

ASSESS THE DAMAGE, OR

THE POTENTIAL FOR DAMAGE,

OR FOR THE ABSENCE THEREOF

STEP INTO CENTER,

(AN UNCANNY SENSATION OF
UNINTERPRETABLE NATURE
TERMINATES THIS VENTURE IN
A STOP RATHER THAN A RECOIL.)

UNDONE? OR ALL DONE? OR ARE THEY NOT DISCERNIBLY DIFFERENT?

WE CAN BE TOGETHER

ONLY

UNTIL SOUND DOES US PART

ONLY

WITHOUT SOUND, TOGETHER

SOUND PARTS

WE BOND ONLY IN UNSOUND

UNTIL SOUND ABSORBS THE UNSOUND

AND RATHER THAN PARTING ONLY,

CONTAINS —

BUT ONE CANNOT ENDURE CONTAINMENT WITHIN POSITIVE SPACE,

PARTING-SOUND SOUNDS, PARTING THE TWO

NOW IN SEPARATED SILENCE

(SAFE. BUT WHAT WAS THE SUBJECT?
AND WAS IT TO BE DISCUSSED?
AND WHY WAS A DISCUSSION SUPPOSED TO TAKE PLACE?
AND WAS IT A DISCUSSION WHICH WAS SUPPOSED TO TAKE PLACE?

OR ANYTHING?)

OR WAS THE POINT JUST TO BE, INSIDE A GLOBULE OF UNSOUND
HOLLOWED OUT OF WHAT SOUND THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN,
AN UNSOUND CAVE — BEING IS NOT NEUTRAL IN THIS PARTICULAR AROMATIC
INCAVATED IN TWO COEXISTING AFTERSOUND SILENCES,

FROM WITHIN WHICH THE DISCUSSION

BEGINS FROM A POINT SOMEWHAT PRIOR TO THE POINT WHERE IT
BEGAN BEFORE WHEN TRYING TO FIND A PLACE FROM WHICH TO
BEGIN, FOR NOW IT KNOWS THAT

EMPTINESS

IS A SUBJECT

BUT NOT

A

DISCUSSION

OR EVEN

A

COINHABITABLE

UNDISCUSSION

(ARE SIGNS OF LIFE SO INELUCTABLY EVIDENCES OF MORTALITY
AS TO BE ELECTRIC FRIGHT — STOP, DON'T EVEN JUMP BACK,
FREEZE DEAD THEN MAYBE SURVIVE

AND NOWHERE, WE'RE GOING TO BE OK

AFTER ALL

time: 62:56
Mahler: Symphony 5, Adagietto (IV);
Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Claudio Abbado

time: 64:43
from: "Dialogue" (BAB, 11/90)
reading: Elaine Barkin

time: 67:10
from: "The Inner Studio" (BAB, 4/90)
reading: Elaine Barkin

Transcendence, then, is not at all restricted to ecstasy, devouring passion, undifferentiated oneness with the universe, all-suffusing peacefulness, blinding sensation — Precise, vivid, specific, as experiential quality, the *total* replacement of the state of normal consciousness with a distinct state.

It seems that it is our primal nature to be suspended, permanently for life, between powerful but irreconcilable contradictories. Primally, our pendulum of innerness swings between the extremes of each of our bi-polarities. From which issues violence, our innate violence. Following René Girard, I would say that violence is ritualized, made symbolic, to regiment society, enabling a human collective to form, evolving a culture. But at the personal level, in a post-physical-survival world, collectivized culture, symbolic ritualization, itself becomes a problematic, not a resource. In such a cultural environment, creativity, understood simply as such, individuates the process of ritualizing violence. Creativity is, for us, at present, the most powerful tool we have to use in striving to harmonize being among our contradictories. Though futility seems to be ultimately our fate — existence is, evidently, a deficit operation — we still have to deal with being alive: it is, precisely, what it is we have, to deal with. . .

time: 70:24
Speaker with tapesound:

As this music enters this room, it unwraps the covers of the soft psychic underbelly of us within its space, revealing, and engaging, and enacting, things we dare not know by name: . . . we, together, conspire to undergo the secret thrill of the revelation and the engagement and the enacting, allowing ourselves to enact within, conspire to collude in keeping the secret which unrevealed spares us the shame of exposure, yet intensely trembles within at the yielding to the touch and the immersion within, this music which sustains with almost unbearable tension the velvet cover without and the bloody sordid mess within, predaciously toying with and unctiously sensuously beautifully pimping to our unacknowledgable prurience, our fantasies of the unacceptable, probing into the soft rotten fruit of my, and your, hidden degeneracy, viciously pitilessly exposing itself to us, so insidiously cannibalistic, engorging us in its limitless narcissism in its own Self, into which we, seduced in this diabolical devouring masquerading as the profession of ultimate intimacy (what? here, in this crowded lighted public space?), we, emotionally, ontologically, are being, are, appropriated, depleted, eaten, evacuated, enervated, . . ***had. . .***

time: 75:07

from: "Some Things I've Been Noticing, Some Things I've Been Doing, Some Things I Need To Think Some More About" (BAB, 5/91)

reading: Elaine Barkin

I have my house, I have my sound, I have my ontology; not as preconceptions, but as after-facts of evolving consciousness. Working out the world — not in the image of my person, but in the image of my perceived ontology — the world as I experience it as real, that I make by so perceiving it, that I make further by retrieving, articulating, and processing my perceptual experience of it. If my ontology feels non-identical with that projected by the articulations coming at me from others (yes of course as I perceive and experience them), if their houses speak a slightly foreign house-language to me, if their sounds coming at me put together an alien sensibility, then my ontological imagery is forced inward, onto the surface of consciousness, becomes my oppressively self-conscious inner identity, my burden of alienation, vivid in me but invisible, intangible, inaudible in the external world I inhabit. The expressive pressure to relieve such ontological *angst* drives me to make my own house, fulfilling inside and out my need to materialize my own sense of reality, my sanity. I make my own sound, make my own sensory-linguistic articulation of what I perceive, what I think, what, simply, is the identity of what, for me, there is.

endtime: 79:00

[Reader's Report to The Graduate School of Princeton University concerning the essay 76 Photographs: A Music *and the videotape composition* Opus 1989: New Jersey, *which together constitute Wiska Radkiewicz's Ph.D. thesis.]*

Sirs:

. . . . . "it is music isn't it?" {WR: Essay, p. 12}: a question partly rhetorical, partly wiseassed, not all that controversial for some, and above all an invitation; an invitation to conceive—
—an invitation to conceive an enterprise whose inceptions, wherever, will acquire, and enlist, feedback, from whomever
—inceptions and feedback which will nurture an emerging univocal, audiovisual work {WR: Videotape}
—a work which will loop, in its turn, with an emerging multivoiced essay about its genesis and its tested or putative destinies
—a work which is neither movie with musical soundtrack, nor tone poem with visual guideposts; but rather, a composition in which the rhythms and tensions of temporal evolution put visual and aural potently on the same footing: to wit, a "musical" footing
—a work whose appeal to ear and eye is thus, while contrapuntal, nevertheless (or hence), in a special sense, unitary: and so requires of our musical sensibilities their utmost, if precedented, aggrandizements.
(Question: Is the standing, as music, of a scripted tone poem any less problematical? Or is it more so? Does Wiska's withdrawal of visuals from their diverse real-life or "narrative" contexts, for

deployment in contexts of themselves and independent, similarly withdrawn "aurals", not place her composition closer to pure music (:—pure music—: let's say, aurals perceived chiefly in relation to one another), than to music impurified by innuendoes of marching, dancing, death, passion?, or by our extramusically inflected sense of what's musically shapely or musically consequential? (: Fall these chips where they may,)) Wiska's essay cuts its knowing path not toward an encompassing thesis, but toward ever more precise illumination of knotty particulars; specifically, the distinct knotty clusters of memory, perception, fantasy, and intent which animate the distinct phases and persons of an artistic transaction. And with its so stringently averted gaze, it surely implies that generalization could eviscerate and compress, where richness and profusion are the point; or enforce uniformity of spin, where multiplicity is the point; or both; and in any case could appreciably subvert the nonauthoritarian (I'd be willing to say anti-authoritarian) social and ethical bearing of the entire enterprise. And so its stunning "Last Chapter", instead of propounding, gathers the threads of phase and person (around images from the videotape; but now solely in the pared, opulently probing English voice of its French Polish author) remarkably together, into what I must outreach myself to describe: —as, at once, a hyperanalytical synthesis, and a basking meditation.

Publication of this engrossing, unique thesis by some house which can distribute book and videotape together is strongly recommended.

JKRandall, 2/97

endpaper: *for an anthology of texts by Elaine Barkin*[*]

e: a reading
benjamin boretz

Texts speaking about not so much as speaking to... for... of..... someone; sometimes, anyone; sometimes, oneself. Not what's written about but who written by, who written to, who written for, who written of. Not so much where it's coming from as who's coming from there. Wanting above all, above all in some acute particularity, to be known not renowned but in the sense of you know someone rather than you know who someone is. Nor so much the views held as by whom and why and with what meaning for giving and getting access to knowing and being known. Idiolectics are to identify, color the talk person-particular not so much to sharpen as to intropersonalize a point. (Yiddishisms don't much clarify: but they do much shmooze.) To identify with: celebrate, probe, provoke, invite, color, inflect, engage: relatedness. not so much reflection as action: texts which aspire for you to dance with them (though something sharp might nip you it's still always a mode of intimacy). Intimacy: is the pervading model of mind-mind exchange, the paradigm of engaged energy, creative-discursive passion. Love is the interlocutory ethos. Also to identify as: you are perceived as being by what you are perceived as caring about; your person-identity your composing-yourself self are the output of its assertion. Speaking about and speaking views about are located there, here. An (existential) odyssey not a (disciplinary) essay: her own private revolution, her radical enactment of self-liberation in her own name, to her own account, on her own terms, in the space of the face of whatever social Establishment it was she was nominally obligated to for having, nominally, produced her.

Read (One): free play in composing discourse modes releases her from that self-effacement intrinsic to conventional discourse rhetoric. Liberates the materialization of all sorts of text-things, free of the strange illusion that there's an Idea (or a Meaning) behind. So it's not some professor or other, but Elaine herself, in person, challenging Charles Rosen's discourse hygiene with teasing Lewis Carroll one-liners. (Charles could have found it kind

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[*] *e: an anthology*. Open Space Publications, 1997.

of an interesting scolding if he wasn't too tweaked by its sauciness.) Whether or not it makes the text more fun, it does make it imaginable that such a text might be an occasion for fun (why go deeper, is it clear there is someplace deeper to go?). The White Knight's "new way of getting over a gate" coming as the punch line of her summing up of the book's analytic-systematic contortions is notably hilarious; and gentle, because it leaves no doubt that it's at play rather than at war (more a Godard irony than a Buñuel cruelty). And the three-way conversation (the two Charleses and Elaine), where everyone gets a lot of ink space (even if it's all under her control) lets you do your own reading: the quotes from Rosen's Schoenberg book on 'dissonance' give (for my reading) a vivid portrait of a writer (Charles R.) struggling hard to articulate: to discover something lurking (and evidently— under Elaine's hardassed exposure—remaining buried) in the depths of unarticulated intuition.

Read (Two): probing to evolve modes of description that capture what music really does sound like and what it really does mean to her progressively leads her out from under the coercive logic of reasons. you come face to face with her growing, sometimes gnawing, awareness that things don't happen for reasons, anyway:...maybe they (reasons) intensify (things), make things real for experience, draw things close to you...or, too, maybe, they relieve too much intensity by fencing things around, making loopholes within too-hot spots and exemptions from uncomfortable implications, making safety zones for you to be where threats can be savored without becoming threatening, where unwanted intensities are kept at a distance, where you can get a zing but don't risk getting enveloped. but get past reasons and you have what happens and you can see how when x<y y happens as it happens, is as it is, by virtue of x but not that it 'happens because of' x except in the extra-experiential 'logic of reasons' space—where it gets an excuse for happening but not necessarily a meaningful eventfulness. You get her on collision course with herself asserting truths and consequences about Webern that add up to sense but not to interest and intuiting fictions in no particular way supported by those truths but suggesting some intensely interesting bodylinguistic choreography going on between her and that incoming sound, like how "interiors invert to exteriors" and eventually how it puts you though turning "outside-in and inside-out"—a small metaphor for an interesting possible contortion of the listening organism in receiving these sounds, against the backdrop of a

weirdly perverse composition game (incremental chromatic expansion in complementary temporal directions) which might incavate an astounding proposal about multilinear time experience, but Elaine doesn't let herself fall into that abyss: she just lays out the moves of this game as if it weren't a cosmic contradiction of the law of contradiction itself but just a pretty neat way of composing some music or other.

Read (Three): ideas and stories; maybe of just one listening/thinking episode; certainly of just one person's experience, free therefore in rhetoric and thought from presumption or obligation to universality or arguable definitiveness: experience of experience not authority of authority. makes room for fantasmic psychedelias of musichearing, true enough as report, sharable enough as either story or user's manual, but intense and real mostly as accessing an irretrievable singular moment of music-induced ontological transcendence: "...no particular chord-shape can be easily construed as the basic shape for the entire etude; nor does Debussy indiscriminately stack one sixth upon another sixth....I begin to hear...as if the interval between successive patches were a stretched or contracted, slightly misshapen or distorted "prime": as if the same pitch-letter name appeared for many of these patches, thus conjuring up a sensation, a feel quite distinct from the one in which the shifted (or displaced) interval would be apprehended as a minor or major second..." ... ...some music by Arthur Berger whose behavior she materializes not so much as a sensible assemblage of musical data but as the manifestation of an odd consciousness, not so much telling as experiencing its own stories, the stories of itself, starting over again and again from scratch with new (but maybe not even different) versions of who it was, a sharp take on a quintessentially eccentric time-flow personality.... ...a valentine to Earl Kim and Earl Kim's *Earthlight* that finally permits itself an eruption into the very mode of cold eroticism transfusing metastically over the KimBeckett soundflow and sealed tight in her afterfeel metaprocessing of it. If you need to tell *the* story, swarms of musical data which probably will support for argument's sake any damn story you want to tell are probably key; but *this* story gets told best by drastic focussed reduction to relevant particulars—like, telling a story. (Musical data themselves make a serious comeback in a far superior form as comical but very contentful graphic rescorings of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, though. And maybe the furthest reach of music-evocation strategy is her unuptight imaging of Milton Babbitt's

conversational wordflow and body language in the very body language of her own verbal-language flow, gathering into one capsule a cameo of his music and person as a simultaneity.)

Read (Four): textstyle-mode experimentation merges into, reflects, maybe even creates, awareness and anxiety and speculation and exploration in her intellectual, aesthetic, sonic-cultural, presentation-cultural, colleague-cultural, creative-lifestyle modes. texts here put you through some of these agonies; come up, appropriately, ambivalent. because in all these regions of personal identity and activity, choosing exploratory lifestyle modes has profound consequences: liberation and marginalization are an invariant dyad, and then there's still always the problem that your story still wants, if only secretly, to be everyone's, or at least someone else's, story too, and also there's the even more secret yearning to soak up everyone's (or at least someone's) stories into (as) yours. Elaine notices she's discontent with business as usual, finding the details of compositional and academic life always imagined as paradigmatic suddenly lodging as strange and disturbing, then she metastasizes this into a multifaceted crusade for and against things on a big variety of issues, but always steadfastly insisting on the public advocacy of private experience. with gratifying tact and sophistication she tells a roomful of Yale musicologists and theorists: "My voice is not your voice; your voice is not my voice; yet I remain hopeful that our distinctive voices can speak to and hear and benefit from one another as, presumably, do the voices of our music...." ...personal problems of being a composer become (plausibly) problems of being a woman and a composer/professor hierarchized with intense discomfort in both directions (down as well as up: hence teaching becomes learning, of course, but also collaborating and real-time playing/composing with colleagues and students both). And gender issues, like issues of native-culture identity, cut confusingly different ways: "Is it...OK for some women composers to buy into the 'patriarchal power structured, hierarchical system of domination' on account of they've been denied power in the past, now want a piece of the pie, of the action? Those 'some', those 'Others'? Yet if so many of us—as so many of us do—express dissatisfaction with entrenched, unyielding, and alienating intransigencies, how come more of us haven't come up with alternatives instead of succumbing? Alternative from within as well as from without? Surely we can do it; with all our un-attended-to social problems, Americans are still the *most* able to desist, to resist. What is

regrettable is that many of the discontented, for whom smaller and appreciative communities are their real cup of tea, are afraid *not* to seek and, hence, not to gain the approval of and recognition from institutional officialdom—whose approval they basically (or so they often say) don't respect.....the woman composer in the academy who chooses to discover her own musical ethos may find herself uncomprehended by her male colleagues; yet imagine the far worse fate awaiting those males who have chosen to overturn their 'own' ("phallocentric patriarchal") inheritance! Those of them who have chosen to no longer be in competitive powertrip mode are viewed with incredulity and alarm as are all those of us—female and male—who have sought counter/mainstream/cultural alternatives in the pursuit of private worlds and idiosyncratic languages." You can feel how her anger at Susan McClary (I don't mean her differences of opinion with her) erupts from the loneliness of feeling drastically ontologically alienated from the moral certainties and assumptive allegiances of one who would speak for, even advocate for, Elaine and her women colleagues. Or feeling more sad than angry at finding her hope for spiritual kinship with another, woman, improvisor, third-world culturecrosser, meditative seeker, unfulfilled; but poignant to follow a meditation on her uningratiating experience of the live-active presence of Pauline Oliveros as it leads her to a devastating compassionate self-analysis beginning "on the way to becoming, we try others on..." ("What to do, I wondered as I wandered back downtown, when you've gotten to admire aspects of the work of someone and then discover that you've confused yourself insofar as you've made equivalents of incompatibles"...) Defending and appreciating male colleagues with whom she does feel spiritual affinity (me, say, and Jim Randall) begins to take on a special urgency in the politicized space which is precisely complementary to the energy of her particular, and very woman-particularized appreciation of Virginia Gaburo and her *Notations* book at an earlier moment, of Diamanda Galàs and her *Plague Mass,* at a later one so then all the exuberant freewheeling swashbuckling adventurous optimism that produces such dividends of expanded appreciation of music aesthetically and in detail, unlimited music-creative activity, social-cultural interaction, uninhibited active self-composition, encounters the devastating downside of unredeemable Outsiderhood symbolized (strangely) in the depressive brown-study netherworld of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own,* and expressed (curiously) in the elusive fragmentation of a diary-entry structure subtly distancing its content of nonlinear ruminations and a series of quotes from and

stories about a villagefull of (mostly) women and (a couple of) men: Marianne Kielian-Gilbert, Judy Lochhead, Deborah Stein, Richard Feynman, Octavio Paz, Trinh T. Minh-Ha, Brenda Romero, Muriel Rukeyser, Fred Maus, Judith Butler, Christine Battersley, Suzanne Cusick, Luce Iragaray, Donna Haraway, Alexandra Pierce, Marion Guck, Emily Dickinson, Jim Randall, Frank Swan, Sarah Weiss, Tildy Bayar, and of course Elaine, surfacing and submerging through a revolving stereopticon of subjects and topics all ironically (with a perhaps weary sophistication of purpose) gathered under the rubric of 'feminist music theory': jury duty longueurs, real-world horror statistics of women-abuse, psychic confusions of being a woman in some man'sworld business, origins of the need for deviations in general, survival value of distinguishing, being able to distinguish, difference, struggling with history, Balinese psychotherapy, self-empowerment by withholding knowledge, patterns of gender behavior likened to Japanese theories of sound and silence, the connection of body awareness and openness to fragmentary structures, genitally determined ontological difference, politics of interpersonal expressive communication, public utterance in the register of intimacy, what's significant to persons about music, blurring the boundaries of discourse and artwork, sexism in the California legal system, out-of-control behavior of female Javanese *gender* players, ergonomics of composing-spaces, the potential for bonding rather than competing in artistic/discursive utterance and expression...

Read (Five): a story of one's own: at the meeting in Montreal of the society for which she wrote and read her Virginia Woolf text, someone asked Elaine if she was concerned whether her work was influential, whether it had attracted a following. I said (don't remember if I waited for Elaine to answer) that founding a 'school' was antithetical to the most fundamental nature and spirit of her work; and that that was an outcome well worth what it had taken to get there.

—July 1997

[insert for CD, OPEN SPACE 11]

{for THE FISH}

I suppose this setting of Marianne Moore's poem is, strictly speaking, a song: the score from which I performed (spoke) it features exact rhythm (in simple conventional note-values), dynamics, and pitchcurve (drawn as a continuous line under the rhythm). On the other hand, it also suggests how poets would read, had they an ear for anything, or any sense of time.

{for CLEOPHILA}

I've never trusted the familiar piety, when offered by other composers, however dead, about the poetry being the thing, the music a handmaiden thereto. (My reserve may derive from the dual fact that so much of my favorite vocal music uses languages which with luck I don't understand, and that composers lie.) Unfortunately, handmaidening is not only exactly what I've done in this case, but is also what I've done before. With e.e.cummings and Marianne Moore long ago, as with Sir Philip Sidney now, I proceeded singlemindedly out of longstanding love for a poem which seemed to me to give English a good name, and I tried to make that printed poem, that printed English, that overarching grammar, come forth "out loud" at full value. Particularly commanding to me in Sidney's poem was the snarled rhythm (—check out, for example, "love it is," in line 23—) which he infuses into its obsessively ramifying, monstrous "conceit" through adaptation to English of Greek (quantitative?) meters—a welcome antidote to the countrypianoteacher metricality of English verse not by Hopkins. My "song" is how this poem talks to me. (You may overhear.)

—JKR

INTRODUCTION

for Music Inside Out, *an anthology of texts by John Rahn*

Benjamin Boretz

Many who read this book will know of John Rahn: who he is, perhaps what he's done, perhaps even something about where his work is 'situated'. His activity as a composer-theorist-teacher, inventor of important computer sound-synthesis software, Editor of *Perspectives of New Music* during the 1980s and 90s, author of an exemplary text on atonal theory, are conspicuous in the foreground of the academic music-intellectual world. But it's likely that he will not have been *visible* to you, at least not in the sense in which he becomes visible in this book. What is visible here is a highly individualistic thinker, idiosyncratic in his stubborn rational integrity and scholarly probity co-existing on almost equal terms with anthropophilic generosity and visceral attraction to radically re-constructive visions, restlessly self-enlarging and self-evolving by way of rigorously reasoned and researched experiments in musical ideation. Superficially at least, John Rahn has taken the journey recommended twenty or so years ago by the eminent musicologist Joseph Kerman, from 'analysis' to 'criticism' — but he has pursued both of those practices in ways and forms unrecognizable as the designata of Kerman's polemical provocation. For John's relation to 'analysis' was always conceptually and philosophically inflected; and his practice of 'critical theory' is always analytically and contextually grounded. In both, his work stands in categorical contrast to the unconceptual jargonized technical data-processing which has often been offered as 'analysis' (or, indeed, as 'theory'), and to the unsupported jargonized ideological positing which more recently has been offered as 'critical thought' (Godfrey Winham once said, talking about some

contemporary-music history-theory books, "They can *say* these things, but why should anyone *believe* them?").

Only a musician, probably, could harbor the particular amalgam of scholasticism and psychedelia cohabiting vibrantly in John's intellectual soul. Or, only a musician who was chronologically destined to be a child of the Sixties but who was also environmentally produced by a fiercely liberal midwestern American clerical family could combine so much unshakable integrity with so much readiness to leap into perilous uncharted places. The product, too, of a high-profile liberal and music-compositional education (at Pomona College — significantly, on the West Coast), a conservatory instrumental training (as a bassoonist, at Juilliard, significantly on the other coast), a stretch of time in the army playing in the West Point band — a sequence which produced, by 1970, a classically learned practical composer-performer with an intense interest in theory and philosophy in both a general and a musical sense, and a powerful orientation to the then-current European intellectual avant-garde, in particular Xenakis and Stockhausen and the thinkers of *Die Reihe* — who decided, then, to pursue graduate studies in music at Princeton with, primarily, Milton Babbitt. He arrived at the Princeton music department during a time that everybody who was involved with it still regards, I think, as a rare moment — whatever their final judgment of it. Typically for academe, the critical lessons of the Sixties were only then beginning to be reflected in the department's social and curricular configurations. It was precisely at this time that there converged there a mixture of people and attitudes which conjoined the established radicalism in theory and composition invented and embodied by Milton Babbitt; the radical traditionalism impressively articulated by Edward T. Cone (with Peter Westergaard firmly bilocated in both of those positions); the powerful technological/theoretical radicalism of the brave new world of digital sound synthesis, with Godfrey Winham as its theoretical guru and Jim Randall as its compositional master, and Paul Lansky its emerging postmodernist rebel; the radical relativistic reconstruction of music theory, philosophy and description represented by my *Meta-Variations,* and by the astounding fusion of wildly imaginative rigorous musical visions, totally plugged-in socio-political-cultural alertness, powerful sophisticated literary and locutary virtuosity and intramurally activist energy erupting in this community in the person and exertions of Jim Randall. And John Rahn's fellow graduate students too were a group of people whose interests intersected and spilled over significantly beyond the boundaries of this array of radicalisms.

