



# Editorial Note

Our intention for *W12* was twofold. We wanted to produce an issue of *W* that stood as an alternative to the seemingly ubiquitous image text works and represented the relationships between poets and musicians. In Vancouver, for example, there are many poets who have close relationships to contemporary visual art and artists and often collaborate with artists as well as themselves use image in their work. As for the multitude of performing slam-poets and “spoken-word” performers: these practices, when engaging with music, tend to treat music as background for expressivist lyrical poetry, whereas we are interested in work that somehow *integrates* poetry and music in constructivist ways.

While working on the issue, we approached constructivist poets and improvising musicians for work and discovered a huge gap between them characterized by a limited understanding of the breadth and possibilities of each other’s area of practice. For example, we discovered a lack of understanding on the part of poets of contemporary musical performance practices beyond avant-garde composition and jazz music. We came across a few writers who were honestly quite fearful of the notion of performing poetry live with musicians of the saxophonist and bassist variety. It seems that many poets associate performed music-poetry not just to Kerouac’s work with