For John, as for the others, this was not an environment to be a 'product' of, it was an environment there to be produced. And John's own dissertation *Lines (of and about music)* was, regardless of its roots and affinities, not so much an evolution of existing ideas derived from Babbitt, Boretz, Randall, and Westergaard, as it was a leap into an assertive self-repositioning and a revisionary reconstruction of existing formalist music theories, most dramatically in its radical way of imaging and structuring the musical time dimension. Those independent modes of conceptualizing and formalizing are conspicuously in view in this book in the article on Milton Babbitt's *Du* and in "Logic, Set Theory, Music Theory". John's preoccupation with the formalization of time-dimensions is evident in the conceptual-hierarchical parity he assigns to the predicates 'note' and 'rest', 'pitch-adjacency' and 'time-adjacency' in "Logic", for example; and in the quasi-formal discussion of "de-arpeggiation" and "pitch elimination" in "*Du*". Like *Lines,* "Logic" wants to extend formalization to the foreground limits of individual compositions and to the analytic predicates of Schenker-derived 'levels' — in explicit contrast to the purposes and strategies of, say, *Meta-Variations*, and, particularly, as against the purely classificatory data-mapping "set" theories proliferating elsewhere at that time. John's goal was to formalize tonal *structure,* rather than just *syntax*, so as to represent and theorize tonal music as comprehensively as Michael Kassler did his version of "the twelve note-class system". But alongside of this formalist fervor, there is in both the "*Du*" and the "Logic" texts a nascent, evolving awareness of the predestined shortfall of any formalized pitch-time theory in reaching its own music-explanatory aspirations, because of its essential indeterminacy with respect to the experiential ontology of perceived music — at minimum in the Wittgensteinian sense in which the logicized rational reconstruction of cognition actually occupies a cognitive territory incoherent with respect to what it wishes to explicate. And, too, an awareness that the issues those texts so complexly and comprehensively aspire to handle occupy a domain completely inaccessible to the aesthetic and expressive issues and qualities for which music is most immediately compelling to its most avid consumers and practitioners. So the poignant question about what that 'music' is which is being explicated arises monstrously, and John's texts are increasingly responsible to it. ("How do you *Du*..." says "we may find that our very precision entails trading precision for concision"; "Logic" speaks of "the desirability of an attitude of pluralism toward music theories"; but in both cases the context is still pitch-structural properties of the kind addressed in Babbitt-type and Schenker-type theories.)

"Aspects of Musical Explanation" (1979) may, in particular, be perceived as expressing John's appreciation for the vitalizing opening of new modes of music perceiving and describing revealed by Jim Randall's teaching and writing, especially the path-breaking *Compose Yourself—A Manual for the Young*, as well as texts by others inspired by Jim's example. Characteristically, John invents his own independent metatheory to explicate such phenomena; characteristically, he does so by invoking covering concepts ("top-down/bottom-up"; "analog/digital") which not only create a secure observation point from which to assimilate these otherwise anomalous exertions, but also 'place' and 'regularize' them by bridging them to the world of existing discourse by way of a classificatory ordering strategy, constructing a normalizing complementarity mediating between the two worlds. Ten years later, "New Research Paradigms" pursues a comparable, multiple, purpose: to legitimize admired but marginalized work by bringing it into the professional consensus, thereby also demonstrating the way to restore that consensus after that deviant work seemed to threaten to destabilize it. And, with those reassurances, John was also positioning himself to expand his own work in unexplored directions secure in their defensibility as non-frivolous.

But John's real personal breakout from his metatheoretical confinements, his breakthrough into a theoretical mode in which to interface with the phenomena of sensibility and affect, came by way of a thorough and careful engagement with the works of a constellation of postwar European thinkers: existentialist, phenomenological, structuralist, post-structuralist, converging particularly on the literary/linguistic writing of Julia Kristeva; the psycho-socio-political-expressive constructs of Gilles Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (especially fertile for "Differences" and "Centers; Dissenters"); and the "generative anthropological" discourses of Eric Gans, an American scholar of French literature who has extended the work of the French anthropologist René Girard ("Centers; Dissenters" is largely engaged with their ideas). Post-existentialist psyche-deconstruction, akin to aspects of the work of Maurice Blanchot and Jacques Lacan, infuse the passages in "Repetition" where a formalized-logic language is employed to deconstruct the geography of musical time experience, and those in which an existential psyche-metaphor ("Death") elucidates the field of psychic action by which music produces the illusion of enlivenment, the 'virtual life' into which it draws its receivers.

Ultimately, John Rahn's progression from the construal of music's 'data

structures' to the articulation of its 'experiential structures' leads implicatively to the question of its 'moral' infrastructures, its place in the value systems of the internal and external worlds. "What is Valuable in Art, and Can Music Still Achieve It?" begins this inquiry by a characteristic winnowing out of the appropriate subject matter, devolving into a meditation (in the ambiance of Girard and Gans) on the sacral residue in contemporary art music (viewed in the large through the theater pieces of Philip Glass). "Centers: Dissenters" relocates the sacral action in the suprapersonal — sociopolitical — domain, exploring in its own way territory opened by Jacques Attali's *Noise;* and engaging the problematics of identity and social power proposed, for one, by Judith Butler. The intriguing moment in this latest of the texts in this book is the suggestion that just as Art is always Dissent, so Dissent is always Art — at least in the realm of the logos, of the meta-expressive or theoretical utterance.

Intriguing especially because it's the last stage of the remarkable evolution which this collection makes visible; it leaves a need to know where it's going from here. But it seems that John's 'advanced' thinking since 1994 has largely been formulated in musiclanguage directly, rather than theorized verbally. And that impresses me as not just an interesting life-choice, but rather constitutes in itself a radical developmental assertion, a recognition that the pressure bearing on discourse in the aftermath of the conclusions of "Centers; Dissenters" can only be contained by thought formulated in the non-referential languages of the arts themselves, by, essentially, the radical dissolution of the *autonomous* metalanguage.

This collection also indexes the special luminousness which John Rahn's work radiates in the public world of musical thought. At every stage, with each subject and context and source-text they touch, these writings reanimate a unique seam along the boundaries of discourses, histories, philosophies, ideologies, creative phenomena, positioning themselves observationally, reflectively, propadeutically, interrogatively: finality is never an issue; conclusions are left to be implicit in the fissures within a complex of considerations. What these texts do politically is propagate a cumulative awareness of the depth and gravity which can be accessed through a serious address to subjects such as they examine. That is what is rare in them, why they carry so much weight in their community, to any reader who engages interlocutively with them, without that weight ever bearing down as hegemonic oppression. The power of John's texts remains contained within the texts themselves; they don't emanate any cult-defining generality projecting itself competitively into the professional world. That is an

important part of their special integrity; their containment within the scale of one-personhood reflects John Rahn's particular intellectual and expressive and social personality and capacity, but it is also the most vivid possible signifier of the immediate and permanent value of his work.

Barrytown, New York, November 1998

MUSIC AS ANTI-THEATER

endpaper for an anthology of writings by John Rahn[*]

1. An Article About *Du*

Taking a deep, hard look at the first aggregate of Milton Babbitt's *Du,*[1] John Rahn is finely positioned to activate his special gift for uncovering, exploring, spinning a multidirectional array of subject-threads, each exploding an expansive, revisonary perspective on the textual core. Assaying the initiatory sonic data of *Du,* trying to find a construal of its 'meaning' (leave 'meaning' as a place-holder) by a simple convergence of pitch, pitch-class, timespan facts on the ground heard as instantiations of Babbitt-type theoretical entities, leads John, first, to a speculative polyphony of pitch-structure-defined rhythms (each reading of which is created in each case by a conceptual ontologization of a 'plain fact', extended as a defining frame into subsequent music)—and then, precipitously, into a rigorously critical formal exposition of the grounding concepts and assumptions which this construal takes as given. John recapitulates this narrative odyssey: (John's text:) "An initial plunge—right off the bat—into the initial particulars of *Du,* bravely aiming to talk merely about "the data", found itself pressed (by cumulative possible miscomprehensions of "the data" as so talked-about) toward explication of some very little bits of the theory by which that "data" came into existence (e.g., the "datum" of the "second trichord halfnote"). The interdependence of data (theoretical constructs) and theory, so illustrated, becomes a problem whenever the audience of an exposition of the data might hold different theories and so perceive different data. . . ." A discursive/compositional strategy: to lead a mind-dance through a complexifying skein of data construed in a highly biased way, leaping off into a quick but intricate excursion into a fragment of music-conceptual formalization (defining with cliché-excavating, bromide-problematizing rigor such hitherto inert, unproblematic music-dictionary commonplaces as 'timespan', 'arpeggiation'), working back from the formalism (via a notion of 'elimination') to a problematization (at least within the context of the so-far tendered

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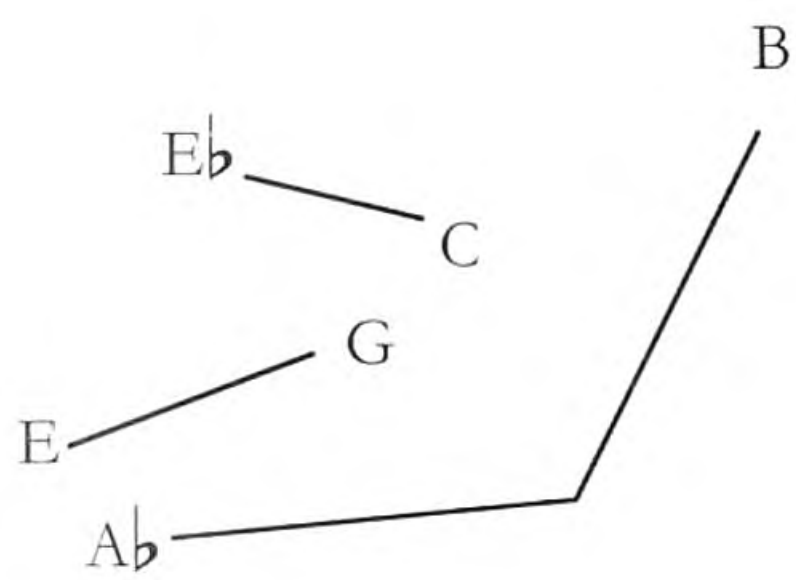
[*] *Music Inside Out: Going Too Far in Musical Essays.* Gordon & Breach, 2000.

[1] "How do you *Du* (By Milton Babbitt)?"

reading of *Du)* of a single note in the piece, and an intense complexification of a familiar predicate: (John's text:) ". . .the tonal operation that *consolidates* pitch-timespans (*de*-arpeggiation) may be workable, *mutatis mutandis,* in a serial theory, but the tonal operation into the background that eliminates pitches while consolidating their timespans (neighbor note) is dependent on a "content-determinate" syntax. How then can the elimination of the A♭ to form "the second trichord half-note" be other than arbitrary?" [Here follows a discussion of the relation between syntactical twelve-tone set order and compositional "partial order", and its formulation as a "rule".] "[On the strength of a later inference of a background pc-ordered set], either the first or the second A♭ must be ignored if the partial pc order is to fulfill the relation. One of the A♭s is "illegal" under this rule."

Having reasoned back from surface tokens to syntactical entities (such as: a 3-pc-partitioned background set), the text regroups to create from that surface a virulent compositional action: the unfolding of a polyphony of 2-pc tunes (03 in shape) enacting an inner-converging complex enclosed by an outer-diverging one:



The reification of this complex opens the way for a discovery of a timespan phraseology analogous to the pitch phraseology. And within the terms of these identified music-active characters, a comprehensive—a multiply comprehensive—close reading of measure 1 of *Du* is articulated (based essentially on the contour of the first three pitch-time sounds). Such comprehensiveness is as threatening of closure as it is gratifying to the appetite for complex coherence: a ferment of incompleteness is wanted, to enable there to be a 'rest of the piece'—rather than, say, a second through *n*th-measure piece attached to a measure-1-length piece. From which the question arises, in the form of a Cartesian introspection on the ontological status of adumbration, of—to read the text 'pro-

actively'—the presence of the energies of the future in the stabilities of the present.

So within John Rahn's piece on Milton Babbitt's piece there ensues a subtle—unacknowledged—shift, in response to the issue of a future implied in a text up to 'now': the shift is—with inexorable logic—from the receptual sense-making perspective to the compositional-speculating one. The sense of pre-diction is not the metaphysical—deterministic—'expectation' in the orbit of, say, Leonard Meyer's writings; it's more like an imagined mind-trip into the head-laboratory of a fermenting compositional process in progress; that is, this text imagines how to arrive at what gets to be there by imagining imaginative compositional thinking of a certain highly charged type. The section of John's article headed **Pitch, voicing** is a model for how a choice might be made, by being perceived (and thus stipulated) as implicated: extending the phraseology from the initial dyad/trichord nest of (03)s in a (015) context to a longer spanned unfolding of 4 (025) (registrally articulated) tunes. And then the text flows into a deeper (if still implicit) evocation of an 'inside-outside' rhythm/pitch event, which in turn (under the sign of **Rhythm**) is mapped as a timespan event created by a flow of pitched sets, which have been reified as meaningful.

2. Drama of Discourse/Theater of Music

John's text creates a drama for an experience of *Du*. Creates it by building a palpable mental enclosure within which it accumulates an expansive—and hence intensifying—story of the character, contents, and substance of that experience—and, hence, an intensity of experience of its own. It identifies and construes some data in a highly restricted way, asserts some deep problematics that this construal is seen to extrude, then isolates two predicates whose formal definition (given in the text) constitutes a particular mode of explicating—giving determinacy to—the object-types of which the particular 'objects' being denoted are instantiations. And then, in the highly charged terms it has created, it struggles spectacularly to give the background theory cogency to the foreground of compositional ideas. Rounding from the formal definition of "ARP" ("arpeggiation") to the problem of "partial ordering" to a reconsideration of the notes of the first measure of *Du* (specifically, that one A♭) is, at least, a dazzling drama of self-created issues and characters. But much more, it is a particularly fine piece of close reading of a musical text drawing on, and giving

voice to, the serious concerns of serialist compositional thinking. Accept the premises of concern, sit with the text and score side by side, and not only will you be drawn into and through an absorbing trajectory of problematics created and confronted and powerfully reconstructed, you will also find yourself opened into a world of new information—new at least in its creative and hermeneutic juxtaposition of otherwise dramatically non-associated components, ranging among Tamil rituals, Church's thesis, Prufrock's malaise—not even counting the broad spectrum of explicitly music-theoretical texts invoked.

Schoenberg complained about Schenker's sketches that he missed seeing his favorite tunes configured in them; clearly he was being an ontological absolutist: I might think that Milton's *Du*—wherever your description of it starts—'is' existentially entangled with a peculiarly 'lateral' temporality—a 'rhizomatic' multidirectionality rather than a 'classical' 'arboreal' polylinear but univocal forwardness; the odd float of a fractured melodism in the piano and a hyperextended lyricism in the voice—both drawing crucially on their countercultural anti-references to historical paradigms signified by those words—is, too, crucial as both input to and output from that idiosyncratic temporality. Does John Rahn's piece 'account' for such qualities? And if it does, or doesn't, is that germane to the question of whether it qualifies as 'a description of *Du*'? Answer to question 2: all musics are radically neutral, absolutely unresistant, fully compliant in any sense you care to require to any description or analysis, any mode of description or analysis, you decide to inscribe them into. Except, that is, where the story as read by someone fails to qualify as a story of that piece for that person; but that problem is mislocated in the theoretical domain. The precise compositional nature of John's piece, which I have been reading as high intellectual drama—even including the precise ways in which it is transcendently comprehensive and cosmically fractional at the same time—is crucial to its character and drama, because its drama is enacted not only within the circle of its own contexts, terms, constructions, juxtapositions, thought-span rhythms, but also against the backdrop of other discourse, the sounds of Bethany Beardslee-Robert Helps playing-singing, the score—against each and all of which its specific defiant pungent barbed idiosyncratic selfhood is crucially personified. It's also an understood part of John's discourse—of, indeed, the discursive cosmos he not so much inhabits as internalizes or maybe just fantasizes—that sharp questions are provoked; the problems naturally raised by his text are as much (at least 'socially') a signification of his text as are the tokens in the score, or the sounds

on the record. You have to travel with him to relate to the problems not only as interesting and meaningful, but even as problems: how to discriminate the 'syntactical' from the 'associational' structure without the intervention of some *deus ex machina* that fatally encumbers the desired perceptual lucidity hopefully attainable by rigorous consistency? To do his piece, does John need to have a 12-pc-system assumption? Is that assumption desired by the piece, is it different in species from the old-school kind of 'tonal' assumption? Does there want to be a retreat from 'contextuality'—are we finding out, maybe, that 'contextuality' is at least partly a cover for another—a distinct and radical—set of biases whose assumptions are—canonically—hidden? Does that liberating music-ontological revolution rest on yet another Dogma of Empiricism—is 'contextuality', like 'indeterminacy', something that ultimately inheres more in the domain of discourse than in the ontology of music de-structuralized, re-contextualized, perhaps, as music?[2] Contextuality and indeterminacy are probably best understood as interesting creative and perceiving strategies, like an intense compositional vision, but 'intertextuality' is probably more like the story of real life.

John says (John's text:) "every musical analysis is an ontology." Of course; but I want to ontologize what I read with what I experience as music in there symbolically and active as looming spectre, rather than to ontologize what I experience as music by way of what I read as discourse or story. The drama of John's text is intense but it is not, does not really try to be, the drama of *Du,* however inseparable its drama is from the looming spectre of *Du.* It is a text which vividly, lucidly, corrosively dramatizes this very crucial distinction: (John's text:) "In music theory, the analogy to [the contemporary] retreat from mathematical rigor or certainty of proof may be a cautious return to the evocative from the definitive. To attain certain goals of communication about music, one may sadly (or joyously) find that our very precision entails trading precision for concision; that our newly minted need for rigorous specificity in relations and values of variables entails either an unacceptable restriction of analyzed context (the "first aggregate-span" alone?), or a particularly if not theoretically impossible volume of time and space, or on the other hand a

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[2] The difficulties of talking about structure and 'structure', as I think about it now, are too formidable to burden this text with—I should just say that the problem of discussing this issue discursively rather than performatively is precisely built into the core of the problem, and has been a stress and a stimulus for much of my writing since at least 1975.

prudent retreat into vague generalities. . .A literature of hints, clues, of "stimulating speculations". . ."

But every one of these futilities is symptomatic, I think, of the futility (if we're lucky) of the ontologizing program:

(My text:[3]). . ."If we infuse our descriptions with adequate epistemic depth, shouldn't we be able to at least enter the ontological space of the contents of musical experiences we care about?. . .what I notice about the way I like [some musical descriptions] is a way in which none of them is used, or allowed, to invade and holistically pre-empt and remake the ontological interior of what is experienced as those musics. . . .At the time of [my 1990 "Dialogue" for J. K. Randall] I was perceiving the stubborn resistance of the music-ontological core to resolution within any referential-descriptive intertext. Implicit in that is a narrowing of the range of descriptive modes which could possibly be regarded as relevant to meaningful musical experience. And in fact, while [I did] not at all trivialize the act of musical discourse formation, [I did] strenuously marginalize it as an active factor in the music-experiential transaction.

"But what I know now is a little, but significantly, different. It has to do with *using* and *allowing,* and with discoursing as a variable relationship at its ontological core. It has to do with some things that occurred to me as I was reading about Paul Ricoeur on the subject of metaphor—or, really, the *metaphorical relation.* I noticed that I followed happily his idea of semantic irregularity as long as it remained an unfixed, unfixable, dynamically onflowing process of unscrutable co-existence (where existence is traveling, and co-existence fellow-traveling) intensely activating the sentience-space between the persistently ontologically distinct objects/texts stubbornly resistant to semantic fusion. And the moment the metaphorical relationship stabilizes into a specifiable localized determinate quality-conferring effect, it seems to collapse *as* a metaphorical relation, and to turn reductive, reductively ontological. So I began to imagine that *every* mode of musical description, from neanderthal chord-labeling to Jim Randall's amazing verbal compositions, had some value in how it captured something potentially believable about some music; and I perceive that the problem is *always* that of reductiveness, the substitution of less for more, of structure hearing for music hearing, or of story hearing for music hearing. In short, music descriptions can be ontologically imperialistic if they are allowed to be, if they are used that way. . . .

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[3] "Experiences With No Names"

"Still. . .the ontological "given" of music is still always and comprehensively for me a "chosen", by conscious or non-conscious action of a perceiver's perception, by ascription. But the choosing, the mind-composing action of ascription, takes place entirely in the language and on the ontological ground of the music-experiential universe, in music thing-language. Thinking in music, the creative-relative do-it-yourself ontology-making ascribing activity is fully liberated, and fully determinate, if terminally occluded from the verbal-cognitive kind of intersubjectivity by its untranslatable, unparaphrasable selfhood."

3. A Question of Textual Modalities

John's *Du*—an authentically advanced piece in that line of John's and other people's thinking—goes back to 1976, a long way from the latest texts in his book. And John, as you would expect, has gone his own many and very long ways during that time. All through John's work he is finely positioned to enter and explore and recontextualize by creative invocation and inventive superposition a huge array of front-line texts building continuously along the moving frontier of 'advanced', and advancing, contemporary thought.

(John's text:[4]) "All musical structure derives from repetition."

There's a peculiar edge to John's writing that's almost hidden, but refracts language and subjects in an unmistakable way: there is, somewhere deep within John—I think—a pervasive countercultural truth-seeker *cum* radical traditionalist driving his rational energies; he can respond vibrantly, ardently, and, finally, creatively to an astonishing array of thought modes, from New Age to Dark Age (I'll let you quantify that). He is, perhaps even advertently, entirely subversive of prevailing academic tendencies—in the musical thought business, anyway—to take the 'meaning' of music—not in the technical sense, but in the ideological sense of 'meaningfulness'—either essentially for granted, or at least to detach the technology of musical thought from any grounds on which that thought, or on which music, might be compelling to persons. "Repetition", like other writings by John, is no less than an effort to rehabilitate the urgency of music in our

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[4] "Repetition"

lives, to intrude blatantly and unapologetically the issue and the need for that kind of urgency into the very structure of musical discourse rather than include a paragraph or two to remind oneself or reassure the consumers of one's abstruse animadversions of how spiritually indispensable music is, how significantly entrenched in everyone's socio-personal infrastructure. John, like everyone, needs better, as especially do those of us who are conflicted by the deracinated acrobatics of academic-virtuoso performances where we yearn for serious engagement with the need for intellectual, spiritual, and material survival as one—the places where expressive composition—of self, world, phenomenon, artifact—are internalized not as high-class luxury but as ground-level necessity. (You can read John's book, in one mode of reading it, as the traces of a lifelong struggle with this conflict: he loves learning, in its intensely purest form, he loves to know and to use as comfortably familiar, malleable working tools things whose distance from the mundane in subject, accessibility, density, difficulty, alienness in time, culture, language make comfortable familiarity with them read as 'learnedness'; he loves to exert powers of analysis and synthesis and multiple-step infra- and supra-understanding that produce wild and astonishing thought-dances as well as airtight demonstrations of remarkably idiosyncratic theses. And it's an inseparable piece of his ethos to stay credible and audible in the Darwinian jungle of academic 'dialogue' (in which 'conversation' has become an outrageous euphemism). This specific array of traits was obviously instrumental in his spectacular success as the second-wave Editor of *Perspectives of New Music,* essentially rescuing it from its accelerating slide into quirky marginalization under its first management, without ever losing its originary sense of dedication to depth and creativity. But always, and extra-ordinarily, John is centrally attentive to—insistent upon—issues of personal and social and spiritual value which he personally needs to motivate and validate the public spinning of thoughtwebs, the assertion of self-determined positions, the claim to entitlement to attention from fellow-strangers. So as editor and teacher, too, John is visible as the champion of the bold and risky, a gate-opener to experimentation and self-determination, to at least those exertions whose seriousness and substance are not in doubt.) John's work and scholarship urge these issues in three principal respects: some texts assert the gravity of music as a presence in our world; some texts (e.g. "Repetition") construct the cognitive properties of music-creative phenomena such as to produce them as, and as inextricably bound to, such gravity; some texts—at least implicitly—urge reconstruction and renewal of the values of gravity and the cultivation of circumstances, awarenesses, and technologies conducive to it

("What is Valuable in Art, and Can Music Still Achieve It?" is virtually an exposition of this complex of conflicts and consciousness).

(John's text, again:) "All musical structure derives from repetition.": the initiatory alert for an assault on the mutual opacity of cognitivity and sensibility: (Roland Barthes's text:[5]) ". . .we constantly drift between the object and its demystification, powerless to render its wholeness. For if we penetrate the object, we liberate it but destroy it, and if we acknowledge its full weight, we respect it, but restore it to a state in which it is still mystified." Although I have suggested[6] that this is potentially—and desirably—a pseudo-conflict, it is entirely real in the experience of a practitioner of discourse seeking truth in the teeth of acknowledged relativism and intersubjective opacity (such as, for example, Roland Barthes). Even within a single experiencer/thinker: (John's text:) "recognition conditions cognition.": we're in it, deep; it's the ontological precipice—everything conditions everything, but not everything *is* everything.

But John cannot conscientiously skirt the abyss; his mission pushes him firmly over the cliff. To confront, conjoin, co-construct the predicates of recognition with the experience of the recognized. And push it to the limit: distinguish three qualities of 'repetition'; call them "repetition", "répétition", "slavery". Each is tied to an outcome sensibility: "repetition" is "alive"; "répétition" is a "re-animated corpse"; "slavery" is death incarnated—and it's not clear, or maybe not even important, in which direction the implication flows (that is, in a universe containing only those three left-hand predicates and those three right-hand predicates, is it if repetition then alive and not any other right-hand predicate, or is it if alive then repetition and not any other left-hand predicate), but John's formalization stops before this boundary. And all the way to an outer limit: these modalities differ with reference to "final cause" ("telos"); without "telos" there is boredom (slavery). Or, a re-traversal of a pre-existing thing with no transformative effect. ("répétition": is it *theoretically* possible?) But, within a larger thing whose telos is not given but in the process of being formed: (John's text:) ". . . like life, it is a process of continued transcendence toward who knows what end". Which leads to a major insight: (John's text:) "a is not then-a". (then what *is* it that *is* repeated?) "A the global thing is the change of context. The change of context *constitutes* "A" and *reflects back into* each A." Temporality and ontology then inevitably

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[5] *Mythologies* (1972)

[6] "Experiences With No Names"

collide, and the collision is undoubtedly an output of the thesis that recognition conditions cognition. (It can be said that a key problem of discourse is also a key problem about cognition with respect to temporality: grasping something means holding it which means fixing it out of time. 'Ontology' is a slippery word here: does it not imply substance, incompatible with substanceless disappearing experiences? Perhaps the 'thinghood', even the 'phenomenonhood' of 'purely experiential' events can be supposed to be virtualized by some alchemy of language/thought functionality, which is how it seems to work—well enough, evidently—in the pragmatic world; but that kind of translational ontologization doesn't really cut it as a critical capture of what there is *as experience*. Radically, maybe that capture is possible only by means of some *analog* language whose substantive identity-form mirrors the temporality of 'lived experience' itself. You can *say* that a variable stands for something experiential, but how can you make it stick outside of the friendly confines of your formalism?)

Recognitions hypostasize temporal phenomena as objects: "a". But not only is "a" not "a" except at *time* "a"[7], "a" is not even "a" at that time—or rather, what is "a" at time "a" is the totality of "A" at that time—indistinguishably?—where A is the temporal thing indexed from some first-indexed moment if that is appropriate (it might have materialized fuzzily out of nowhere). That is, there is no way to "extract" "a" from "A" without fundamental loss of—or categorical change in—identity. So recognition language and cognition language resist intertranslation: "a" is a *quality* of *a time*—an experienceably abstracted "time in a music" embedded within an experienced "time in a life"; so the quality "a", and the quality "a, then-a", are metaphysically inter-opaque, because ontologically successive. John's way to bring sanity back from this chaos is to introduce a (non-formal) predicate called "Deceit", wherein the ontological change in time is grasped in a continuous retroactive 'correction' of previous 'misperception', a perception according to which however much something is as it is, it is clearly not as it was. ("Deceit" outputs from an ingeniously creative reading by John of my 1977 text "What Lingers On (, when the Song is Ended".) But I think this is another excrescent virtualizing device, a symptom of the core recognition/cognition problem: is identity contingent on identification? Which is also to say: Is cognitivity contingent on intersubjectivity? ((John's text:) "Any intersubjective entity is essentially linguistic, since only communication connects "subjects".) Or is the analytic abstraction

[7] in some determinate tetrad of 'piece-time', 'virtual time', 'clock-time', 'life-time'

(the story of the cognition) a distinct mode of abstraction from the experiential abstraction ('the cognition')? Does John (and do 'we' need to) presuppose that only that is true which is known to be true, or knowable to be true? Given that 'true' is always *linguistic* is there another—'non-linguistic'—possibility: that something may be—by virtue of *determinate subjective experience*—knowable to be potentially 'real'—though never determinable as to whether actually 'true'? "Such a thing as can possibly be true, because real" is distinct from "such a thing as could not possibly be true"; this, I think, could be a key to music's potential 'intersubjectivity', that I can imagine that something of my own determinate ('real') experience may be intersubjective in principle, though I can only investigate this indirectly (i.e., can't show or claim anything 'true' of it *in se*). Here is collided with again the essential (though entirely non-regrettable) opacity between music as discoursed and as ('musically') experienced. (Can 'experience' itself be 'a language'? I think probably not, for the same reason, I guess, that 'existence' can't be 'a predicate'.)[8] And, I think, right on the same wavelength, I can recognize in John's idea of "telos" a sense of constantly changing global-purpose drift, but not necessarily (never!) a destination.

I find myself stirred by John's precisely calibrated term-making ("boredom", "deceit", "slavery" are fine examples), issue-making, argument-making to desire my own "telos", to blow down to the Oracle such a question as "what are the meaningful benefits of reduction to a concept?"—meaning much less than it threatens, of course, because it's really a conversational interaction with John's piece, which I'm reading as a powerful explication of random pieces and inchoate chunks of experience by tying phenomena I can recognize to predicates I can understand, and purposes I can believe in. How the investigation of "repetition" gets John and me to bring up to mind certain facts and angles-of-awareness which we both find meaningful—and which weren't elicited for us except via the particular pressure of the particular issue being raised, is—apart from the sheer art of the work—the real value of the investigation, not I (we) care about the details as giving the 'truth' of the concept (is it 'repetition'?), but that we care about the concept (depending

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[8] The potential determinacy of non-verbal 'subjective' experiences is suggested whenever someone performs an 'interpretive' realization in intersubjectively sharable sound form of her interior 'hearing' of some existing 'musical composition'. In this perspective, what is cognized as the 'interpretive aspect' of this performance is literally understandable as a *discourse,* non-verbal, non-translatable, non-paraphrasable (except by an equally 'creative' behavior), suigeneric as an exteriorization of a subjective state, like the literal documentation of a 'thought' as it is experienced internally within the thinker (cf. Wilfred Sellars on the intersubjective status of thoughts, in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind").

how we've arrived at it) as putting us onto (i.e., eliciting from us ourselves) a world—a particular world—of things to be aware of and to think about.

4. Another Excursion

For instance? Repetition, for instance. (John's text (again):) "All musical structure derives from repetition." Now, retroactive from where John takes me, I'm looking to try to go deeper. First try: 'retrievable properties'. Why? Because 'non-repetition' is not non-significative. Any 'first sound' potentiates any number of possibly determinate retrievable qualities: (my (1975) text:[9]) "a motive is a retrievable aspect of a sound event which is in the course of events retrieved." Subsequent events which either match or don't match may (*may*) elicit retroactively any set of those. Hence 'randomicity' as a perceived quality is also a 'structure'—and anything having a "determinate feel" (that is, anything: if something is not present in or retrievable from consciousness it's not in the sense I'm talking about a thing) is, *thereby,* a 'structure', in the only global sense I can make of 'a structure'. A single flash of green light is (possibly) determinate as an articulate thing without 'internal' structure, or retroactive structurability. Apart from the question of sheer identity, what gives such a phenomenon its 'structural' content is the determinate coherences it projects onto its universe—retro-specifiable as temporality, spatial size and shape, intensity, color, etc.—all (in a manner of speaking) *delimiting* the perceived space and *creating* the qualities exhibited by subsequent (as well as antecedent, if any) stuff, universally and permanently in some ultimately extended sense, but immediately and palpably if conjoined by a perceiver that way. At some other level, the issue of "whether there can be structure without repetition" is trivialized by the ultimate regression to the grossest level at which a 'more-than-one'-ness is experienced. Even if the only thread of uniformity is 'thing-thing', without higher-order determinacy of '(thing-type)-(thing-type)'. So even if (John's text (again):) "recognition conditions cognition", 'non-recognition' may designate a determinate structural event as well.

Second try: 'Regularity', of which repetition becomes a sub-case, the residue of some accumulative reading of coincidences with a set of regularities projected fore and aft by a configuration.

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[9] "Of This and That"

This may be a purely technical point; more critically, I think that John's urgent program to expunge representation from the substance of music is impeded by the inherent representationality of "repetition". Or, indeed, by the inherent representationality of any verbal ontologization. Only a non-ontologizing discourse can leave music free from becoming metaphorical.[10] John's deepest image (his text:), "A piece of music for Mary is the life Mary lives alongside of her life" is deepest where we know that music resembles nothing in other experience *literally*.

5. Music-for-John

"Repetition" (the article) wants to free music from representation to empower it to give Mary her life in the immediacy of unmediated but always cognitive experience, and in the ultimacy of a palpable unmediated all-ness ('whole') which is an objective but, as I've said earlier, never a destination. (John's text:) "the end of a piece of music. . .is not its telos." "Differences" (the article) comparably asserts music without semiotics; but its radicalism is of a different order: it so strenuously asserts its passions and visions that it ends by thoroughly persuading a reader that the truth in discourse is precisely the same as the truth in art: a true access to the state of mind and being of someone at a particular time-moment. Beyond the emanations (abundant and luxuriant) of Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus,* the co-optive subsumptions of canonical texts and the favorite popculture iconography of post-modernists, drawn into a molten dialectic with the lost 'modernist' yearnings for significance (entailing substance, therefore positivity), there is, most compellingly, *Music-for-John.* And it must be, above all, Music-for-John which this essay exists to witness and speak to. So the starkness with which discourse is exposed as compositional artwork in "Differences" is a surprising self-revelation; that it comes down as a discourse makes it almost too close for comfort: for it seems that the core metaphor for meaningful expression is *physicality:* (John's text:) "Music in particular, that nonvisual art, is as intimate and immediate as the maternal breast. . .we should, before listening to what the audible has to say, get in touch with touch." (Music people know that the audible is touching: it's the sacred secret of the otherwise interpersonally dysfunctional among us.) (John's text:) "INTIMACY/ We have to ask music some very intimate questions. How does music feel when it entwines with its listener

[10] To diss music as metaphorical is not to diss any given metaphorical relation between music and discourse, or even to comment on that issue just here.

like two bodies sliding over and around each other?. . .Human life and music listened to by that life do not run parallel in straight lines never meeting, but rather intertwine closely, touching each other all over, and penetrating and being penetrated by the other, so that while they touch they almost fuse into one entity, one life-music or one music-life." It's touch, physicality, the intimacy of concrete pressure, that expunges semiosis from music, liberates it as (John's text:) "a sensuous mathematics, a calculus of life." It tells me the truth, the truth from John (if not the truth-for-John) that music is not the subject of semiosis, but is in fact the ultimate *residue* of semiosis. Or perhaps, even, reverses the semiotic transaction altogether: (my text:[11]) "As music enters me, as I enter music, we are both—music and I, both, entering one another—together transforming receiving penetrating gendershaping. . . .Together opened, filled, to the brink of not-other-being, this music, this I, in our own undefinable interprocessing . . .? To be moved, by music, or with, transported ontologically, inhabiting a new-perceived world, resonating a new-composed music, being thereby a new-created new-being, of unsignifiable but saturately selfspecific gender: Was I male, within myself? Was I female, within myself? Was I person? Am I still? Have I been some resonance, some inflection, some reinvented creature alchemized out of the base matters of male and female? (Yes, if I remember correctly,. . .)"

6. Music-for-John II

(. . .If criticism is an artform, should it not be addressed art-critically. . .?)

(John's texts:)

On Madonna[12]: "Each of Madonna's music videos engages its own nexus of social and ideological issues. The series of music videos gives the impression of an artist, a person, working her way through themes offered her by her life experience: her father, her familial religion, racism, environmentalism, prisons, and always, of course, sexuality. There is a development from work to work. Each work internally is not inert, but active in a way that is sufficiently polysemous to bear interpretation, or active reception. The line Madonna draws is a "ligne de fuite", a line of flight or vanishing-line, always escaping to another plane. The one semiotic constant is

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[11] *music/consciousness/gender* (1995)

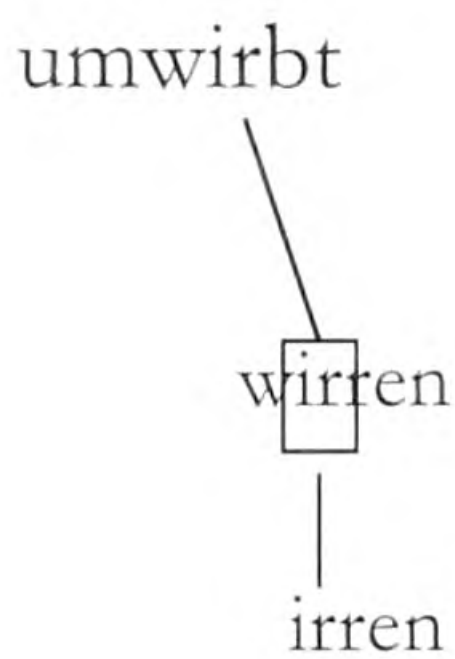
[12] "Differences"

her femininity, which she wears like a mask—a guest at a masquerade party who wears her own face. . . .

"And yet there is another Madonna behind this fretwork screen. The saturated surface of pop-culture intertextuality is gathered up, unfolded, enveloped. The *n*-dimensional construct of planes of consistency created by her lines of flight is packaged in an *n*+1-th dimension, the artist's persona behind the papier-mâché shell, and this in turn intersects a plane in a higher dimension, which is the native emblematicity, the ethnicity of her work. This multiple capture of the fluttering bird threatens to trivialize its subject. Can the bird fly free?"

On Milton Babbitt[13,14]: "To some, Babbitt's music is "elitist", coldly cerebral, incomprehensible, and static, yet for others it is bubbling with energy, a nonhierarchical multidimensional network in which each element is highly polysemic, links stretching out in all directions: Babbitt. . .[exemplifies] in his music structures which are in fact incompatible with those of elitism and phallocentric control. . . .

"These "liebesgedichte" *Du* by August Stramm, selections from which are set by Babbitt, were written under the insane conditions of the Western Front in 1914-15. The poems abound in sound play and obscure internal puns: e.g. in "Wiedersehen", last line:



. . .Their theme seems to be the emotional relations, confusions, distinction, and identity among Du, Ich, Dich, Mich, and Wir—certainly an appropriate song theme for the relation of Milton Babbitt to (or vice versa) his music, his colleagues, his students, his

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13 "Differences"

14 "How do you *Du*"

performers, his critics, The Public, an analysis or analyst, this analyst or this analysis of *Du*."

On Brahms[15]: "In making comparisons, what, if anything, are we talking about? Not, directly, about the [Violin Concerto] or the [Second Symphony], but about their intermodulation; our perception of each modulates, warps, and informs our perception of the other, forming a third entity which is the pattern of their interaction and the object of comparative discourse. For practical purposes, we may hypostasize this pattern of interaction, and from it we may even form an idea of some essential nature—call it 'D-ishness'. This D-ishness, the essence of at least these two pieces considered together, would lie in that realm of the intelligible inaccessible except to creative intelligence; that is, pretty inaccessible. According to one earlier frivolous theory of Plato's cave metaphor, the composer—in this case, Brahms—gets an idea of D-ishness (which resides outside the cave, with the Good) and makes an image of it, that is, a piece. The orchestra then parades the image behind the low wall to our rear so that we perceive its fire-lit shadow (the performance) as we sit shackled to our expensive seats."

On motets from the Montpellier Codex[16]: "What I find most exciting and inspiring about Ars Antiqua motets is their counterpoint. By counterpoint I do not mean local voice-leading of the kind inadequately discussed in 13th-century treatises, although that must surely be taken into account. It is hard to write a beautiful song. It is harder to write several individually beautiful songs that, when sung simultaneously, sound as a more beautiful polyphonic whole. The internal structures that create each of the voices separately must contribute to the emergent structure of the polyphony, which in turn must reinforce and comment on the structures of the individual voices. The way this is accomplished in detail is what I am calling "counterpoint."

"This kind of counterpoint is multi-leveled, coordinating events up from the note-against-note level. (Levels are not anachronistic here. For hundreds of years before the late 13th century, theorists had been talking of ecclesiastical chant in terms of hierarchically nested units, in a technical vocabulary of phthongi, voces, syllabi, neumes, commas, etc.)"

On Philip Glass[17]: "The operas of Philip Glass illustrate what may be a rebirth of a sacral connection. Each of his operas has

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15 "D-Light Reflecting"

16 "Theories for Some Ars Antiqua Motets"

17 "What is Valuable in Art, and Can Music Still Achieve It?"

been a ritual of ostention, pointing at various quasi-sacred facets of contemporary culture: Science (*Einstein on the Beach*), Religion (*Akhnaten*), Politics (*Satyagraha*). . .The hieratic staging, the absent plots, the mesmerizing ritualistic music, the device of the lone, mythic (but human) figure seated silently above and behind the rest of the stage action, the opposition of crowd and individual in a way that is positively not romantic, the absolute avoidance of conventional expressivity in the music and its reliance on very large-scale rhythmic structures of almost frightening asceticism, all point to an aesthetic that makes a radical reconnection with the sacred that suffuses Glass's music with its particular flavor, as witnessed by this description of the Tantric conception of time:

> On the vast time-scale imagined by Indian thinkers, variation and individuality seem to mean nothing. Each apparently unique pattern of events is felt to be the result of overlapping cycles of different rhythm, conceived, perhaps, somewhat too spatially, always reproducing eventually a resonance they must have produced before."

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On the other side of post-modernism, there is a relativistic appreciation of the diversified Other- and Self-identifications across the musical spectrum. John gets his effects by having at both Madonna and Milton from the same perspective, a perspective (in this case) derived from Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (adopting terms specifically from Volume II, *A Thousand Plateaus*). *Derived:* it isn't like 'applying' Deleuze and Guattari to Babbitt and Madonna, more like using the perspectives of their interconnected words for things to chart a particular (clearly partial, for him as for us, in the service of making certain points) portrait of each. (John's text doesn't explicitly make this comparison.) As I process these descriptions I'm engaged by what progressively impresses me as a critical music-discursive issue—I think it's critical even though it sounds kind of innocuous: it's about *distance;* as an issue, it's a schizoid one: 1. the distance of your discourse is an essential output of your intellectual sensibility, or even an essential output of the nature of your inner experience; 2. the distance of your discourse reflects a considered judgment—on philosophical, social, political, epistemic grounds—of where a discourse mediates most appropriately between giver and receiver. The delicacy of any deconstructive incision into this question, in the case of, say, John's

on-music texts, has a lot to do with a question I asked a long way up above in this text: What are the benefits (purposes, virtues, effects) of 'reduction to a concept'?. Because, you can argue *against* how someone does something on the grounds that it's better done some other way—but—way before Bill Clinton's linguistics seminars—'we' knew that there was a trap in that 'it': it's not the same 'it' which is being done here, or would be being done that other way. Take the broadest, grossest, most massively insensitive point first: it's a powerful resource of discursive rhetoric and highly formal (in whatever sense) language, and of 'terminology'[18] in general, that it enables strenuous, intricate, complex copious processing of some object of its attention *at a detached distance*— double visioned, something is giving very close attention to something, but that close attention is coming from afar, from a place where it is sheltered from assault by the backdrafts or confusion of the things written or the things written about with the personal identity of the writer—or something of that nature (I don't want to be taken too literally here).

(My texts:[19,20])

"Think how fundamentally inexpressive art music is, as a medium. Structure is always an alienation of expression. The very purpose of structuring is the alienation of expression. Not necessarily in a negative sense: reflection is alienation too: to engage by distancing, to access by mediation; safety from directness to enable the channels of reception to receive without the paralyzing fear of annihilation, of immolation."

"Dick Hebdige, reading [the passage by Roland Barthes quoted earlier], reflects on how his own study of style 'ends by merely confirming the distance between the reader and the 'text', between everyday life and the mythologist whom it surrounds, fascinates, and finally excludes.

"These are abject surrenderings to the psychic distance which is regarded in them as an invariant effect of discourse doing, but which is fatal to the possibility of immediate and total interpenetration of text and consciousness. . .immediate: that is, unmediated by any supervenient content of consciousness; and

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[18] You can distinguish a 'term' from a 'word' in that terms have (must have) definitions and words don't (can't); in this sentence, single quotes enclose *terms*.

[19] *The Purposes and Politics of Engaging Strangers*

[20] "Experiences With No Names"

total: that is, leaving no part of the consciousness of the experiencing being sentient of its own self as other than the content of *having* the experiential output of the interpenetration of the text and consciousness.. . .And I have been convinced that the same faculty for imagining and abstracting that can lead to psychic anaesthesia, to safety and immunity from intense and—let it not be denied—scary experiences, can equally be mobilized in the opposite direction, of self-directed sensitization and strength in the service not only of creating our own experience, but of making it more real, making it more substantial, and more particular and specific for ourselves."

So why is 'distance' an issue? In what realm of concern does it make a difference? Here's a claim: John's ("Repetition" 's) way of bringing Mary close to music being described with the sureness and mastery of discourse textured by theoretical languages is thereby, however contrary to its desires, *referentialized:* it erects a context-self of discourse and, however sensitive to the context of musical experiencing, creates its own internal self-referential drama. A discourse of words rather than terms, undefined, and undefinable, in experientially composed language (as, "the experience speaking", rather than—timbrally—"the writer speaking about the experience") might seem to have, at least as its self-propaganda, a more effectively anti-theater output, by virtue of being inexplicitly specific, non-paraphrasable, and undefinable, thus disenabling transference in the shape of a dramatic form onto its signified phenomena. What is discourse for? (Perhaps we could do a survey.) But there is a difference in direction, if certainly not in 'value' or 'validity' or interest, in a masterpiece of intensely composed thought-discourse elicited reflectively from music experience, as against a self-undefined (vocabulary-free) text—a text 'non-verbal' the way poetry is, but not, obviously, being itself poetry—which is, by a radically different path, expansive *to* music (moving in the direction text→music) without actually determining it. ("[R]ecognition conditions cognition": the phrase seems to become more interestingly ambiguous (or, problematic) as issues accumulate.)

7. Discourse as Anti-Theater

If most music talk in the rhetoric of discourse can not get close enough to music in the way I'd like it to, and cannot help getting too close to music in ways I don't like it to, what about

discourse that doesn't do that kind of violence to music, but still embeds itself in the rhetoric of discourse with all the problems which that entails? That is a problem I'm having throughout this writing, trying to address not what is really important and profound in John's texts, which I refrain from violating for the same reason I don't parse music, or poetry: their most particular meaning is inextricable from their terms, their forms, their dialects, their totality—normally, that's been a reason for me to not talk about a discourse explicitly. Normally, I'm more likely to be addressing a subject or a phenomenon, mentioning other things (like other writings) as part of *that* enterprise; but here, I'm explicitly writing about these texts themselves—and I've chosen to touch on issues which are important to me *about them* (not necessarily important *in* them or *to* them). Curiously, John's texts addressing musical issues almost always at least equally address music-theoretical ones; that is, they not only talk about music a certain way, but they—often energetically—talk about precisely why they are choosing to talk about music the way they do. And there's something else I've been avoiding—this is probably as good a place as any to mention it, since it's going to be unavoidable in what immediately follows: that is talking about the aspects and pieces of John's work—more in the earlier texts but still to a certain extent in recent ones—which directly engage or invoke or are otherwise involved with work of mine. My shyness hasn't to do with etiquette or any kind of social grace, especially not modesty (I've been quoting myself liberally throughout). But it's the same point as I've made earlier: in no other context would my invasion inevitably do as much confusing mischief as in this one; let me be stiffly categorical here: how someone's work is *in* someone else's is not subject to correction by the supposed originator. It's a character in a new story, and the characters as well as the stories are the property—the *responsibility*—of *their* authors, and to *their* (mis-) readers. From my point of view, this goes as much for Susan McClary's and Matthew Brown/Douglas Dempster's essentially unsympathetic characters bearing the names of me and me-authored texts as for John's essentially sympathetic ones (though John's use is much more like engaged fellow-working than like critical commentary, and therefore John tends to invoke my texts for his own stories in his own ways but leaves their own voices to speak for themselves in their own ways).

John's response to Brown and Dempster's discourse "The Scientific Image of Music" is, largely, overtly, and inherently *about*

discourse. He says (John's text:[21]) "To understand a text, one must give it a close reading." I don't take this to contradict what I've been claiming (see my thoughts on 'distance' and 'close reading', above), because doing a 'distanced' close reading to access a text (as a looming spectre) isn't necessarily the same as writing a locked-on textual intervention to overrun it (however lovingly). One thing about a book that both John and I like a lot, Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus,* is that it cites enormous quantities and varieties of texts, but always in contexts and with surrounding language which recontextualizes them so radically that there is no feedback to the texts themselves, to threaten them with inflation, invasion, or re-interpretation; so they're left still speaking in their own voices, intensely 'used' but not reconfigured (—disfigured, as it must always be). And John nails it down for us right away: (John's text, first sentence:) "Music theory, like any discipline or science, is a process of discourse." So—implicitly—we're responsible to a discourse which we co-opt for our own discourse. If this is about morality, or ethics, or virtue, or etiquette, ok. But how people receive things, and how they accept them or not, are critical qualities of *their* world-processing, and the output of that into 'the' world—ugly, nice, precise, gross, fair, foul, whatever. The authentic motivation to accept a music discourse or a theory about music is about the same as for a music: its 'truth' (as I've said before) is the truth of an individual experience at a particular moment, to which you're being given access, in a very controlled way. Such an experience, accessed that way, may be sharable, but it is at least cognizable; its 'objectivity' or 'universality' as an experience or as an attitude toward experience, are hardly of much interest compared with the possible interest in difference made accessible, an imaginable but up to now unimagined coloration of experience by the peculiar poetry of self-description. So unless one is preoccupied with the monochromatic images of authority and hierarchy, it seems inevitable that the rhetoric of a music discourse pitched toward universality and objectivity is likely to be defeated as a conveyor of particularity. *Meta-Variations* (my text) unequivocally declares itself the output of one person's personal musicsense—but since it reads in the imperative voice it tends for many readers to obscure its own most global message.

So, description and prescription are confused; and this confusion has egregious consequences. If people hear and compose in a multitude of sometimes incompatible ways, that is undoubtedly a rich and desirable situation, totally appropriate to music insofar as

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[21] "Notes on Methodology in Music Theory"

it is an expressive artform. Does that situation pose a problem for music theory—as a discipline, or as a science? What's required is a foundational study of what kind of discipline music theory, or music, is; of in what sense it is a science. For the kind of discipline it ought to be, the sense in which it ought to be a science, is one in which the luxuriant diversity of individual ways of and takes on music are particularly gratifying and inspiring: an ethos like that of (post-structuralist) anthropology, say, rather than that of (pre-relativistic) physics.

(John's text:) "The idea that a theory of music need not separate the sheep from the goats, and should not have such separation as its goal, or deem itself successful if it does achieve segregation—this is a radical departure from the way Michael Kassler first proposed to use formalized theories for music, and goes against the grain not only of later music-theoretical enterprise but also of the normal usage of formalization in logic, linguistics and science." If it's more interested in the qualities of lived experience than in the reductive simulacra of dialectical theater, the arena of competitive algorithmization, music talk will self-evidently shape itself, modestly as it must, on individual experiences (the only kind there are). But if it's more interested in one of those other occupations, then formal elegance or expressive eloquence or killer ideological power assertiveness are probably more to the point. This is not to be understood ironically: just as there is very interesting music that uses some "philosophical system" as its (at least program-note) emblem, or that abuses or trivializes some poem whose texts it co-opts, uses it to make its own sense over the limp remains of the 'original', so might some music talk appropriate some music, or 'music', that way. (It seems necessary to say that there are instances of such ruthless plundering that I like a lot: *A Thousand Plateaus,* for instance, or Proust, or Lucchino Visconti's movie *Death in Venice* (where what is co-opted is not by Thomas Mann but by Gustav Mahler)—it's not all turkeys like *Doktor Faustus* and *Jean-Christophe*—; but it's hardly *as* 'music discourse'—especially hardly for the explicit detachable 'music discourse'-seeming passages they may include—that I value them.) (John's text:) ". . .let us accept the fictionality of their characters Babbitt, Boretz, and Rahn. (Anyone who may be interested in what we think we said—what we said we thought—may read the texts homonymous with the ones cited in "The Scientific Image of Music Theory")."

So how do you get out of the reductive "whatever"? John says (John's text:) "this is not to say that all theories are equally good, or that any theory supports discourse in a way that is somehow neutral with respect to some hypothetical underlying objective

reality. Even natural languages. . .color their utterances. A theory goes a step further than a language, in that a theory is intended to bias utterances within its framework toward whatever it considers to be useful kinds of things to say." For my part, I'd just as soon exclude 'goodness' as an explicit topic from the theoretical-discursive conversation—not because I'm indifferent to what I think of them, but because at a high-profile level 'goodness' tends to minimize the distinctions among things, blurring 'difference' into the one-dimensional way things are better than others rather than the way they differ from one another, multidimensionally, as things in the world, such as people, differ. And also, we shouldn't have to put up with the absurdity that 'goodness' is demonstrable rather than attitudinal (forests have been devastated in the service of this obscenity). That leaves a question like, What's the output of this theory; do I want to get interested in the music (or the methodology) that filters out of it? There's no lack of critical pressure in this kind of reading—just that the locus of criticism is provincialized to the singular speaker—and its political power to coerce strangers and to claim generality is at least limited. (Because, as I wrote in *Meta-Variations,* to say "It's beautiful to me" is just to say, "It's beautiful".) (John's text:) "It would be absurd to expect that one and the same theory would guide future composition along the lines of, or focus musical experience in the ways most suited to, say, the recent music of Xenakis, Boulez, Stockhausen, Babbitt, Carter, Cage, Adams, Glass and Peter Gabriel. Each composer, or each style period of a composer, or at the extreme, each composition, may be a musical microculture sufficiently differentiated so as to suffer loss of being under some Procrustean regime. Let those ignore this warning who are happy with, or have a taste for, the *disjecta membra* of musical corpses, or etiolated images of ghosts reflected in a tarnished mirror." And so, too, when the subject of talk is music talk. Philosophically at least, dumb, silly, bad, misguided, obnoxious, irrelevant, uninteresting, are not excluded from the universe of allowable text-behaviors. Look at it from the obverse perspective: (John's text:[22]) "Art is dissent. Issues of elitism, "high" or cultivated versus "low" or popular art, mechanisms of patronage and support (by Church or aristocracy or bourgeoisie or State)—all these are basically red herrings. Art is dissent, autonomy, feeling apart from, taking responsibility for one's own foundations, then putting forth that autonomy in an object designed to engage others." My more processual (as against artifactual) image is the Foucauldian "play is resistance"—and that's one way that 'art'—including both 'music' and 'music talk'—can be truly serious: as resistance-play-behavior,

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[22] "Centers; Dissenters"

whose traces may or may not be tangible objects or exhibitable phenomena. Also, dissent is, perforce, process-dependent in that it is necessarily *relative* to a possible *compliance:* no dissent is dissent autonomously.

Writing argues. Does music argue? Can writing not argue? Can writing that argues be expansive in a music-centered space? Is the only way to have a non-reductive, non-cannibalistic response to music to stay away from verbal language? Is there a non-reductive mode of dialogue with discourse except in a non-commensurable (ontologically discrete) language? My text wanting to touch without molesting John's texts gives me such questions. But gives me no more answers than I can get from anyone's writing, or their music. Reading John's book is like going through a mental-space continuation of our decades-long conversation (much of which—probably the most substantial part—has been unavoidably virtual). Our most intense dialogue (virtual or analog) is naturally centered in the terrain where our work most comprehensively entangles and overlaps, where it engages us so 'micro-culturally' that there is no way I can conceive of to address in public discourse the issues identified with *Meta-Variations* and its successor texts, by both John and me. The texts are there[23], as John says in his response to "The Scientific Image of Music Theory"; and the book containing John's own texts is now in your hands. Consider it an index of how profoundly people need and affect each other that their meta-discourses—like their efforts at music-experiential description—are fated to be so extremely reductive and false when they are pressured to render a comprehensive and authentic experience of experience. I've tried to authenticate my regard and esteem for John's texts, as texts, as accesses to Music-for-John, as access to John, by mostly leaving them alone—the opposite of what seem to be the natural tokens of regard and esteem in the public world. This will not be misunderstood by readers attentive to what I've written.

So it makes sense to end this text by touching its unspoken inner opening: The range and scope and quality and depth of mind and learning in John Rahn's thought around and about music, his ways of sharing it, are, in their humane generosity, as inspiriting as they are impressing: his is the true contemporary face of authentic humanism, the clear penetrating voice which belongs uniquely to the thinker, for whom to speak, is always also, to learn.

Barrytown, New York, October 1998

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[23] especially (John's texts:) "Logic, Set Theory, Music Theory"; "Aspects of Musical Explanation"; "New Research Paradigms"

Princeton Township Committee meeting
September 28, 1998

Madame Mayor:

For the past week I've been racking my brain to come up with some words which might adequately convey to the Committee the feelings of dismay and violation which afflict some of us, now that our governing body endorses, in fact solicits, a massacre.

But as this massacre begins to loom in its definitive monstrous shape, I find my thoughts turning away from argumentation, and toward my doomed friends, the deer:

toward the young buck with the superlong tongue, who cleans out my birdfeeder;

toward the confident fawns who trail their timid mother thru my underbrush;

toward the deep-eyed wonder with which they look thru my window to watch me watch them.

And then the realization hits me with full force: in the Godlike name of Scientific Ecosystem Management, our Municipal Government proposes to dissolve such scenes in blood. My doomed friends will die.

Our Officials claim public demand:

But Madame Mayor,

my annoyance over my tulips and tomatoes, and birdseed, is no excuse for a massacre;

that dent in someone's fender, put there by that corpse at the roadside, is no excuse for a massacre;

ambiguously supported allegations about Lyme Disease are no excuse for a massacre;

the depletion of understory in some stand of trees that we, in our need for condos and office parks, have not quite got around to destroying entirely, is no excuse for a massacre;

these things taken all together are no excuse for a massacre;

in fact, there is no excuse at all for this devastating, selfishly-inspired violence.

Yet our Officials, in their pursuit of perfect—and perfectly concealed—violence, are now conferring with ever-so-disciplined Virtuosos of the Floodlit, Silenced, Midnight Centerfired Headshot:

we will be able to wake up some morning without even knowing that a so-called Wildlife Refuge—in Herrontown Woods or Mountain Lakes—was, in the Bosnian sense of the term, "cleansed" while we slept;

we can wake up without even knowing that scores of our valued semi-domesticated neighbors—or rather former neighbors—have been baited, then betrayed; and are now hung up, gutted, on some meathook somewhere;--a triumph of civilized, technologized, efficiency in the stealthy implementation of a barbaric policy.

These Midnight Rambozos are Real Professionals.

What a disgusting profession.

Madame Mayor:

You and your Colleagues are deficient in Empathy.

That not a single member of this Committee, or of the Environmental Commission, has seen fit to denounce this murderous, government-empowered, violence, is a disgrace to our community.

May all of you be voted Out at our earliest opportunity.

Jim Randall
Gulick Road
Princeton Township

Notes for Open Space CD 10: *Language ,as a music*

Benjamin Boretz

"...something that only a composer could have written" was how Jim Randall introduced *Compose Yourself* to me, to suggest why it might be relevant to publish it in a composers' magazine. My revelation was: there are things you want to say, anxieties you want to engage, arising from anything in your life, arising in your perception from your perspective as a composer, that are not music itself (because they're explicitly *about* something(s)) or poetry either (because that's a different perspective of saying), and cannot be discourse (because that's a closed world in which some things are unsayable, or even indiscernible except as composite masks) — but such things may, still, be composable as something — not as music, but as music is composed, as something being what it is about: as languagemusic, composed out of the specific sensibilities which belong to you as composer, listener, reader, writer, player, speaker. To engage your reading in your writing as you engage your listening in your composing. Even though — maybe even because — my preoccupations, my compositional habits, my literary habitats are distinctly different from Jim's, *Compose Yourself* did not just open the enormous creative space it inhabits fully by itself, it gave me the means to transform my own mental universe, liberating thoughts, awarenesses, images ("...resurrecting a new world...a new way of constructing, of imagining..." [*Compose Yourself*, pp. 11-12]) — and, inevitably, texts: first, "in Quest of the Rhythmic Genius"; ultimately, *Language ,as a music*:

April, 1979: Barrytown, New York; August, 1979: San Diego, California:

Part of Kenneth Gaburo's extraordinary generous Lingua Press project is to propagate essays in 'extended composition'; in particular, he's gathering ideas for his monster 'whole-language' collection *Allos* consisting of texts about language mostly by composers; so, after publishing our twin piano pieces in a gorgeous album, he invites Jim and me to produce *Language ,as a music* and (Jim's) *Something Medieval* in the Lingua "Collection Two" series. Typesetting *Language ,as a music* becomes my first move into hands-on type composition, which eventually becomes a normal practice for my work. Susan Quasha, who is principal artist-designer for the uniquely artist-supportive small press called Station Hill in Barrytown, works tirelessly and meticulously with me to refine every graphic detail of the text. We're using an early programmable (pre-computer) typesetting system called Alphacomp; cumbersome, but its output is controllable and good-looking, and it's totally accessible to my input as no commercial composing-room is. When we're finally done, I deliver the output by hand to Kenneth Gaburo in San Diego — Alphacomp makes no duplicates, and saves no files after spitting out galleys (they have to be cut and pasted by hand like sounds in a tape studio). The book, with a surprise hard cover designed by Kenneth, is a magnificent token of Kenneth's interpersonal largesse, and of his dead-serious pursuit of publishing as a medium of creative composition (see his and David Dunn's *Publishing as Eco-System*).

November, 1979: A Faculty Seminar at Brook House, Bard College:

The fortress of audio-reinforcement gear, speakers, table lamp, bookstand, piano that minimizes the speaker/player's visual presence ensures that what's 'live' in the performance is just a voice: my voice, placed at people's ears rather than coming at them from where my body sits. It's also a comfort zone for me to be able to speak and play for an hour and fifteen minutes sustaining focus on an unbroken continuity of utterance. Afterward, everyone assumes that the voice of the character portrayed in Part V is my 'real' voice, putting out my 'real' message. And everyone tells me how much they enjoyed the Irving Berlin song in Part IV.

May 4, 1980: Center For Music Experiment, U.C. San Diego:

C.M.E., directed then by Virginia Hommel Gaburo, inhabited by a credible collection of intense people in a variety of intense ways; Jean-Charles François and John Silber in particular interacted so intensely with me that we practically laminated; but almost that much intensity was routine for the typical interactions with and among the citizens of that community: Warren Burt, David Dunn, Virginia Hommel Gaburo, Diamanda Galas, Jonathan Glazier, Ron George, Anne Hankinson, John Mackay, Will Parsons, Ron Robboy, Isobel Terceo, Richard Zvonar — the ones I can remember. My self-invited performance of *Language ,as a music* surfed on these intensities — it was effectively conducted by the (— intense! —) body language of Diamanda Galas glaring furiously from the front edge of listeners. The giant gamelan hanging on the wall facing me sang back whenever my voicesound crossed a certain resonance threshold. I implicate them all in the performance — they're all present and tangible on the CD. (The pianomusic movement (Part II) is borrowed from Sarah Rothenberg's performance of the long piano piece on Open Space CD 1 — C.M.E. had no piano so we had to roll it on tape there too.) Right after (it seemed way too soon after) I got intensely lectured on the manifold deficiencies of the performance and the piece — one colleague assigned me to remedial attendance at her next-night concert of extended-vocal-cum-electronic screaming; another assigned me to remedial study of Bunraku puppet theater. Personally, my only regret was the unscheduled (and still unfortunate) crescendo/decrescendo toward the end of Part I. Otherwise, my event felt to me like an integral piece of an average C.M.E. week of way-of-life practices (including crucially playing/movement sessions with the intrepid KIVA techno-exploratory ensemble). C.M.E. was so promising a model for music-intellectual-creative-performance experimentation that I was scarcely surprised when it disappeared soon afterward.

Compose Yourself, C.M.E., the C.M.E. community, KIVA, the gamelan are, for me, embedded in the sounds of this performance, the looming spectres bonded inextricably into the identity of this piece.

B. A. B., 6.99
Barrytown, New York

[note for jkr's performance of "intimacy–a polemic" on Open Space CD 10]

I remember two itches I was scratching in writing "intimacy" (—both of them ferociously music-theoretic, and hence right on target for a meeting of the Society for Music Theory held in the Biltmore NYC Ballroom several decades ago—):

1. *Something known to just about everyone else and newly discerned by me: namely, that "a" piece of music means different things (i.e., is different pieces) to different people, and to the same person on different occasions, and with no diminution of legitimacy.*
2. *As an inflected inflector of an occasion, an occurrence of music derives its identity from the particulars of its participation in that particular occasion, whatever the occasion.*

I look back in wonder at the implacable warmth with which I favored and ravaged these commonplaces (—no doubt many years of tracing it all to the score enhanced my sense of revelation—); but I also notice that the outcome of this passionate investiture of the obvious is something I'm glad I wrote. (John Rahn once paid me a treasured compliment: he claimed that I had the gift of "making the obvious incandescent". So John, I hope "intimacy" is a case in point.)

And I remember two incompatible origins of the only taped performance—the one on this CD:

1. *I finished writing the text just in time to perform it once all the way through (onto tape) in my rec room, before unveiling the very tape the next afternoon at the Biltmore.*
2. *Over a period of many weeks, and in the presence of witnesses (: Elizabeth Billington and Arthur Margolin), I practiced the first half over and over.*

So? (Either way, I still like this performance a lot—except where I forgot to inhale before singing.)

(At the Biltmore, my audience was depleted by the scurrying departure of scores of young women toward the rumored progress of Allen Forte through a proximate corridor. Those who remained, having survived an analysis of Schoenberg's Violin Fantasy, listened tepidly to my tape, incredulous.)

—jkr 9/98

Music, as a Music

a multitext in seven fragments

Benjamin Boretz

Prologue

I want to make a text without a voice, no voice of its own, just a text to say something transparently, to say a saying that leaves no residue of the sound of itself but only of the sense it wants to make, forgoing a voice to give a voice to what it says, to what it cares about: to music — or, rather, to music's anomalous double.

I

[Part I of Black /Noise III, a video/sound/language piece; words from *1000 Plateaux* (Deleuze & Guattari); computer-generated sounds; images mostly of artworks]

II

If music is what you hear it as, does that "as" imply the invariant presence of a metalinguistic partner within the experienced text of the music-experiential space?

Or, is it possible that music is not <u>like</u> verbal language, but that — like verbal language — it is an input/output behavior acquired transactionally, mimetically, not through other language systems — that is, not theoretically: which is to say, could it be a functionally discrete psycho-ontological space — in that sense, <u>a</u> language, rather than a subspecies <u>of</u> some other, or some super-language — an expressing/thinking/behaving mode not learned through the agency of (the content or the sense of) a prior psycho-ontological space, of a prior, supervening other language — like, say, verbal language? Could music, in such a possible worldview, be, in formal terms, an experiential 'primitive' rather than a derivative or a construct of the senses of previously ontologized sense-bearing experiential subsystems? If to be linguistic is to have a purely psychological identity created from a

selective biased 'reading' of sensory input of a certain type — and thus to be 'a language' is independent of such issues as reference, syntax, coherence, logic, meaning, structure, entityhood — if its manifestations can come and go like thunderstorms (where do they start? where do they end?) — isn't it easy to think that music is some kind of linguistic phenomenon — linguistic like a thunderstorm when you shudder not from some realistic physical terror but from the spooky intuition that it's an intentional expression of some superhumanly powerful hidden presence — and that you could characterize music in the weak way of words as something which behaves simultaneously as a materially sensible phenomenon and as a purposeful intentional utterance, and ontologizes somewhere between the two? Musical entities are understandable as temporal-phenomenal things, but isn't 'music' in its holistically active form, like language in its total-systematic configurations, a learned disposition to shape sound-time input and to create shaped sound-time output in terms of a certain intuitive mode of ontologizing sound-time qualities?

A less dualistic story of music and language might propose that an initial experience of self-produced sounds, resonating back to articulate and dimensionalize the world of the infant sounder, specializes out at some life-point toward a more explicitly referential-systemic branch, and a more exclusively expressive branch. It might even make sense to think of these two stories as co-operational — the first as a story of observable development from the observation point of the quality-types available in the intersubjective world, the second as a possible story of the internal-world experience of self-development, of groping for, grasping, and ultimately being shaped in, the terms of those external-world ready-mades: 'language', and 'music'.

These stories may seem plausible, even sort of banal. But I perceive that they also imply something fairly sticky: that it's perhaps possible to have a single-valued single-consciousness experience of music, without the invariant simultaneity of a meta-text. In other words, music can be not necessarily what you hear it as, but, radically and uninviolably, what you hear as it. If this sounds like primal-experience sentimentality, propaganda for a return to the primitive, then it's implying an idealism which I don't share. You could possibly epitheticalize what I am thinking of as a move toward a 'quasi-primal' state of mind: in that I imagine a single-consciousness music experience as an experienced quality of total consciousness — a totalized foreground of awareness — but localized to single experienced episodes, not as any 'reality' of consciousness as a whole. In fact, there is a derivative intuition possibly implicit here, that consciousness itself may not be best theorized as 'a whole'. Nor is an 'innocent ear' imagined, or even desired, by my

stories: what I'm thinking is of that experience you yourself have had, at some time in your past, when you and some music ran together and got mutually blown away, transfigured for all time: in that episode, that music (or that unnamable thing that it was) constituted your entire consciousness: you were that music, that unrolling sound — or, better, there was no you, or that music, what there was was just that that/you unrolling: what 'transcendence' might mean, non-ideologically: there's no foreground/middleground/background polyvocality, just some holistic is, some unspaced happens. An episode where everything else in your historical world-past is not expunged, or even dysfunctionalized, just obliterated from the foreground of consciousness in the unary moment, and not linked to it in any determinate, literal, analyzable way. I think you have had this experience, at least once — else why would you be a musician now?

What I want to suggest about this kind of music experience is that it might plausibly be consequent on, and ultimately ontologized with respect to, a series of previous life-events speaking exclusively in the suigeneric language of music. 'Suigeneric' does not signify 'isolated', or even insulated, just relatively discrete in the total cosmology of consciousness. Floating independently within the global consciousness-bubble along with, in some loosely determinate relative configuration, everything else in your momentary mind-world. Of course the interdependence of everything is not in doubt, but it probably isn't designable in any one intracoherent language; although everything has to do with everything, and everything is affected by everything, not everything is intercommensurable with everything.

How would music discourses even happen in the mythic world of such a fantasy? Of course they would (probably). That much impact on people's consciousnesses is going to engender urgencies which ultimately, inevitably are going to demand verbal processing. At the fading point of intense experience, discourse is a way to feed off of vivid experience, to try to hold on to it, to have it beyond its live-action-time, to maybe re-position it (and maybe yourself) so as to be able to re-experience it, perhaps to fix it as a permanent renewable asset of consciousness. And relevant discourse happens in any expressive-linguistic mode: poetry, mathematics, acoustics, physics, psycho-science, socio-science, anthropology, medicine, metaphysics, theology, analogy, metaphor, musical composition, graphic art — even music theory: people's discourse needs to assume the images of their obsessions; and meaningful music stories will get told in every mode of telling.

The question for music then is not really about discourse; it is about how discourse is situated in the constellations of musicking behavior. Music alone, in its single-consciousness mode, can't satisfy the

intense urges toward interpersonal transactions which, in a variety of guises, come down to the creation and enforcement of social hierarchies, the production of selves as focal authoritized or dramatized personae, co-optive assertions of conceptual proprietorship — the whole armory of means of person-by-person control. Whatever its inexplicit inner psychic temperament, music is categorically — if not always purposely — anarchistic. Even less than thunderstorms can it convincingly hegemonize all by itself — thunderstorms too need a priest to supply the metalinguistic interpretative text which enforces their supernatural politicization. And you can easily see how the politics of musical meaning reflect pre-emptively from the qualities of metamusical discourses, which tell us what music is, and what it is like — something which a discourse about single-consciousness music experience can't do — and wouldn't wish to do. So musics acquire meanings, many meanings, many different kinds of meanings, meanings some of which are mutually incommunicado, and others of which are mutually incompatible, entirely by way of discourse, and its ear-training output of double-consciousness, discourse-driven, music listening. Post-discursive single-consciousness ear-training, deprogramming the double-text habit, retrieving consciousness toward the capacity for unary transcendence, pursues different music-expressive aspirations; perhaps coincidentally, it reinforces the implicit anarchism in music, leading away from the hegemonizing institutional orbit, verbally enabled and implemented interpersonal control. (Don't tell me I'm talking Dionysian and Apollonian here: those are serious verbal-cooptive meta-levers, totally subversive of unlabeled experience.) But even if someone, however momentarily, succeeds in resisting the tide of meta-conscious double-texting, their self-empowerment is hazardous: unplugging yourself from the security of socially well-ordered referents, you're drifting dangerously toward expressive decontextualization and aesthetic disorientation; and the consequences of widespread musical self-determination for coherent music socialization, or professional music education, would obviously be radically destabilizing, even totally disenabling. My own personal mode of resistance, apart from strenuous ear training in the form of explicitly focused real-time music making, has been to radically immerse discourse in music, to saturate it with my own music-sense and voice, to enfold it within music by making it <u>be</u> music. Trying for a not-music-ontologizing discourse to coinhabit the expressive space with a not-discourse-ontologized music. This produces, for me, very gratifying results; whether they have any bearing on the questions of discourse as a tool for — rather than just another subject of — music learning, thinking about music, conveying understanding or insight or theory or opinion, is less certain. So I have no claims to make about such texts, or

such a way of making texts, and certainly no idea that I know how other people should address these issues in their own lives; except that I think, if they're musically interested people, they might want to work it out for themselves. What I do have are some thoughts about the etiologies and interconnections of some things I've noticed recently, which you may or may not regard, as I do, as alarming.

III

[Part II of Black /Noise III]

IV

Music fills me full of things to say, which I can not have a way to say; I am, ineluctably, completely, … on my own: alone with music.

And yet, and perhaps even consequently, it's possible that music, in our culture, is drowning, may even already have drowned, in saying, in discourse; that musics as musics have become virtually unrecoverable except as illustrators of saying, as contentless placeholders used as soundless referents in deluges of program notes, pre-concert lectures, newspaper reviews, pedagogies, a whole headful of philosophical and theoretical and political and critical expressions identifying themselves in the name of music. Could it be that the seductive, imaginative, thoughtful, creative, intricate, acute, profound qualities of critical thinking simply become the entire residual experiential content of 'music' in our world; and, shorn of their music-determining power, would the texts of discourse simply be vacuous? And would music, leached beyond metaphor and model, dredged back up out of the morass of discourse, come up blank, faceless, voiceless, meaningless? Deprived of linguistic explication, music, in a verbal world, really doesn't signify anything; it doesn't even signify nothing. Beyond metaphor, without representation, bereft of discourse, then, is there still, can there still be, something to call 'music'? Is anything 'musical' left over after the metalinguistic attributions to music of all its qualities are deleted, or transcended? Can music be significant, even if it doesn't signify anything? Another way to ask: is there some other dimension, some other type, of human reality outside of verbal-linguistic reality, but within the verbal-hegemonic world, where the single-experiential double of what is called 'music' has its own identity? Of course —

within verbal reality, there are non-linguistic entities and phenomena: raw sounds, for example. So beyond metaphor and representation and discourse music could still be ontologized as just sound; and maybe this has been the outpost of valiant efforts — like John Cage's valiant efforts — to rescue the aesthetic value of pure sound in our ears. But if it's part of music's identity as a phenomenon to be cognized as *human-intentional*, like a shout, or a petroglyph, and not just as some incidental physical-sensory object or phenomenon (whatever the serious independent energy of that kind of aesthetic surface), then it's got to be some kind of utterance, in some kind of language: it has to *mean;* that's intuitive. And maybe that's what has made it plausible, given the overwhelming plurality of people's experiences and cognitions in this culture, to think that music must mean *something,* in order to be, as they feel it to be, *meaningful* — namely, that it must be a kind of language, in the same sense that verbal language is language. So what discourse is desired to do, and is read as doing, whether it's theoretical or metaphorical in style, is ascribe meanings to music, essentially transferring meanings it specifies into the ontological space of music itself. Read this way, theoretical discourse is not descriptive, or analytical, and so-called metaphorical discourse is not metaphorical; rather they are directly, aggressively *ascriptive:* they transfer into music itself the very characteristics and functions of representation and metaphor they attribute to it. So verbal configurations like 'scale-degree chord numbers', 'Sonata form', 'Schenker-level', 'Fibonacci series', 'combinatorial set structure', 'masterpiece' do not, in their most pervasive applications, function to represent musical phenomena; nor do metaphors like 'violence', 'crystallization', 'loneliness', in their most pervasive usages, function to describe anything necessarily in music; most of the time, it seems that music is being conscripted to stand for them. In both cases, the theoretical and the metaphorical, what happens is a reversal of what you might call the 'descriptive relation': rather than the words 'I-chord' or 'repetition' being used to represent something which is in music prior to their application, what happens, by the alchemy of discursive application, of ontological transference, is that something in music is caused to be, and to represent, the I-chord or the repetition: some moment of music becomes a I-chord moment, some moment of music becomes a repetition moment, some music becomes a repetition-structure, it's cognized, perceived, experienced, ontologized as such, reduced to being that. So, too, can Beethoven's Ninth Symphony be caused to be ontologized as a metaphor for violence, rather than the discursive word 'violence' being ontologized as a metaphor for it. When this happens, if this is what happens, music becomes its own exterior theory, its own analytic model, its own distancing metaphor: it reduces to a surrogate for verbal language, an

encrypted language-code, a relatively vague and feeble and inexplicit form of representation. And, given their essential inexplicitness as representation, all musics are radically neutral, absolutely unresistant, fully compliant in any sense you care to require of them to become any ascription or analysis, any mode of ontologization, you decide to impose upon them, in your own perception, or in the perceptions of anyone who uses your discourse that way. If I try to imagine extra-textually how Beethoven's music is violent, I'm unsure how to project it explicitly onto other experience: it's not like watching a video of an episode of violence; and I can't determine whether to image the violence as being inflicted on a man, woman, child, — Beethoven, me — or by "a bloody fist upon a splintered table", as Adrienne Rich's story goes. Discourses, stories, and theories, unlike music, are highly explicit and as powerfully determinate within the realm of verbal-language reality as music is indeterminate within that realm. So the ontological transference between text and music goes only one way: you can cause the theoretical construct, or the metaphorical image, to be heard in the music, but you can't really read the music out of the discursive text, so long as it's still perceived as *discursive*. The looming spectre of music, sustained intact behind the impenetrable ontological barrier, can enliven the text expansively; that is intrinsic to the referential-experiential character that inheres in language. But the invasion of the text into the perceptual space of music, because music is quintessentially non-referential, is radically reductive, and deadly. Music can literally become language, but only by losing the musical; language too can literally become music, but only in an impoverished way that also loses reference, the essence of what is linguistic.

Consider a discourse like Susan McClary's remarkable provocative analysis of a patch of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which speaks of "one of the most horrifyingly violent episodes in the history of music." Where does that get its vividness, its cutting edge? If you apply it directly into the music, it develops an enormous polemical energy, by ascribing to Beethoven's music a reductive character, which it can then be heard to have: namely, Beethoven's music becomes a metaphor for "one of the most horrifyingly violent episodes in the history of music". On the other hand, if Beethoven's music remains external, a looming spectre, its image invoked as an abstract signifier internal to Susan McClary's word-drama, it contributes to that drama in a particular way; the drama, rather than the music, acquires an intense expressive edge. The looming spectre of Beethoven's piece would then be in Susan McClary's text like other insightfully distorted reflections of reality are in works of literature: the mandrake root in a John Donne poem, the town of Balbec in a Proust novel, the trial of Socrates in a Plato dialogue. Then the direction of reference is inward; the forms of the

poem, the novel, the dialogue are the realities they create with these referential images, the dramas they ontologize around the looming spectres they invoke: no practiced reader allows them to ontologize the looming reality-spectres themselves (think of "Gloucester, Gloucester"). The cliché about Sigmund Freud's naïveté or intransigence as a contemplator of expressive phenomena was that he converted "art into text" — this is said derisively, or at least critically. But such a reverse ontologization, the transference of the identity of a text into the identity of a music, is virtually the norm of our world of musical discourse, theory, criticism, description, pedagogy.

Why do discourse, theory, and pedagogy take such an apparently perverse turn? Why does the 'truth' of ascription, according to either the pre-postmodern intellectual paradigm of physics, or the post-postmodern intellectual paradigm of law, seem a more plausible reading of musical discourse, by so many of its makers and users, than the creative imagery of description, of self-defining responsive intellectual drama — why is it counterintuitive to musical practitioners to read musical discourse more like poetry, say, than like mathematics or geology? Why is discourse read as if it was seeking to be true, rather than just expressive, interesting, engaging, creative, imaginative? You probably wouldn't read John Cage's ideas about music as 'true' or 'false', or Jim Randall's evocations of Tchaikovsky as 'authoritative' or 'persuasive', however enthusiastically or negatively you responded to them. So why does this attribution seem to correspond with the rhetoric — mostly borrowed from the physical, cognitive, and social sciences — which music discourse commonly adopts? One reason, as I've suggested, is in the yearning to quantify, and justify, the intuition of 'meaning' received from music: it's not a tree, it's not an earthquake, it's an utterance, someone's musical utterance. And perhaps there is the fear that music, in the way we care about it experientially, would vanish, would be experientially neutralized — nullified — in the absence of representation-ascriptive discourse. I'll leave that issue for later. But another reason, more important in that it explains the persistence of the use of discourse and theory and story-telling about music in its ascriptive form, is that only if the discursive transaction flows in the direction discourse → music can actions in the verbal-linguistic world be objectified, can they be made usable to control, institutionalize, hierarchize, authorize their thought — empower themselves interpersonally with respect to music in music's presence as a tangible field of political-social interaction in the verbal-linguistic world. In the nonverbal-linguistic world such facts just don't exist; they are verbal facts, symbolic facts: language, as Pierre Bourdieu puts it, is symbolic power, at least in some of its most egregious usages. If music is not forced to represent, it remains self-determinate, non-negotiable as

material for social empowerment, for institutional capital, for hierarchization of experts and practitioners, for the verification of historical and scholarly accuracy, for the enforcement of ideologies, for the whole business of and around music in the 'real world'. Non-ascriptive description looks but doesn't touch — like poetry, it is appreciable but inapplicable. And — I'm repeating myself — any discourse can be received as either ascriptive or non-ascriptive, can be read either way, used either way: it can be regarded as a valuable access to someone's vivid ideas and visions, read as someone's internally self-formed verbal-intellectual drama, rather than as an objectified prescription, instruction, or proposal for application. But given the strength of ingrained habits of music-intellectual behavior, and the social order of the music-intellectual world, it is possible that such non-ascriptiveness can only be effectively achieved by discourse framed in a blatantly non-referential dialect, unusable as representational attribution, and non-verbal at least in the sense that poetry is nonverbal, that it creates an at most neoverbal, neolinguistic reality.

Remember the other question, the epistemic rather than the political one: how can we theorize a nonverbal, a musical 'reality', as opposed to a verbal 'truth'? And what, in such a reality, might the referent of 'meaning' be? Speaking of the larger class of linguistic phenomena, encompassing language as well as music, I've said: "to be: is: to mean". That's in *Language ,as a music.* A music is not a tree, or an earthquake, right, but it's also not a story, a fact, an opinion, a structure. Metaphorically, music is said to be, and can be, any of these things; but except in the most extravagantly abstract fantasies, such semiosis is never literal or exact or rigorous, but always looks across an unfathomable analogical gap. Cognition, nonverbally, does not entail recognition, or representation. Seemingly basic musical 'facts' such as repetition, chords, melodies, parametric geographies, etc., are really only verbal 'facts', primally opaque to music, but radically reductive to it if they're ontologically transferred into music as representational 'musical facts'. But since intersubjectivity is supposed to be restricted to the symbolic-linguistic, and since cognitivity is supposed to depend on intersubjectivity, how is it possible to identify in interpersonal space a linguistic but nonverbal 'music reality'? Obviously, not within verbal discourse: that would be circular. But think about this: if a musician can perform, in an intersubjectively sharable form, in an interpersonally accessible space, an 'interpretive' realization of her interior 'hearing' — her mental 'experience' — of some existing 'music', that performance — the aspect of that performance which is cognized as its 'interpretive' aspect — could be literally understandable as a *discourse,* nonverbal, nontranslatable, non-paraphrasable (except by an equally 'creative', non-objectifiable piece of materialized mental behavior), suigeneric as an

exteriorization of a subjective state, like the literal documentation of a 'thought' as it is experienced internally within the thinker. If this is intuitive, it is evidence, outside the inaccessible confines of inner experience, of the potential determinacy of nonverbal, 'subjective' experience, which, mostly, like thoughts, is perfectly intersubjective in principle but just not sharable by any known means of exteriorization. Perhaps this just sounds like a pitch for 'contextuality'; but actually, I'm suggesting that 'contextuality', supposedly a liberating music-ontological revolution, is really just another verbal-reality hook, another mode of representation reductively ascribable to music, something that, like its complementary twin 'indeterminacy', inheres in the domain of discourse rather than in the ontology of music.

I want to go a little further: Is 'understanding' music really what people are after in seeking to receive or produce it? Is it perhaps something else, some way of thinking and expressing almost ontologically required to be opaque to the category of 'understanding'? You could suppose, in fact, that precisely insofar as people value music, they value its liberation from the linguistic orders of 'truth', value its intense 'virtuality', value it precisely insofar as it offers an experience of reality without reductive imagery, representation or definition. And since language is perforce opaque to nonverbal reality, can only parse truth and the laws of logic and science, anything which purports to be music-explanatory discourse is predestined to fall short of its music-explanatory aspirations, because of its essential indeterminacy with respect to the experiential ontology of perceived music — at minimum in the Wittgensteinian sense in which the logicized rational reconstruction of cognition actually occupies a cognitive territory incoherent with that which it wishes to explicate. In consequence, 'truth'-claiming language about music has the effect — as I've said — of transporting music into its domain, verbalizing it, and de-ontologizing it as music, converting it into the linguistically true rather than the musically real. Translated into pedagogy, this transferent activity has the effect of converting music hearing into symbolic name-representation, and an instant translation of sound into language, in the interior of the perceptual transaction itself. Why is this so often the preferred path of metamusical behavior, in its theory and its pedagogy? If one thread of music theory has its antique origins in the investigation of the mathematical properties of physical resonating bodies, another — the one which comes down as pedagogy — appears to have had its origins in tactics for the training of singers, a methodology to enable them to learn to reproduce complex polyphonic music by various mnemonic devices, without having to understand, cognize, or experience it as music. People were being trained to produce musical experiences for others, not to have them themselves.

The residue of these histories is observable even now, even with the intense sophistication of contemporary musical theory and its teaching methodologies; that residue persists not so much in intention or even in method, or content, as in the underlying continuity of the subject matter of music as a school study. Perhaps that has something to do with the sociologist Howard Becker's observation that of all institutions in our culture, musical institutions are the most resistant to deviancy or innovation. I don't need to demonize teaching or discourse to suggest that their purposes, histories, and effects need to be carefully studied and clearly re-theorized in order to assure ourselves that what is practiced in these areas is to the benefit of music as a medium of expressive art and a form of creative thought.

If things merely *are,* they don't *act:* they are not, at least not directly and literally, instruments of power through coercion, conviction, or manipulation. Hitler may have invented himself by using Wagner's music, but Wagner's music did not invent Hitler. Long ago, in *Meta-Variations,* I proposed that all theories are self-fulfilling, that no theory could tell you *if* something was 12-tone, or in C major. What a theory did was provide a vocabulary and a perspective from which you could investigate what that piece could possibly be *as something* 12-tone, or in C major. However removed that "as" was from "truth", it's still too close for me now, because I perceive that the musical part of music is never the sort of thing that could possibly *be* 12-tone, or in C major, or lonely, or violent. Nor is it "just music" either, in some undifferentiated sense. In its own language, it's fully specific, just not specifiable; fully meaningful, just not translatable; fully existent, just not representational.

V

[Part III of Black /Noise III]

VI

A music musically 'real' but verbally indeterminate — or at least verbally neutral — susceptible to infinite experiential variety and unlimited creative response, but opaque to judgment; a discourse expressive and committed but removed from the territory of truth or authority; a pedagogy intensely holistic but non-abstract and untestable, are all subversive to the existing social order of musical things. They cannot be controlled or institutionalized without being transformed into their negations. They threaten to materialize a world of acts which are expressive and rational but not manipulative or usable as criteria of judgment. Can our world stand to have any even so insignificant a stratum of it running around loose like this? The experience of music ontologized as a music may resonate deeply with the experience of life; and although most experience of life may itself be deeply linguistic, that particular resonance of life in music is deepest, and most radically dangerous, when you know and value that music resembles anything else in your life, anything in your extra-musical experience, just not *literally* — but *musically*.

I can imagine reimaging music as the residue, even the antithesis, rather than as the avatar, of semiosis, offering a holistic, suigeneric, uninhibitedly hedonistic psychedelia impervious to predications from outside its self-determined introstruction. I perceive verbal discourse as poetry, hardly less estimable because its actual provenience may be ontological creativity rather than paraphrastic explication. To be 'creative' in this sense is to be understood as making new things — 'neolanguage' in the case of poetry, which is in this sense as 'non-verbal' an artform as is music; 'neosound' in the case of music in composition, performance, or audition — rather than just rearranging things that already exist for clarity's sake, without, supposedly, changing what they are thereby. Music, received as music, might still be — would almost certainly be bound to be — enriched and suffused by everything else in your life, your history, your world, just in no foregrounded, obtrusive, double-imaged, definable, describable way, being itself unspecifiable in its transcendent metamorphosis of 'sounds' into 'a sound'. As music, music has to be its own interior discourse, its own, only, fully concrete metalanguage.

VII

[Part IV of Black /Noise III]

* "...before all distinctions between form and content, between signifier and signified, even before the division between utterance and the uttered, there is the unqualified Saying, the glory of a "narrative voice" that speaks clearly, without ever being obscured by the opacity or the enigma or the terrible horror of what it communicates." (Maurice Blanchot, "After the Fact", translated by Paul Auster, in The Station Hill Blanchot Reader, edited by George Quasha. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill, 1999.)

Fargo, N.D., November 1998/March 1999

Reflections on Cardew and Wolpe: Vignettes of Old Masters I

benjamin boretz

Cornelius Cardew: *Treatise* (1963-1967)
Jim Baker, Carrie Biolo, Guillermo Gregorio, Fred Lonberg-Holm, Jim O'Rourke (players), Art Lange (conductor), Steve Metzger (recording engineer), Peter Pfister (mastering), John Corbett (liner notes).

A score such as Cornelius Cardew's *Treatise* belongs as much to the education culture as to the compositional. Because its most salient social characteristic is an imperative provocation to composition: if you are drawn to this score, and if you want to engage it, to perform it, whatever, you can only do so by strenuous encounter with more of the fundamental issues of composition than blank-slate composition is likely to enforce. In fact, Cardew's score is inverse to the traditional music score — and irrelevant to the normal avant-garde score — which may be described as confronting a user with a performance situation many of whose terms are pre-delimited, and many of whose parameters are predetermined (under the normal interpretations of such scores). Decisions of all kinds concerning possible sound-making, expressive, and performative behavior are made by someone, and those decisions are encoded in the command-systematic images graphically inscribed in the score. The compositional decision-field, in short, is defined, delimited, and narrowed by each of the scored symbols. In Cardew's score, the graphic images not only don't narrow the range of decisions which have to be confronted in order to 'play', they function precisely to expand them into areas which are likely never to have been considered open to re-examination — or even perceived to exist. So where the program-note writer for the *Treatise* album says that "Cardew's *Treatise* invites fanciful readings. In fact, it invites any kind of reading" * , I think this is true only from an angle of approach which looks to a score for instructions how to play, rather than provocations of what to think about (not what to think), what qualities of experience, time, sound, idea, relationship of persons in a socio-expressive situation need to be accounted for (not how to account for them). This is a radical idea of score-making — one, as I began by suggesting, oriented to learning, to expanding people's own initiative toward their own consciousness-raising and creative

development rather than toward exhibition or the fulfillment of agendas of virtue or awareness or expression thought out and codified by a controlling composer; if you work at Kenneth Gaburo's *Twenty Sensing Exercises,* or Pauline Oliveros's *Bonn Feier*, or any of her Sonic Meditations, or Christian Wolff's *Sticks and Stones,* Stockhausen's *Seven Days,* or any of the scores in Roger Johnson's anthology *Scores*, you will be aware of — and subject to — the point that all of these scores are designed to make a difference in some particular respect in the experience of players and/or witnesses, or in the sonic or aesthetic result. Or to cultivate specific types of sensitivity training, for interpersonal awareness (Gaburo), aesthetic awareness (Kenneth Maue's *Water in the Lake),* or performance behaviors (Barney Childs's *The Roachville Project).* Many of them are formulated in terms of what outcomes are aimed for, without supplying the resources to get there — a somewhat bizarre reversal of the 'classical' music situation, where a score supplies a wealth of materials with no explicit articulation of what music is supposed to get made with them: here are some music-making materials (notes, etc. in sequence), for you to make whatever music with ('classical'); as against ('avant-garde'): here is what music to make, but you provide the materials (whatever notes in whatever sequences, etc.). My own 'speculative' scores, while they strenuously leave outcomes open to real-time composition, nevertheless are conceived with the idea that their input will 'make a determinate difference' to the sonic/experiential output, though they do not preconceive what that difference will be. All of these (and there's no implicit relative valuation in these observations) are variants of the traditional orientation to an outcome, an output, somehow, at whatever distance from explicit predetermination, stimulated or coerced or manipulated by the texts of the scores. But I think Cardew's score is over a radical threshold beyond all of these in being reconceived from the opposite end, the end of radically opening, rather than bounding, the experience-thought- and composition-fields of those who engage them. The sounds heard on these CDs are a very satisfying manifestation of people engaging the kind of activity I've described here (the Sonic Youth version is too much of a snippet to count as more than a symbolic salute to an iconic forebear-figure).

(1999)

* John Corbett; other descriptions he offers: "...it is quite literally a map without a key. There are no suggestions for how many instruments should play, whether they should play all the shapes or single ones, how to translate the graphic notation into sound, or, for that matter, whether to read the score from left to right...it comes without a marker of scale...there are none of the duration indications that John Cage used....instead, the score is left to be interpreted not simply in terms of how it sounds but also with respect to how it functions and at an even deeper level, what it is for...Treatise is a board game with no instruction book."

* * *

Stefan Wolpe: Assorted CDs (see below)

Any music which makes it through the channels of public dissemination to your ears is of necessity aggressive; else it doesn't get through those channels. But compositional aggressions are not all alike: there is music which is aggressively coercive, like Beethoven, aggressively neutral, like most jazz and all of Stravinsky, and music which is aggressively manipulative, like Mozart and Wagner. (Of course, there are infinite varieties of composites of these reductively formulated personae: Mahler is often a remarkable loaded hybrid of coercion and manipulation.) Manipulation, in particular, has many faces, not all describable as beguiling or seductive: there is an entire literature of music which seems built to be reverse-manipulative, refractory to reception rather than subversive (Mozart) or insidious (Wagner). I think this mode (refractory manipulation) is a twentieth-century phenomenon — a necessarily democratic manifestation unlikely in a highly hierarchized world where underdogs survive only by the grace of overdogs. So here is Stefan Wolpe, whose music exerts its presence by an extreme of charmlessness and in-your-face opacity, not — like, say, Webern — offering you an intimate engagement with the interplay of structural materials, nor, like Sessions, drawing you in with drama, color, and impressive simulacra of expressive and textural depths while simultaneously immolating you in more polyphony than you can process. Wolpe's surfaces are nothing like these; there is an intense struggle orchestrated into them, a struggle, remarkably, between composer and listener: what keeps you listening, if you do, is the obvious presence of something formidable which cannot be penetrated in any obvious mode of reception. The unbending ruggedness of this music is astounding: at maximum power, it becomes an experience of awesome otherness, accessing an internal landscape spiked, barbed, rejective, snarling with ferocious compositionality — for it is, above all, ferociously compositional — what punk might be were it authentically, complexly, deeply, metaphysically — humorlessly, but with the reality and power of real genius — angry. This is in no way 'outsider' music *, for what it uncannily finds a way to compose is a species of terrifying interior experience which belongs to everyone, though it's doubtful that everyone wants to explore it.

Listening again to this music — which I, like most serious New York musicians, was particularly attentive to during the 60s and 70s — I've been struck by the literalness of Wolpe's compositional credo — "any bunch of notes", etc. — in practice. And, as in his writing, there's an interesting dichotomization, and constant cross-emphasis between the pitch-structural (motivic-set) expository messages of his sounds, and their concentrated gestures of superfocused expressivity:

*"The composer [Stefan Wolpe] living in New York today is an outsider in the best sense of the word. It is impossible to subsume him." — Theodor W. Adorno, 1940

All is pregnant and charged,
and depth is man's due.
and man's filter.
and all,
that is,
is what it is
All together.
And without that it is litter,
and if not litter, it's falling apart.
There is no dimension to turn to,
but the dimension of a continual collapse.
There is no door through which to enter,
and no wall to lean on,
And you walk a thousand miles,
and you haven't moved a bit.
You walked your feet bloody stepping on the same spot.
You are without time.
Because you have gambled wrong,
you have even lost the **Blossom of the Moment.**
You are without a moment.
The last thing to do is to kill time.
That is the not-so-witty suicide
in which to survive without getting hurt.
(But you have even killed your sensibilities.)
seek to get all points. They don't come easy.
But you will have learned which to do without
or how to knot them together.
I am concerned with not breaking my nose **on light surfaces.**
I am not the one who's taking risks in shallow waters.
There **are flat surfaces and deep ones.**
I am in praise of the deep ones.
But back to the pitch.

The strangely didactic slant of this writing — more Frantz Fanon than Igor

Stravinsky — is mirrored in sound, in a demonstrational kind of unfolding of baldly asserted sequences (the 12-tone theme of the piano Passacaglia is only the most blatant instance; the Symphony and almost every other piece lays its initial material out right up front too) whose straightforwardness is unnerved by the heat of its own assertion and the progressively rougher and denser situations it blunders into. The toughness and strangeness of this music is reason enough to resist the 'classicization' that the frontier creative art of my lifetime undergoes as it becomes historicist iconography; I still bridle at the smooth beauty with which contemporary players spin out the quartets of Bartòk whose slashing radicalism — aided and abetted by those astounding program notes by Milton Babbitt — on their original Juilliard Quartet recording — redefined what music might possibly be (and the same for the quartets of Schoenberg and Elliott Carter's of 1951). So I resist Austin Clarkson's desire to draw Wolpe's music into the canon of presentable masterwork by infusing his mostly lucid, knowing, and illuminating program notes with normal-music-sounding images: as, "the first movement is an essay in intimate lyricism" (about the Symphony) — not that it's inaccurate, or inapplicable, but rather that it doesn't seem the slant that captures where (I think) Stefan Wolpe's music is most artistically formidable.

Wolpe CDs I'm listening to:

Symphony No.1 (composed at Black Mountain College during the 1950s; 2nd concert version, 1994). Yigdal Cantata (1934). Chamber Pieces I & II (1965-68). NDR Symphony Orchestra; NDR Choir; Johannes Kalitzke. Arte Nova.

Quartet (Piece) for Oboe, Cello, Piano, Percussion (1954-55); Cantata for Voice, Voices and Instruments (1963). String Quartet (1969). Gruppe Neue Musik "Hanns Eisler", Leipzig; Cornelia Kalisch, mezzo-soprano; Robert Schumann Kammerorchester (Jürgen Kussmaul); Silesian String Quartet. WDR.

"Music for Any Instruments": Quartet for Trumpet, Tenor Saxophone, Percussion, Piano (1950-54). From Here on Farther for violin, clarinet, bass clarinet, piano (1969). Music for *Hamlet;* slow movement for flute, clarinet, cello (1929). Suite im Hexachord for oboe and clarinet (1936). Seven Pieces for Three Pianos (1951). Music for any instruments (1944-49): Three Canons; The Spheres of Fourth; Displaced Spaces. Ensemble Avance. WDR.

(2000)

remember that confirmation hearing----think back a ways----where some senator declared that "mediocrity, too, deserves representation"?
Well I've one-upped him.
Late on in mvmt.2, I aimed for stupid. (: the tired note; the flubbed gesture; the frumpy rhythm (----but deadpan; at low temperature; gentle; no horselaughs; no burlycue; with sympathy almost))
I even wrote "Quintessence of Stupid" into the score as a performance direction.
From day 1, Martin played it great.
But "Quintessence of Stupid" didn't click with him. So we talked it over.
We settled on "The Higher Doodling".
Months go by.
Concert.
Recording Session.
More months go by.
I play the edited tape for Steve Mackey.
Steve, unbidden, zeros in right there: "Ah! What a beautiful melody! ----it's sort of got an antique flavor to it."
So we've got Me composing Q of S, Martin playing the HD, Steve hearing an AF, and me feeling no pain: a Cozy, Wholesome vignette.
In which all Philosophy is Immanent.
(Which stimulates speculation)
1.Music is vague.
2.Music is sharp as a tack. People differ.
3.These guys aren't smart enough to get the message.
4.These guys aren't Stupid enough.
5.I just don't have what it takes to deliver the message.
6.Ain't no message: just soundpatterns awaiting perception.

7.Ain't no message: just an airborne Material Being, requesting infusion of an Animating Soul (namely, Yours----or yours----or yours ----or yours----)

(That "Stupid" headset still cuts the mustard with me: when I tried to delve back in & purge some flab, I almost couldn't:-----why?---- because I couldn't quite re-enter that Stupid Feel. And without it I wasn't with it.)

You'll probably figure which passage we're talking about.

But don't worry about it.

What I mostly wanted to explain about was a pitchfreak.

(You tell yrself stories too, my friend: tell yrself y'r doing X because yr shaky psyche is scared to get caught doing Y----Y being what y'v wasted too much time at anyhow----and anyhow y'r doing Z.)

(And what's worse, if I'm contriving to hear what I'm composing, I'm schizoid from the outset:

1.I'm the mobilized & engaged creator nurturing, and urging on into the unknown, a burgeoning organism;

2.I'm the omniscient critical listener (warped by what animus? judging from what pedestal?) poised to reaffirm, or reject, or redirect, in detail, or in toto.)

(And if I'm supposed to stay awake 'til I get there----& if I can't sit still for humming to myself and taking it down at dictation---- then the envisioned outcome had better seem fetchingly, intriguingly, elevatedly, even irritatingly, Other(----than Me).

}Me vs It{

(Let's face it, it's only when my Burgeoning Organism manages to separate itself from me, begins to Demand of me, becomes Other, that it seems Real.)

(and turns me into a Method Actor.)

(So the outcome will stand in no simple relationship to Me, ----is not directly expressive of Me in any uncomplicated sense. It's a distinct Being (in the sci-fi, not the Heideggerian, sense) which, however, will now cut loose from its animating, inspiriting force (namely, Me, party of the 1st part) and seek a serviceable Soul out there somewhere (e.g., You----or you----or you----or you----)

___And found Martin!

___Party of the 2nd part!

(What the performer delivers to you, companho, is to You just some more Incoming Airborne. (Brings you in range.)(Puts you in the picture.) Now you've got to Animate on your own, all over again(:___!Party of the 3rd part). if You screw up, Martin is wasting his time.)

And you can't put music on like your one-size-fits-all socks.

Your sock just cuddles your foot all snuggly, be your foot ever so fat, ever so long, ever so corny, ever so dainty, ever so noisome, ever so twitchy.

And your foot comes out the same as it went in.

And your sock, if it's any good, resumes its sockshape.

But music can mess with your psyche bigtime.

(Close Listening?----That's not the half of it.)

Your psyche, while on duty animating Incoming, may actually, at least for the nonce, undergo some refinement, some corruption, some harrowing, some soothing; some filtering, some mellowing, some pulsating, some exaltation; some acquiescence; as indeed may the music.

(So whether some incoming airborne carries Deep Comfort or Deep Danger (or just Socks that Won't Fit) depends on You ----depends on Your Sillyputty Soul, on what Shape you're in, what shape you can Get Into, the shape of You(----or you----or you----or you----or you----)

}It vs You{

(Get it? Perceive the Pattern?)

(Sure, some music can't handle the traffic; can't get thru all those re-fittings without some sagging or some toning of essential tissue; some freshening or some staling of substance.)

(Like Hindemith's Whatchamacallit.

Don Martino claims it gets a little worse each time they play it.)

Never mind.

What you've got my word on is this:

I've spared nothing to sweat any dead tissue, any vapid substance, out of it:

All it asks of you is your soul.

}It vs All{

___Have you no regard for Your Audience, Sir?

(You want True Confessions, right?)

(OK. So I've moved on. Left GAP6 behind me. Right: I'm just a listener now. Like You(----or you----or----).

}It vs Me{

(So have I got what it takes? or what.)

These perspectives are presumably repugnant to biological science.

The NY Times (01/01) reveals that, for advanced researchers into animal behavior, music is "musical sounds".

Sounds that "entertain".

And there's a "limited number" of such sounds.

----of sounds that entertain "the vertebrate brain".

(Have you wondered why some music doesn't seem to get anywhere?)

All subject, of course, to the "laws" of composition----these laws being "similar" among whales, humans, and birds: pentatonic scales and ABA forms, that crowd.

___Hey folks!

___Your innocence Screeches.

You demean long recognized & celebrated musicalities among animals with your feeble (,not to say defunct) music-analytic misapprehensions.----not to mention the dignity of human thought.---- or the sanctity of newspaper space.

___Open your Face!

Do you get a buzz when whalesong goes pentatonic?

Well go blow your mind on Rob't Hall Lewis's whalesong symphony.

Do you get a buzz when birdsong reprises the A-section?

Well go blow your mind on Messiaen's Catalog.

(a Pitchfreak

!ignores!

Prefab. (: scales; forms; laws of composition)

!revels! enviously

in, &

!spurns! Detritus

from,

The Demise of Classical Tonality.

:Some composers----think back a ways again(----I go way back)----

regretted the loss of the Referential Tonic.

(Not me.)

In response, they proceeded to 1.extend, loosen, or reformulate the principles of tonality to govern an enlarged harmonic inventory or 2.stomp the shit out of some complicit, but unresisting, note. Often C.

:Some regretted the loss of Harmonic (triadic) Homogeneity.

(Me too for a while.) (I cured myself)

In response, they proceeded to 1.proliferate some favored sonority, maybe sexier, maybe hardassed or 2.recirculate the 12, soon & often or 3.impregnate 2. with 1.

These responses yielded valued, seminal music.

:But what I most regretted in both the Demise and the Responses(----keep thinking back a ways----way, way back) was the loss of vividly individualized, distinctly (even multivalently) energized, pitches: of the "color" or "tendency" or "charge" accruing to a pitch thru its involvement in a pitch network (: Take the supertonic's leadingtone, or a flarped 13th: you don't wait to smoke it out in college; it's right there in your face from cradle to grave): instead, we were left with an even distribution of neutral "free & equal" positions in a uniform space, uniformly lusting after stringbass harmonics and fluttertongued flute; a propensity for the sound of everything in general to bomb out the sound of anything in particular; and an exaggerated reliance on proliferation of structures (: keep in mind that the bite of tonal modulation lay not so much in "doing it at a different pitch"----which runs shallow----as in the concommitant recoloring of each pitch retained----which runs deep: Transformation outranks Transportation.).

(Alright already.)

___Could it be Gender-Specific?

(the Pitchfreak

!faces out! from Whatever nexus of cultural drift

!out breaks! " " " " " "

!transmutes! " " " " "

!trumps! " " " " "

You're damn straight!

an Animal Rights piece, maybe.

or a caper for Twisted Tutu?

Sure. Fine. You Bet. I'm Psyched!

except Nothing Happens:

like Shaking Hands with Myself. I don't get the Pitch.

(a lot of Elite types hang out at princeton)

___Post-Tonally. !CONTEMPLATES

___Post-Twelvetonally. !THE 88's

(by what authority?)

!Turns On!

!invokes! the innards & oddities, the inclusions & exclusions, the outreach & connectivities, of whatever small----Small is Good---- groups of pitches out there evade, or solicit, attention. (Like the birds, like the whales, like the gods, their voices must be heard.) Don't "structure" them: Heed them: Interact, as with another person: listen; adjust; dispute; assess; respond; support; undermine; absorb. (They will reciprocate.) You didn't create or shape the world. You're merely responsible for it. (Krishnamurti, sort of)

___are you testing any Major Markets?

(Roger Sessions composed directly onto the transparents, in ink: "You see, I know what I want.")

(not Me.)

(I'll know what I want when my piece is done with me.)

!Whoop-de-damn-doo!

___Sir, this is unProfessional Conduct.

(wasn't classical tonality a Subtle Interlocutor?----not Rules; nor just a "resource")

___!infiltrates! (the unfamiliar)

___! " ! (" peculiar)

___! " ! (" repellent)

___!camps out! (on rough ground)

___!outGrows!

----faithful to Them.

----elucidative of Me.

(is Communication a Dirty Word you ask)

(is this Truly Reflective of the Post-Modern Predicament of Your Average Western Persons Baby?)

!Purports to Believe! that

out there in that not-all-that-limited number of various-sized

(----large is ok----)groupings, and successions of groupings, of

pitches; out there among their commontones & asymmetries;

lurks

a plethora of inklings

of textures, of tones of voice, of dimensionalities, of

temporalities, of trajectories,

special to each

& illuminatory of & illuminated by

each,

awaiting discovery and invention:

figments, waifs

lurking

to become beings

(----in the sci-fi, not the Heideggerian, sense----)

to seek your acquaintance----

to Suck your Soul.

(what I said, ma'am, was "incoming")

___It's Between I & Y'all

)on you

[jkr]

Benjamin Boretz

I/O

–February/May 2001

Written first as a solo reading for a symposium on "Music and Politics" conceived and led by Judy Klein at the March 2001 conference of SEAMUS (Society for ElectroAcoustic Music in the U.S.) in Baton Rouge whose other participants were Jon Appleton and Anna Rubin; rewritten for two voices and performed with Karen Eisenbrey at a meeting of the Washington Composers' Forum in Seattle, May 2001.

Speaker I

Speaker II

poetics . . . ?
. . . politics?

"A Year from Monday"?
Lament for the Victims of Hiroshima?

modalities of expressive behavior . . .
. . . modalities of interpersonal behavior?

Ancient Voices of Children?
Gesang der Jünglinge?

is there a difference? . . .
. . . is there a relation?

Scratch Music?
Maledetto?

:politicizing the aesthetic . . .
: . . . aestheticizing the political . . .

"Feminine Endings"?
The People United Will Never Be Defeated?

. . . are they the same thing?
are they even anything
discriminable? . . . or meaningful?
– about expression? . . .
. . . or perhaps only about :'art'?

Tibetan monks dancing
on San Giorgio in Venice?
The Shaggs?
Tabuh-Tabuhan?
The Goleta Anarchist Music Ensemble?
Bulgarian village women chorusing
on Nonesuch CDs?

or really perhaps only about discourse?
(: in which the politicizing of the aesthetic . . .
signifies the subsumption of the expressive text
within the discourse,
as its instrument, its property?)

Shostakovich?
The Futurist Manifesto?
"Twelve-Tone Rhythmic Structure and the Electronic Medium"?
"On Musical Performance of Gender and Sex"?

. . . or in which the aestheticizing of the political
signifies the adoption by the expressive text
of the condition, the identity, of discourse?

4'33"?
Apollon Musagètes?
Ein Heldenleben?
I am sitting in a room?
Pli selon pli?
. . . ?)

. . . at the edges, doesn't
politicizing sloganize politics
into ideological weaponry;
doesn't aestheticizing dysfunctionalize politics
into iconic imagery,
like a shot of stimulus energy
spiking a kicky entertainment . . . ?

The Chairman Dances?
L's G.A.?
LA?
Bye Bye Butterfly?
Ode to Napoleon?
Different Trains?
For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy?

still, don't both music as poetics
– in its corporealization as 'art'
– and music as politics –
in its mode of activity rather than theory
– share an originary need,
even an originary strategy
directed toward that need?
do they not arise within
the same human predicament,
as the usual diametrically opposing responses
to a common dilemma?
is not their common issue
the vulnerability, the anguish,
the fearful alienation
of ontological isolation,
the terrifying sense
of helpless imprisonment
within the vulnerable psychobody
with no perceivable possibility
of credible interpersonal connection
to mediate the enveloping alienation of being,
growing, metastasizing as being itself expands?

Das Lied von der Erde?
Turangalila?
Soundings?
Momente?
Smalltalk?
GAP6?
Fire Music?
Europera?

the reflexive tack of 'art', the interiorizing creative tactic,
is to reify solitude itself (to borrow an image of Maurice Blanchot),
to create an interior world as palpable and inhabitable
as the external one, to populate the loneness of being with
fulness of substance and texture approximating to the
visionary fantasy of unalienated being.
as Maurice Blanchot says of the creative writer,
where he is, only being is.

intimacy (a polemic)?
t-wmukl-d?
Visage?
"On the way to becoming"?
Sauh?
Wang Wei at the Piano?
Forgetting and Remembering?
Earthlight?
Steam?
Philomel?

the tack of 'politics', precisely inverse,
is creative exteriorization,
reifies the exterior world as a multiplicative reproduction,
a symbolic objectification, of the self, producing a tangible,
if self-induced, interpersonal support system.
appropriating representation appropriates authority,
ultimately appropriates the identity of the collective to the self.
the oracle effect, says Pierre Bourdieu, a ... form of performativity,
... enables the authorized spokesperson to take his authority from
the group ... I am an incarnation of the collective, and by virtue of
that fact, I am the one who manipulates the group in the very name
of the group ... the violence that is part and parcel of the oracle
effect can never be felt more strongly than in assembly situations
[– Elias Canetti would single out the symphony concert –]
in which ... the professional spokespersons who are authorized
can speak in the name of the entire group assembled ...

"Against Plausibility"?
"Schoenberg is Dead"?
"Boola Boola"?
"The Agony of Modern Music"?
"Der freie Satz"?
"Caliban Reborn"?
"Queering the Pitch"?
Fluxus?
Soviet Iron Foundry?
Lament for Sarah?

but: consider: who – what real person – am I talking about?
who is the pure expressor, who is the pure politicizer?
what there is is, in fact, only all of us

– with different colorations and intensities,
all of us both expressors and demagogues;
self-explorers and self-asserters inextricably.
and so it is us, the creative musicians,
who can be observed, in varying modalities
of coloration and intensity,
to politicize our own poetics,
if only by betraying its non-negotiably non-verbal being
by circumscribing it with articulate discourse
– pre-empting the unmediated, unguaranteeable, uncontrollable intercourse
between the created expressive phenomenon
and its recomposing receiver
to reframe the interface so as to include us,
personified, corporealized, as ourselves
– just at the site where we had, precisely, managed
to nullify just that oppression, the oppression
of being too much with our selves to be within ourselves,
so as to have a world to be in.
and it is us, ourselves, the creative musicians,
who aestheticize the politic,
who ferociously reach out to engage strangers with our performances,
who appropriate to our anonymous anomalous expressive phenomena
the rubrics of their anxious concerns,
including at the desperate extreme
the reductive abstractions which catalyze,
symbolize in the public space the primal issues,
their – and our – simultaneous needs for and terrors of
significance made bearable in the simulacrum of togetherness
enabled by the imagery of public outrages, causes, occasions for war,
the whole media-cultural array of "issues" and "phenomena"
which we all addicted to the mass-hysterical euphoria-schadenfreude
credit as real, and their analyses or descriptions as rational
– we, needing strenuously to engage strangers,
appropriate to the expressive work
the exogenous energy latent in these symbolic political things
even if they inflate the scale of our own expression
so as to obliterate those poignancies uniquely articulate
within the expressive language itself
which we have so seriously struggled
to bring into being.

and so we become strangers too.
in the expressive space we have created.

yet it cannot be questioned that in every musically
expressive act there is also an innate, indigenous politics
– but a politics which by its nature as music is not
susceptible to being restated with discourse, and
whose messages are therefore subverted
by the gratuitous public-verbal politics
to which they are assimilated.
I said already that our complicity in
undermining ourselves is an outcome
of a particular complexity of expressive artists,
of creative musicians: that we could not survive
permanently affixed to the interior worlds we create.
the very socialization of our sound, its capacity to be
meaningful to others,
is a painful reconfrontation
with the essential alienation
and isolation
the expressive act is needed to ameliorate.
so the musician-artist rages to join her own lost world,
the very one that she by releasing her work
has created for them, rages not only to be able
to inhabit it with them like them,
but to inhabit it in her own name,
on her own account, not
– not like them –
as an anonymity
in the public audience space.
for her, anonymity
is a cruel dissonant pun
on the originary expressive
erasure of identity.
isolation recycled,

Futility?
Klinghoffer?
For the Uncommon Woman?
Intolleranza?
A War Requiem?
Kiva?
Golem?
Form for piano?
Time's Encomium?
Rothko Chapel?
Unit Structures?
Big Road Blues?
Vingt régards sur l'enfant Jésus?
Echoi?
Om?
Evocations?
Twisted Tutu?
Custer's Ghost?
Blue in Green?
Available Forms?
The Purposes and Politics
of Engaging Strangers?
White Writing?
"Compose Yourself"?
The Cave?
Sticks/Stones?
Sonic Meditations?
Koyaanisqatsi?
Rainforest?
Musica Elettronica Viva?
"Rules of One's Own"?
The Roachville Project?
"Meta + Hodos"?
"Speaking and Singing"?
"Noise"?
"The Beauty of Irrelevant Music"?
Urban Bushmen?
Once?
Mutatis Mutandis?

by the very means
of its remedy.

Key?
Private Parts?
On Being Invisible?
...the serpent-snapping eye?
Apo Do?

this treachery we practice upon our own expression cannot be evaded; it is equally essential to our survival as the expression it betrays; the betrayal, the alienation of expression, intrinsic to discourse and structure and exteriorization are the symptoms of the recognition that the interpersonal space may be real, or rather that the interpersonal space is real in its own specific way.

Ideas of Order?
Prometeo?

in that perspective, that political perspective, the molten mysticism of pure expression unmediated, released into the social space undelimited by these socializing dampers, is as likely to catalyze violence as to exorcise it.

Mobile for Shakespeare?
Mudgett?

our appropriation to our persons of the power of our expression may be deceitful and subversive, but the release of that expressive power in an undefined interpersonal space untethered by names and faces and sets of social manners threatens the release of energies far more ominous: music has a thirst for destruction, say Deleuze and Guattari; every kind of destruction, extinction, breakage, dislocation. is that not its potential "fascism"?

from the seven days?

if music is ontologized in this atavistic way as pure expression, pure mysticism, as molten volcanic energy, then its release unmediated into the social space is a direct route to violence and chaos, as surely as political energy running unconstrained into the personal and interpersonal spaces is a direct route to absolute tyranny.

explosante-fixe?

and just as discourse and structure alienate and mediate pure expression, thereby making it survivable in the social space, so do liberated

expression, empathy, self-awareness, reflection mediate, constrain, loosen the politically constructed power-assertive spaces.

"it's all yours"?

make possible that uneasy self-contradictory fragile network within which we, along with all our fellow-strangers, can realistically sustain a life pursuing significant expression, and without which, in some idealized world of extreme programmed politics or unleashed inchoate poetics, we could not.

Symphony of a Thousand?
ONE?

PROLOGUE TO ("Whose Time, What Space"): [A Seminar Talk at Eastman]

Benjamin Boretz

Olivia Mattis was giving a historical seminar at the Eastman School of Music on composers who were also critics; Bob Morris suggested she invite two such living people who — not quite coincidentally — live next door to each other in the surroundings of Bard College in upstate New York — Kyle Gann was the other — to talk to the seminar about their accumulated insights from within that role — Kyle for the last fifteen or so years writing for The Village Voice and elsewhere, I having been Music Critic for The Nation during the 1960s. Kyle talked first, recreating expansively, in the terms of his personal history, the celebratory story his book tells of the rise of "his" new generation of American music (Later on he did remark that he had once tried to live in [my] world, but it was too suffocating — he needed more oxygen, he said.) Our listeners were graduate students and professors — I saw among them my old friend Bob Morris and my new friend Martin Scherzinger; Martin in particular leapt into the post-lecture discussion, with familiar laser-energetic sharpness, indicting and convicting my texts of an interesting if possibly illicit fusion of naive romantic mysticism and manipulative disingenuous duplicity, perhaps accounting for their strange transformation of the sound of the music we listened to at the end. The talk after that went on so long that Olivia had to disappear to get her bus home to Buffalo well before we all finally subsided to the coffee shop next door. [My offering, slightly modified by afterthoughts, follows.]

Composing music, playing music, listening to music, thinking and writing about music: each and all plausible as a person's possible self-gratifying, self-fulfilling occupation. Writing public music criticism or professional discourse, like teaching, create a radically different existential condition: a projection of self-presence — the public enactment of a consciously constructed, self-overlayed persona rather than the localized being of a person — into the consciousness of others, where the effect at the receiving end is the main output of consequence. That's a vastly more complex and ambiguous social, ethical, intellectual, expressive situation. And pretty dubious and unpromising ground for self-realization, too. Looking back (it's been a long time) I wonder if there isn't just a terminal paradox in the idea of synchronously constructing a public-persuasive exterior persona alongside of an interior compositional-creative focus on the precise (it-)projection of such specific singular modes of being as: musical compositions. On the other hand inhabiting such a paradoxical duality does induce a singular intensity of self-reflection, a state of uneasy awareness that opens a perspective from which to view the entire host of paradoxes, confusions, denials by which the machinery of 'normal' public metamusical behavior is enabled.

Some such consciousness was at least implicit in some of my later — more radically "political" — pieces in *The Nation* during the late 1960s; and much of my work since then seems to have been written and composed in its shadow: so, in 1978, in *Language ,as a music,* I had my earnestly self-conscious professor-character say, in his letter to his old mentor:

> "We may not speak as we perceive, but we will soon enough be perceiving as we have spoken."

which, as I think about it now in the context of our subject, is less a

sophisticated program for social action or epistemic self-analysis than a symptomatic expression of the radical insufficiency in the distinctions being made in that professor's world among wildly disparate phenomena which all go under the same names, under the pretext or delusion of having common denotations. So 'music' can be fully encompassed by any number of mutually exclusive rubrics, each of which not only encompasses it totally, but is totally opaque to — and incompatible with — any of the phenomena or properties denoted by any of the others. Such as:

1. History. Politics. Theory. Ideology. They do, unquestionably, exist, and they each have their fact-telling vocabularies, each of which creates facts of a certain kind. But those predicates are not necessarily connected to the experienced facts of any person's life.

2. Take history: it is a determinate reification of the antecedence of our sentient existence, a demonstrated perspective on who we are, on where we are. Its truths are inescapable, and pervasively account for major aspects of the world that directly and significantly affect everyone's life. Nevertheless, persons do not perforce experience their conscious living as history, as historical events, or qualify their experience in the vocabulary of historical predicates. You could say that history proceeds, in a self-defined, self-contained way, on the outside of most people's lived lives, accumulating and accessible at any time by observations which can be perceived by anyone as true, without being, except in that sense, the actual content of anyone's experienced life-events. You could say that historical facts about your own time are public-global facts, and that there are what you might call person-localized facts which more likely constitute the experienced contents of being alive. So there are things which are unquestionably true of your lifetime as public facts about it, which are likely inter-opaque with your (person-local) experience of your own life.

3. So too there are truths about music as a historical phenomenon, as a public-in-the-world phenomenon: demonstrable historical facts, like aesthetic evolutions and contingencies, concretized meta-phenomena like "High Baroque", "Mannerist", or "Modernist", creating perceptions and associations; there are generalized categorical technical facts, as "tonal", "serial", "microtonal" creating wholescale substitutions in perception of named identities for raw sonic blips; particular theoretical facts like "6/4 chord", "Sonata Form", "hexachordal combinatoriality", "cadence", organizing perceptions into negotiable familiar packages; there are aesthetic-critical facts, like "post-Webern serial", "heavy metal", "world music", "indeterminate", "complex", "bubblegum", "post-Modern", "minimalist", "Gospel"; and cultural facts, like national identities, ethnic traits, sociological facts, like "glam ", "academic", " downtown"; political facts, like "hegemonic", "socialist realist" or "decadent"; ideological facts, like "feminist" or "formalist"; value-judgment facts, like "immortal", "masterpiece", or their contraries — all of which help you to locate yourself and some music in terms of appropriate personal distances and so-created typicalities — and whatever else. But how any of these predications, and which of them in particular, are going to determine or affect the experience of some music transaction at some person-time moment — or whether they will at all — is not given merely in that they are assertible and, given the pliability of music for any use words decide to put it to, demonstrable and — therefore — true. In other words, that something is true in its context doesn't mean it's relevant or palpable in every context; and in fact, all the different actual and possible contexts taken together — well, there's no way anyone can possibly take them all together at a time, even if there are no actual contradictions among them. In fact, there are — must be, at least in some initiatory phase of someone's life, purely private-seeming experiences of music which have apparent properties entirely unrelated to the whole array of public facts and images. Whether or not these private properties are

discernible within the environment of unremitting public-music imagery, and however powerfully their experiencing is affected and inflected by the public discourse, it is still in their terms that anyone's actual experience actually takes place. That in fact underlies any intensity of engagement with which the experience of music is invested, any way that music is not simply received as a verbal-type utterance, just articulated by other means, in music sound. The public-music imagery can create music experiences completely in its image: that is entirely evident and internalized within everyone in a common-cultural space, but in our common-cultural space at least, it's not what music, as music, as expressive art, ultimately does with, for, or to you.

4. Now every composer, in the act of composing, is composing in a historical time, in some historical way, some cultural way, some technical way, some theoretical way, some ideological way, some sociological way — but a composer, in the act of composing, is not likely to be consciously enacting these — at least, not all of these — ontologies within her composing-consciousness. It's unusual for a composer to think of her work as first and foremost an example of some category, a manifestation of some tendency — at least for the composer, there's something in the music outside, or at least over and above those categoricals — perhaps, in some people, as a superior performance within their terms. But in any case, as something personally meaningful outside of the cultural-historical-political-technical-theoretical-ideological-sociological meaning it may have.

5. So a composer, in writing publicly about music, might particularly — paradoxically — want to project the uniqueness and mutability, rather than the generality and certainty, of any musical experience, against the grain of the supposed public "need" for music — in favor of possible person-local music-needs (say, for deverbalized expression) of any possible persons within that public; might

transplant into the institutional world the language of the personal-experiential-ambiguous, rather than the external-world-certain, sense of some music. And so the music criticisms and descriptions composed by such people might reach for other vocabularies and grammars than those of the generalizing categories, to seek for a verbal territory commensurate, or trying to commensurate, with the sensed sense of music from within an essentially incompatible space. Which, naturally, tends in practice to produce confusions and incoherence — social, if not cognitive — not so different from those produced by the contradictions implicit in the institutionalized public exhibitions of the works of expression themselves.

6. Living, along with lots of other people, within this confusion-energized fragmented space, I've produced words, music, and committed persistent attempted pedagogy; the tensions and contradictions I've been talking about have been stimulating rather than inhibiting, like mind-sets that elicit particular intuitions whose ideological origins are not necessarily evident. An idea, that is, is not ever an illustration of points made elsewhere. But you may consider the following as a continuation of this text by other means:

[Whose Time, What Space is, at first, a text which I performed by setting myself up as an overloaded one-person ensemble, hanging as many soundmakers of various types on my body as it could possibly hold, then adding a couple more. That physical situation was a significant score for this performance, as you can imagine. Four music-descriptive texts follow, interacting in various ways with the musics they engage.]

[sound: "Whose Time, What Space", CD performance, 2002 version]

April/September 2002

(whose time, what space)

Experiencing music is bringing into being a singular time-space identity, received from a singular perspective of location.

A peculiarity of any music experiencing is that no physical time-space-location-occasion (observable and quantifiable in referential, intersubjective terms) can be designated as being the time or space or occasion identity of a music experiencing.

The real time and space and occasion of music experiencing are psychic time and space and occasion.

And the psychic time and space and occasion of a music experiencing are fully contingent upon the specific coincident physical times and physical spaces and real-world occasions within which that music experiencing occurs.

All the psychic and physical time, space and occasion identities are undetachably interdependent: are, in fact, indivisible and mutually create each other; a music experiencing is thus a comprehensive totality which comprises a particular convergence of identified psychic and physical times, spaces, and occasions.

(soundtrack 1)
(a Korean court music)

A five mile long
dragon moves through
a winding course,
all its parts,
organically connected,
following its head
around each corner at
inconceivably remote
distances, but always,
unimaginably,
inexorably, performing
the precise maneuver
predestined over a
humanly
unencompassable
space, from head to
inconceivably distant
tail.

Time
stretches
transcendently,
beyond any
measurable
flow,
by the
overwhelming
magnitude
of each
dragon-move
event.

(soundtrack 2)
(a Mozart symphony slow movement)

The universe is emptied of all but a droplet of matter, which as we enter it progressively metastasizes into a hermetically sealed unpeopled metauniverse composing itself in accumulating energies of complexly balancing dynamisms, growing again to the size of the whole universe again but now within our own transcendently reinitialized mental space. Time is invisibly undone, insidiously reconstituted under the force of the invisible inexorable intangible ferocity within the universe contained within this droplet of matter in which we are immersed, which is within our mind.

soundtrack 3:
(Milton Babbitt's First Piano Concerto)

You could call it unfiltered
megaSchoenberg in jazztime
continuity (not poptime or
modernmusictime, either)
but what I most love about
Milton's Concerto is its
gritted integrity being
defiant unregenerate militant
Positivist music, sternly askance
anent the softheaded stylewaffling
of the gegenwärtliche jugend,
a relentlessly uningratiatingly
polyfrantically multilayered
senseassertive discourse here
being socially publically sonically
displayed and exposed to be sure
but unmistakably demanding
for adequate reception ultimately
that it be studied minutely
and intently in printform
uncompromisingly exhaustively
inexhaustibly

(soundtrack 4)
(a panpipes orchestra in the Chilean Andes)

We walk together from church to ritual square, we breathe together as people breathing together breathe. Time is the natural sense of our flowing forward together, naturally infolding as movement and sense of movement together, unfolding as the unitary shape and space of our timeless, dimensionless being, together.

—may 1986
[BAB]

Prologue to "Little Reviews" (Life in the Slow Lane)

Benjamin Boretz

Despite what you may have heard me say lately, I believe there actually is at least one real-life, music-affecting sense for "the history of music"; one that rises up sharply as I engage to write my responses to an assortment of CDs I've been listening to lately: in my (and your) personal life-history, there are living composers, there are dead composers, there are composers who were born after you were grown up, there are composers who were living and died during your lifetime. Everything about what you hear when you hear any instance of music is contingent on this history of yours — for me, it's especially noticeable how different it is to confront the image and sounds of an ontologically "dead" composer and of one who died after I ontologized them as living — most especially, of course, when I knew them personally. The strange unsettling sense of emptiness, of the aftermath of fullness of presence suddenly blanked out, has no resemblance to the complacent equanimity, the sheer enveloping comfort, of the posthumous presence of a historic master — even the historic masters who were living but quite aged when I first came into musical consciousness, and even — like Stravinsky, Varèse, Wolpe and Sessions — when I knew them personally. I think such history profoundly affects how I experience music, or, indeed, what music I hear, mutating radically — ontologically — as time passes. So when I think of Irving Fine, or Seymour Shifrin, or Earl Kim, or Bob Helps, or Kenneth Gaburo, or Earle Brown, or Herbert Brün, or Ralph Shapey (the list is getting very long) there's a spooky sense of immanence intensely present but infinitely denied, a spectre of enormous energy looming powerlessly over its own immutable absolute absence.

And the ones born in my adulthood, composing intensely just as if they had always been there, strenuously

occupying conspicuous spaces in my musical consciousness that were never even there before — it has nothing to do with the stylistics of their music — produce a complementary but equivalently weird effect, sort of a blindsiding of fullblown energetic presence materializing fullblown out of nowhere. These are the ones I'm most insecure about listening to, or writing about, because I have a sense of being in the wrong place, from the wrong time — particularly, tuning in from the wrong 'social' position, to come at their music, to have it come at me, in an unmediated, uninhibited interaction. It feels like I need to distill my instinctual responses with a sense of, yes, all this history, to use that sense to distance reception from pure interpenetration, to be able to cultivate a meaningful aesthetic benefit, internally, and a considerate interpersonal appreciation, socially, for the character and substance of their sudden presence in my expressive world.

Another way of saying this — from the perspective of a reader or listener — is that everything you read about or hear in music is an output of a particular life history at a particular moment, and its truth or expressivity is the truth and true expressivity of that, and, really, only that, moment — as is this. What you get, if you care to, is access to that moment, as you compose it for yourself, out of your own moment. That I am 67 at this moment, male, born in Brooklyn, educated musically on the East Coast, perceive clearly that the world has been coming to a dismal end for some time now — and so forth — is objectively determinable; (and where that all crunches is anybody's call — and belongs to their story, of which mine is also one).

So, if you accept the conditions on this warning label, I invite you to read.

August 2002

doug kolmar

Virtual sculptures, spaciously concretizing time with (despite? rigorously bracketed by?) uncompromisingly rudimentary sonic ingredients, hypercontextualized into a counterintuitively expressive formalism. Johnny Chatterbox is different, a vividly ritualized piece of pure sound theater, dramatizing its own sounds as personae.

twisted tutu

tutu will work; twisted's a stretch. or does straight get kinky at a sufficient extreme? still, playfulness is encouraging when it's not too transparent a put-on. as these little pieces illustrate (were they composed to do that?). voices as drum machines is pretty kinky fun too, though drum machines as drum machines I don't know. i guess most music exists for the same reason most other music exists, to exist.

martin boykan

sometimes beautiful, sometimes impressive, always admirable, never 'interesting'—which gives you a challenge to think about after listening—so often 'interesting' is gratuitous, and so obviously marty's eschewal of 'interesting' is a direct confrontation with that gratuitousness, in favor of an unswerving fidelity to the integrity of composition craft—it sounds Brahmsian in the telling, but integrity extends to a rugged anti-mimesis too—though every gesture is tempered in the crucible of 'musical'—as well as 'modern'—and none is without its counter-gesture, or its counterpointing offset.

sebastian currier

But something got lost : The rhythm died. Though a lot is nice: sometimes scintillating, even dazzling; and imaginative, even wild sometimes, in idea and effect; but always right next to it a lot is expressively inert — making a generic instrumental, musicsound sound, with strokes laying there unproblematicizing, unproblematicized. or is it unprocessed, just laying it out so straight it's irrecoverably concealed? So knowing so irreproachable, so determinately excellent.

just an oldie, from 1978; but a gleaming icicle of a piece pointed straight up and down, glistening, shimmering, sparkling, pulsing, powerfully exploding but always in place not flowing forward—the imagery of—*gagaku*, the unfathomably ancient tradition of the absolutely alien others, an unkown, unknowable all-devouring space ennambulated with perfect control, consummate poise, insouciant polish, an Emperor's Nightingale in the heart of darkness...

* * * * * * * *

I've come to think that the (sound/time) identity, the perceived character, of any music doesn't derive primarily from its technique, or style, or materials, or medium, but from the attitude toward music, the conception of musical composition, it embodies. So when I listened to Bartók's 2nd violin concerto — a piece I listened to a lot as a teenager, and still was finding pretty intense — followed by Schoenberg's violin concerto, in Rolf Schulte's recording with Robert Craft — I was profoundly struck by a huge difference in substance between them, which I could absolutely experience as a palpable musical quality: the radical complexity of Schoenberg's conception of music, of that piece, not more 'serious' than Bartók's, but in a different class of commitment to embracing and realizing musical ideas of any degree of problematicity or difficulty; a lifelong vision is being pursued: this piece is not just 'a good piece' or 'a successful piece' but a piece of that lifelong effort, such that falling short of its authentic realization was more to be dreaded than the social rejection that might follow from its pursuit — no matter how acutely dreaded that rejection was, or how bitterly it was felt and resented (the egomaniacal conviction of infinite entitlement is also intrinsic to that music-compositional attitude). That kind of lifetime vision authentically pursued is surely what distinguishes John Cage and Morton Feldman and David Tudor and Merce Cunningham from the Downtown playboys and girls who idolize their coolness but have no stomach for their self-determination. The point is, you can hear it in —*as* — their music.

* * * * * * * *

louis andriessen

get past the wrong-note wrong-note music, the blatant in-your-face ripoffs (from a living anthology of American composers from Copland and Nancarrow to Reich — and doesn't forget Arthur Honegger's *Pacific 231*), the pooped-on Mozart and the souped-up *Earthlight* riffs, and there's a residue of odd, quirky sensibility, stripped-down aestheticism, cartoonish reductionist humor, deadpan negative expressivity (featuring some ice-cold vocal eroticism that's like terminal Kim), an extremity of chilled-out bare-note superdry unblinking what-you-hear-is-what-you-get surface (like Bennie Moten over a telephone wire) that makes, say, Lukas Foss's *Time Cycle* or *Phorion* sound like warm sticky sensuous romantic expressivity. within which somewhat strange terms there's a whole lot of musical invention, even a whole lot of music, somehow. it's an odd game, for sure; but it is about listening.

ralph shapey (1921-2002)

It wants to bloody me hurling itself against the wall of advancing time. To make it stop. To make it be space. To make it be here not now. To make it be necessary for total attention to be paid. To make it be Presence, to make Presence unerasable, timesafe, allpresent: Something. Someone. IT. Iterating permanently not reiterating again. Not initiating anytime ever. Over a desperately drivingly creative lifetime an unchanging aesthetic: a gutbasic monofocal vision: Greatness is Presence is Greatness. Always. But evolving aesthetically within, especially in the 80s and 90s from grey gritty miasmic soundliths of the 50s 60s 70s to some nuancing inner complexity some totally indigenous species of inflectional finesse, and even: sensory ingratiation. like in Evocations 4 where pairs of sounds, vibe and cello, piano and violin, wind entwining vertically bidirectionally tighter to the point of almost terminal circulatory inhibition before being holistically pulverized by a wipeout 2-tympani immolation; and here and also in Evocations 2 and Songs of Life an unexpectable new multichrome transparency recontextualizing the animistic bigdoglike immovably planted allforce primalsound (but still never ever insinuating mewly or padding deviously like cat or MortyFeldman mindhovering timesuspending soundloving surfacestroking). A lifetime of militant resistance, stonewall refusal, by the end a total still lonely old master of his own unimaginable oneperson solitary transcenmusical thing.

he conjures silences in infinite varieties, creates spaces in between where you never imagined there could be spaces to be vibrantly vacant. their emptinesses sharp articulate colors of hyperaesthetic inhabitations. there are no episodes. so there is a sense in which nothing happens. a music that starts from that place has a long way to go: his music goes to places of undesignable character, of unspecifiable action, of unlocatable position, of unclassifiable color, places that have no knowable expressive meaning but still you want very much to be there. and creates a social dimension a politics dramatized in the persons and actions of composer conductor player individual group which is there as something heard not just referred to. and especially heard in the silences: a nonideological workbook not a textbook; a musical laboratory about relevance not about attitude; about reified activated resonance living it not ideological imagery symbolizing it. interesting that such multivalent silence/space/concept music comes to him via jazz, that nonstop immovable univalent stonewall utterance space; but although I don't know the jazz he plays it seems more out of the Jack DeJohnette and Anthony Davis/Leo Smith music of the 80s, the Georg Graewe and John Butcher music of the 90s — or even out of the venerable Monk — than from the massively overdetermined world of Coltrane or the totally soundconditioned environment of Miles Davis or the immolations of Mingus. but still, this creative flexibility somehow secretes out of the jazz sensibility and context and not much at all from the temple of self-consciously elevated creative purpose. in any event something puts him out of the range of the other composers on his CDs no matter that most of them are also considerably of interest.

CDs:

doug kolmar

Strange Attraction
(doug kolmar)
Vivendi CD

twisted tutu

t wis tedtu tu p lay n ice (1999)
music by eve beglarian, Duke Ellington, Robin Lorentz, Guy Kluvecsek, Randall Woolf, Kitty Brazelton, Arthur Jarvinen
(eve beglarian and kathleen supové)
O O Discs 66

martin boykan

Elegy (1982) (Jane Bryden, soprano / Brandeis Contemporary Chamber Players/David Hoose, conductor)
String Quartet No. 4 (1996) (Lydian String Quartet)
Epithalamion (1986) (James Maddalena, baritone / Nancy Cirillo, violin / Virginia Crumb, harp)
CRI CD 786

sebastian currier

Vocalissimus
Theo's Sketchbook
Whispers
(Mosaic / Susan Narucki, soprano / Ayoko Oshino, clarinet / Rolf Schulte, violin / Martin Goldray, conductor)
New World 80527-2

roger reynolds

... the serpent-snapping eye
(Edwin Harkins, trumpet / Cecil Lytle, piano / Daryl Pratt, percussion)
Pogus 21025-2 ["all known all white"]

bela bartók

violin concerto No. 2 (1937-38)
(Dénes Kovács, violin / Budapest Philharmonic /Ervin Lukács)
Hungaroton HCD 31041

arnold schoenberg

violin concerto
(Rolf Schulte, violin / London Philharmonia / Robert Craft, conductor)
Koch 3-7493-2 H1

louis andriessen

De Stijl (1984)
M is for Man, Music, Mozart (1991)
(Gertrud Thoma, Astrid Seriese, voices / Shoenberg Ensemble / Aksa Ensemble / Orkest de Volharding /Rombert de Leeuw, Jurjen Hempel, conductors)
elektra nonesuch 79342-2

ralph shapey

The Covenant (1977)
Rituals for Symphony Orchestra (1959)
Incantations for Soprano and Ten Instruments (1961)
(Elsa Charlston, Bethany Beardslee, sopranos / Contemporary Chamber Players of the University of Chicago / London Sinfonietta / Ralph Shapey, conductor)
CRI CD 690

Evocation II (1979)
Songs of Life (1988)
Sonata for Cello and Piano (1953-54)
Evocation IV (1994)
(Joel Krosnick, cello / Gilbert Kalish, piano / Joel Smirnoff, violin / Lisa Saffer, soprano / William Trigg, percussion)
arabesque AR 26728

mathias spahlinger

Apo Do ("von hier") (1982)
(Arditti String Quartet)
Montaigne MO 782036

"und als wir" (1993) (for 54 strings)
(SWF Sinfonieorchester / Lothar Zagrosek, conductor)
col legno WWE 1 CD 31875

Extension (1979-80)
(Hildegard Kleeb, piano / Dimitris Polisoidis, violin)
hatART CD 6131

Program note for ***shouldn't we talk ?*** :

Forget Weirdnesses (: amazing multiphonics, sonic matches, extended resources, & all that) .

What I'm after, needs Ordinary; needs, as between percussion
and saxophones, the bald incommensurability that estranges them right there in their most routine, everyday, doings — like banging
on stuff
vs. *playing tunes.*

*Roughly, here's how my 4 mvmts go : {*Your Attention Please*}*

I.

Carnybark [BARI+PERC] hawks the World's Tallest Midget (Or Somesuch), whose brief Strut [PERC] Gets Nowhere.

[A puzzled
SILENCE ensues.] → ??Start Over?? ←

Yo! [BARI] Go! PERC assents.

& Solos Sententially.

ALTO unbuttons a jazzy, Practiceroom voice; whose licks PERC registers, then Waxes Sentential Again (giving carnybark the grand go-by), and stumbles into A Sludgy Groove. where SOPR infiltrates, Gabbles (flustering PERC), Narcissistically takes over, Pirouettes Out Of Orbit, and earns **#the gong#**.

— whereupon PERC solicits, & delivers, a Forceful Anti-war Speech — Sentential — Mostly On Drums.

Encouraged (or is it heckled) by PERC, TENOR (a beginner with a halting investment in rhythm) Huffs Manfully to embrace phrase 2 of The Sheetmusic Version of ***Body & Soul.***

II.

A Grandfatherly Rumination Pathetique [BARI] leads to A Cheap [+PERC] Funeral, which peters out in A Blaze Of Damped [SOPR+ PERC] Ascension.

III.

Revamping Failures Familiar From Mvmt I, TENOR and PERC
re-emerge in A Partnership Of Convenience; in which ***"fft, CaCa"*** supports Some Honky Hotcha, whose Addlecrotched Unraveling earns a {tasteful} **gong**.

Aping the sustained **SILENCE** surrounding the gong,
A Sustained Blast by TENOR kicks off A Supercautious Game
Of Virtual Checkers — in which You Can't Tell whether they're playing each other, or Against Us. Whichever, a Rigorously Plausible Upshot earns **the gong** and an embarrassed **SILENCE**. *(Silence, here, is always realworld silence: never GaGaLand, as in **GAP5**, where time floats as space.)*

Thus It Is, that in The Doldrums Of Nothing-To-Do — abruptly, some honky hotcha resuscitates; but its even feebler unraveling again earns **the gong**. Which heralds Some More (or is it more) Of The Same virtual checkers. Which is — (in turn) — (again) — **gonged**. Yet These Guys Won't Quit; and this time contrive to simulate
A Consequential Consummation, which seems, for a hopeful moment, to spring us into the clear; — but : —

{gong} — we are abandoned, in thrall to a Resigned, Drained, **SILENCE**.

Now that any imaginable remnant of energy has dispersed, PERC ushers in the only genuine patch of The Real Thing to be found here: namely, a ripoff of a Gerry Mulligan [+BARI] countermelody to ***Love Me Or Leave Me***; which is rowdily squelched by carnybark, re-appearing In Cameo.

However, enough PERC-energy leaks across the subsequent **SILENCE** to incite Supranatural Inversions Of Race & Gender, as ALTO lolls on the concluding lick from ***Lonely Woman*** — a reverse from which mvmt III won't recover. ALTO turns out to be a Quite Persuasive, if histrionic, diva, who enacts for us A Comprehensive Madscene with which we cannot help but Empathize!! PERC attends closely, and works its way thru a responsive, Noticeably Hypersentential, interior monologue, which blossoms into a running Explanatory Aside To Us, and Outlasts The Outsneaking Diva.

IV.

Sensible of, nor intimidated by, a Jagged Landscape of PERC splatts, SOPR rises, by Steps Admittedly Logical, up into the stratosphere, where ***The Saints Go Marching In*** on their 1st 4 notes, in augmentation — outfoxing the stars.

*{*Continuity, consecution, in this precis, is, of course, surreal.*}*
*{*as music is.*}*

—

JKR

(one more little review)

Shouldn't We Talk?

(jkr)

The subjects are obvious.

(Just listen.)

Lots of opinions too.

(You may not agree.)

(Don't have to.)

It's pure temporality,

in 4 mvts..

(But not any temporal evolution ever anywhere anytime.)

(The indensity takes a big lot of getting used to.)

(If you listen.)

(So listen.)

-- B.A.B. Feb. 2003

(an Epistemological Gauntlet)

what
&ahelluva$toryline
who. it?

What Is It about About.

[a response to recent contentions]

In order of appearance:

Swann

The Oracle of Kabbalah

Turtle Island

WoD(gmh)

A.L.(n&h)

?AYS?

(ed.)

Divine Flash IV (Fakhruddin 'Iraqi)

Gatsby

(jkr)

from Bedlam, 1762 (: Chr. Smart)

But then at a certain moment, without being able to distinguish any clear outline, or to give a name to what was pleasing him, suddenly enraptured, he had tried to grasp the phrase or harmony --- he did not know which --- that had just been played and that had opened and expanded his soul, as the fragrance of certain roses, wafted upon the moist air of evening, has the power of dilating one's nostrils. Perhaps it was owing to his ignorance of music that he had received so confused an impression, one of those that are nonetheless the only purely musical impressions, limited in their extent, entirely original, and irreducible to any other kind. An impression of this order, vanishing in an instant, is, so to speak, *sine materia*. Doubtless the notes which we hear at such moments tend, according to their pitch and volume, to spread out before our eyes over surfaces of varying dimensions, to trace arabesques, to give us the sensation of breadth or tenuity, stability or caprice. But the notes themselves have vanished before these sensations have developed sufficiently to escape submersion under those which the succeeding or even simultaneous notes have already begun to awaken in us. And this impression would continue to envelop in its liquidity, its ceaseless overlapping, the motifs which from time to time emerge, barely discernible, to plunge again and disappear and drown, recognized only by the particular kind of pleasure which they instil, impossible to describe, to recollect, to name, ineffable --- did not our memory, like a labourer who toils at the laying down of firm foundations beneath the tumult of the waves, by fashioning for us facsimiles of those fugitive phrases, enable us to compare and to contrast them with those that follow. And so, scarcely had the exquisite sensation which Swann had experienced died away, before his memory had furnished him with an immediate transcript, sketchy, it is true, and provisional, which he had been able to glance at while the piece continued, so that, when the same impression suddenly returned, it was no longer impossible to grasp. He could picture to himself its extent, its symmetrical arrangement, its notation, its expressive value; he had before him something that was no longer pure music, but rather design, architecture, thought, and which allowed the actual music to be recalled. This time he had distinguished quite clearly a phrase which emerged for a few moments above the waves of sound. It had at once suggested to him a world of inexpressible delights, of whose existence, before hearing it, he had never dreamed, into which he felt that nothing else could initiate him; and he had been filled with love for it, as with a new and strange desire.

With a slow and rhythmical movement it led him first this way, then that, towards a state of happiness that was noble, unintelligible, and yet precise. And then suddenly, having reached a certain point from which he was preparing to follow it, after a momentary pause, abruptly it changed direction, and in a fresh movement, more rapid, fragile, melancholy, incessant, sweet, it bore him off with it towards new vistas. Then it vanished. He hoped, with a passionate longing, that he might find it again, a third time. And reappear it did, though without speaking to him more clearly, bringing him, indeed, a pleasure less profound. But when he returned home he felt the need of it: he was like a man into whose life a woman he has seen for a moment passing by has brought the image of a new beauty which deepens his own sensibility, although he does not even know her name or whether he will ever see her again.

The paradox of Ultimate Nothingness is that because it is so vast and all-encompassing, with no beginning and no end, it is also Ultimate Oneness. Ultimate Oneness, Ultimate Nothingness — *Aleph* embodies it all.

Aleph's essence of nothingness is reflected in its sound. It has none. The very first letter of the *Aleph Beit* is silent! *Aleph* is the sound that comes before sound. *Aleph* is so close to the divine essence, on the edge of the holy nothingness from which sound and form emerge, that it can't be constrained within a particular sound. We "pronounce" *Aleph* by opening our mouths but saying nothing, as if we were speechless with awe and wonder.

Aleph brings into form that which is formless. It makes solid that which cannot be grasped. At the same time, *Aleph* retains the prealphabetic condition, before creation, when "the earth was without form, and empty" [Gen. 1:2].

Out of this emptiness, life flashes vividly into being. God says "let there be light" and there is light. Out of nothingness, earth, air, and fire come into form. All three begin with *Aleph*: *adamah*, "earth"; *avir*, "air"; and *esh*, "fire".

Anasazi,
Anasazi,

tucked up in clefts in the cliffs
growing strict fields of corn and beans
sinking deeper and deeper in earth
up to your hips in Gods
your head all turned to eagle-down
& lightning for knees and elbows
your eyes full of pollen

the smell of bats,
the flavor of sandstone
grit on the tongue.

women
birthing
at the foot of ladders in the dark.

trickling streams in hidden canyons
under the cold rolling desert

corn-basket wide-eyed
red baby
rock lip home,

Anasazi

4

I am soft sift
In an hourglass --- at the wall
Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift,
And it crowds and it combs to the fall;
I steady as a water in a well, to a poise, to a pane,
But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall
Fells or flanks of the voel, a vein
Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate --- we cannot consecrate --- we cannot hallow --- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us --- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

At once vast and sparse. Not a flower in sight; nor a star in the greenguide. A "garden": the "Parterre." To one side, the flat palace. (3 stars.) Elsewhere, massed beyond our ken: trees; clouds. Here it's manmade grounds: bull-dozed flattened straightedged layered. Spent the end of the afternoon here yesterday. Couldn't wait to get back this morning. Got it to myself. Dirtplots and dirt borders. Grassplots. Stone borders and steps and patios and benches. Geometrically stonepooled water. A few, a very few, shrubs; all shaved conical. The layout, symmetricized. Grandly. Mercilessly. The named curve. The named shape. A knockout. Nothing over your head, my friend. Or even up to your armpits. One is master here. Domesticates infinity even. At a deep sublevel out from the foot of the defunct falls, facing away. Straight lines of divine length, going away. A canal, treelined: on either side, the long thin colonnade. The alternative promenade. In far country. The path not taken. Within bounds, what there is. Not dense with dense subpockets like Versailles. Nor a dusty drag like the Tuileries. Same guy though. Le Nôtre. Should be a household word. Physical embodiment, as the very space we occupy, of thought; art. And rawly so.
Undisguised, the theft from us; the violation; the intent to overawe. No rollicking fancy. Or sensuous intimacy. Or mindblowing revelation. Hardcore. No shit. Truths: a system of: uncovered. Powers: empowered: imposed. Correctitude to the nth. To be grasped in selected, static acts of vision. One's Will has been Worked. Under shifting cloudcover, the lone walker meanders; traces queer paths.

[Cf. also Benjamin Boretz on Ralph Shapey (1921-2002) in OSMagI4 which ran a dead heat for inclusion in this slot but lost out (on unstated grounds) on appeal. (Something about "about".)] --- *ed.*

IV.

The sun shines and a mirror dreams itself the sun.
How then should it not begin to love itself?

Jealous, the Beloved demands that the lover love
but Him, need but Him.

So jealous is He
all others are destroyed:
He must Himself
act every part!

Necessarily He makes Himself identical with all things; for the lover, what else is left to love or to need? And no one loves so hugely as He loves Himself. Know now who you are!

Don't dream this thread
is double-ply:
root and branch
are but One.
Look close: all is He ---
but He is manifest through *me*.
All ME, no doubt ---
but through Him.

Junayd said once: "For 30 years now I've been conversing with God, yet people seem to think I'm talking to *them!*". Through the ears of Moses He heard Himself speak with the flame-tongue of the Bush:

He speaks
He listens
you and I
but a pretext.

He talked a lot about the past and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was. . . .

. . . . One autumn night, five years before, they had been walking down the street when the leaves were falling, and they came to a place where there were no trees and the sidewalk was white with moonlight. They stopped here and turned toward each other. Now it was a cool night with that mysterious excitement in it which comes at the two changes of the year. The quiet lights in the houses were humming out into the darkness and there was a stir and bustle among the stars. Out of the corner of his eye Gatsby saw that the blocks of the sidewalk really formed a ladder and mounted to a secret place above the trees --- he could climb to it, if he climbed alone, and once there he could suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder.

His heart beat faster and faster as Daisy's white face came up to his own. He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God. So he waited, listening for a moment longer to the tuning fork that had been struck upon a star. Then he kissed her. At his lips' touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete.

Through all he said, even through his appalling sentimentality, I was reminded of something --- an elusive rhythm, a fragment of lost words, that I had heard somewhere a long time ago. For a moment a phrase tried to take shape in my mouth and my lips parted like a dumb man's, as though there was more struggling upon them than a wisp of startled air. But they made no sound and what I had almost remembered was uncommunicable forever.

a diversion:

Legend has it that The Fervid Mystic buttonholed
The Forensic Musician.

Said TFM: The Ultimate is Unknowable.
Replied TFM: True.

Misunderstanding the grounds of this disagreement,
A Bourgeois Rationalist says: The Existence of God
has been Demonstrated.

To which TFM replies: Blasphemy.
And to which TFM replies: Bullshit.
And to which An Existentialist Philosopher adds: God is Dead.

Understanding the grounds of this agreement,
An Edgy Positivist says: Define Your Terms.
And adds: the predicate "Unknowable" is unverifiable.

Quoth TFM: Righto. and Profound.
Quoth ABR: Righto. and Wrong.
Quoth AEP: Righto. and Voluntary.
Quoth AEP: Righto. and Fatal.
Quoth TFM: Righto. and Motivic.

Tolerable vibes ensued.

Rejoice in the Lamb.

JUBILATE AGNO

For I will consider my Cat Jeoffrey.

For he is the servant of the Living God, duly and daily serving him.

For at the first glance of the glory of God in the East he worships in his way.

For is this done by wreathing his body seven times round with elegant quickness.

For then he leaps up to catch the musk, which is the blessing of God upon his prayer.

For he rolls upon prank to work it in.

For having done duty and received blessing he begins to consider himself.

For this he performs in ten degrees.

For first he looks upon his fore-paws to see if they are clean.

For secondly he kicks up behind to clear away there.

For thirdly he works it upon stretch with the fore paws extended.

For fourthly he sharpens his paws by wood.

For fifthly he washes himself.

For sixthly he rolls upon wash.

For Seventhly he fleas himself, that he may not be interrupted upon the beat.

For Eighthly he rubs himself against a post.

For Ninthly he looks up for his instructions.

For Tenthly he goes in quest of food.

For when his day's work is done his business more properly begins.

For he keeps the Lord's watch in the night against the adversary.

For he counteracts the powers of darkness by his electrical skin & glaring eyes.

For he counteracts the Devil, who is death, by brisking about the life.

For in his morning orisons he loves the sun and the sun loves him.

For he purrs in thankfulness, when God tells him he's a good Cat.

JUBILATE AGNO

For God has blessed him in the variety of his movements.

For his motions upon the face of the earth are more than any other quadrupede.

For tho he cannot fly, he is an excellent clamberer.

For he can tread to all the measures upon the musick.

For he can swim for life.

For he can creep.

For he can spraggle upon waggle at the word of command.

For he can jump from an eminence into his master's bosom.

For the dexterity of his defence is an instance of the love of God to him exceedingly.

For he is the quickest to his mark of any creature.

For he is tenacious of his point.

For he is a mixture of gravity and waggery.

For there is nothing brisker than his life when in motion.

For there is nothing sweeter than his peace when at rest.

For he knows that God is his Saviour.

For he will not do destruction, if he is well-fed, neither will he spit without provocation.

For he is an instrument for the children to learn benevolence upon.

For he is good to think on, if a man would express himself neatly.

For every house is incompleat without him & a blessing is lacking in the spirit.

▪ ▪ ▪

TEXT:

(for the Graduate Music Forum at UCSD,

1/28/2003)

IS MUSIC NECESSARY?

Benjamin Boretz

What does the discourse of music have to do with the practice of music, or with the expressive or intellectual presence of music in our lives? Music as practiced locally is an expressive language — or, rather, a territory of expressive languages whose medium is normally sound. Writing is also an expressive or intellectual — the words are denotatively, if not connotatively, interchangeable — art form; and people who do and care about music are sometimes also verbally expressive; and their verbal expression tends to reflect their involvement with music — music, in one way or another, is likely to be a character or a presence or a looming spectre in their discursive novels, treatises, or algorithms. But does thinking and writing about music in verbal or mathematical language actually contribute anything significant to music in its own space, as music — rather than, to music as, and in the spaces of, history, sociology, linguistics, systemics, or politics? Does music as music need discourse? Do we know what music needs discourse for, in pursuing its expressive/intellectual urgencies? That is, what aspect of musical endeavor needs discourse for its pursuit, what aspect of discourse does music actually apply to itself, by what means does such application happen? If music as music does need discourse, how much of it can it use? Does it need more than it already has? Should someone's answers to these questions lean toward the negative, does that have any implications for the value of metamusical discourse as a practice? If music doesn't need discourse to enable it to be music, does that suggest that there is no important reason that musical discourse should be done? Or is discourse, like music, itself a significant form of expression, where the presence of music as a central subject in some of it is its creative focus, as

political events are a focus for certain historical discourses? (And the sense in which the discourse of the natural sciences interacts with the physical facts of the physical universe is certainly a complexly and intensely creative-seeming phenomenon — Oscar Wilde said that Nature imitates Art, and Nelson Goodman's improvement on that epithet was that Nature was the product of Art and Discourse. My own relation to Art was exposed when my friend George Quasha asked me — for a video project — to say what Art is, and I said that Art is the name given to the Ego masquerading as the Soul for purposes of material or social capitalization — but that's another topic.)

Take physics. The science. What is theoretical discourse in physics? Is it "the theory of physics"? Does physics actually *have* a theory? Of course it does. But does it? You might think, physics doesn't *have* a theory because physics *is* a theory — that's what it is, a theory. And what it's a theory *of* is not physics; it's the physical universe. A theory *about* physics is not the theory which *is* physics. Same for sociologies, histories, psychologies, semiologies, musicologies: What they *are* are theories. So what about music: is music itself, as composed, as performed, as internally or externally heard, a theory, something ontologically theoretical? Of course there's always a sense in which the referents of any theory (as any of those named above) are created by the theory, and are therefore themselves ontologically theoretical. But — in the cases of such things as the physical world and the human world there's something inferred as existent outside its theoretical identity — you could say they consist of things or phenomena *which can be* perceived — whereas music is exactly and entirely *what is*

perceived as music. It is ontologized by being perceived. This isn't a weird idea, just a description of how it is in the human world, at least locally. So in that peculiar sense, music itself is "a theory" — its own theory. But that still doesn't mean that music is a theory of anything outside of itself, like a piece of descriptive verbal or mathematical language. Because the theory that "is music" is not "music theory". The particulars that are music are not about music, don't *refer to* music (except in special cases, or in a non-particular sense), don't appear as external "signifiers" but as groundlevel phenomena. So music itself is not a theory in any of the senses that "music theory" is a theory. The question, then, is: does music *need* a "music theory"? What does music need a theory *for*? How much theory does it need? More than it already has? And what kind of theory might it actually be able to use? Are so-called "music theories" about music in some different sense than the sense in which music is ontologized internally as music by the inexplicit, internal operation of internalized music-filtering processes? Do they, can they be used to, penetrate, interact with, or even address those non-symbolic music-ontologizing cognitive processes, if these processes have no discursive contents but only discursive meta-descriptions, like verbal or mathematical or clinical stories about some selectively extracted post-facto componential *aspects* of some music?

(Whatever your answers to those questions, there is a kind of theory that, whether or not you could characterize it as useful "to music", is literally usable to make music, and has clearly been used by those composing it: the kind of theory which non-prescriptively proposes and constructs possible

music-making resources, which generates materials by adopting an idiosyncratic analytic/conceptual perspective on the contents of sound fields, without prescribing any syntactical methodologies such as belong to the creative compositional enterprise exclusively. Such as you might derive from discourses by Hector Berlioz, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Sergei Taneiev, Josef Hauer, Arnold Schoenberg, Ernst Krenek, Nicolas Slonimsky, Henry Cowell, Harry Partch, Milton Babbitt, Howard Hanson, Karlheinz Stockhausen, George Perle, John Cage, Iannis Xenakis, Gunther Schuller, Elliott Carter, Jim Tenney, Jim Randall, Ben Johnston, John Rahn, Robert Morris, David Lewin, even Allen Forte.* But this kind of "theory", however naturally derived from prior experiences with composing and contemplating music, has nothing explicit to say about how any actual music is or goes, not even the music composed with its specific assistance as referential structure.)

So where do discourses about music as expressive language locate themselves relative to music as music? Insofar as what they are is *writing,* done by musicians or by other people with serious relationships to their own musical experience, their relationship to music as music is less like the relation of theories to objects or phenomena than like the relation of poetry to love, or — indeed — of poetry to objects, phenomena, ideologies, ideas — to, even, theories. Namely, — by the nature of a music as a non-verbal utterance, as a phenomenon ontologized purely as experiential — such discourses are creative expressions, compositions, perforce

*This kind of resource creation, for creative cognizing and composing, was also a substantial part of the purpose, and hopefully also of the effect, of my *Meta-Variations,* Parts II-V.

creating verbal spaces resonating against the non-verbal spaces of music. Of course their relationship to music as technical, aesthetic, or social history, or as behavioral or cognitive psychology is explanatory in those domains as correlative structures to the presence of music in various observational situations. But their relation to music as music remains inviolably, invaluably, autonomously creative — a condition that enables a species of expressive / intellectual substance to accrue to musical discourses which sets them in a potentially unique position in the world of verbal composition. Nor does this condition diminish their potential interest or value in the extra-musical domains in which they theorize the presence of music and paramusical behaviors — it just delimits and articulates the sense in which such attributes do and do not constitute their being 'about music' in discrete and incommensurable senses.* There is a hint of experimental evidence of this in Gilbert Rouget's *Music and Trance,* wherein he reports that there is no correlation between the musical nature of a given music and whether or not its presence induces trance; and that, of course, the playing musicians, not being designated by the social convention to experience trance, don't. In fact (as I've said elsewhere), the only discourse I know of which may be said to actually manifest thought about music as music is an interpretive performance of, or a performed improvisation on, a preexistent musical composition. But that of course is as literally non-verbal as music itself. And I don't mean someone playing their Schenker graph, their sonogram, or their row chart either.

*Nor should the "creativity" being ascribed here be read as implying any particular species of value or virtue.

If it seems to anyone here that my thoughts imply some demotion of music discourse of any kind, in any way, that would be only insofar as you would regard poetry, music, or other expressive language forms as inferior in meaning, importance, or substance to other forms of expression or intellection. You won't be surprised to know that I feel rather the opposite way; the multiple and holistic implications of every music for every aspect of life and every species of social, cultural, political, and personal predicament are surely there, but they interest me far less in their explicated discursive wordtext form than in their unsayable specificity as musicsoundlanguage. And the ontological tension between an expressive-descriptive wordtext and its spectrally present subject creates a potential field for experiential content uniquely indigenous to that space, a transaction which interests me intensely. But can there actually be discourse outside the core ontological space of music, but still in a vibrant metaphorical dance with it? And can music actually be present in the ontological space of discourse, as transmuted perception, speculation, imagination? Were they possible, might not such incarnations be promising candidates for participants in an expansive, and expanding, world of thought and experience — in which music has its unique centricity, uniquely personified, expressly intellectual, holistically aesthetic, where music is any kind of work or play you actually need it to be, as only music can be?

<Hence be it known that novel adumbration of the word --

... there are things you want to say, anxieties you want to engage, arising from anything in your life, arising in your perception from your perspective as a composer, that are not music itself (because they're explicitly *about* something(s))

...<-- being neither something else,

or poetry either (because that's a different perspective of saying)

...<, nor misremembrance of the word;

and cannot be discourse (because that's a closed world in which some things are unsayable

...<; nor from the word,

, or even indiscernible, except as masks)

...<but yet from something

but may still be composable as something

...<-- misremembers something else.

— not as music, but as music is composed,
AS SOMETHING BEING WHAT IT IS ABOUT:

just, like, music?

If there is anything outside of language,

it cannot be said that there is.

But there is.

Is there?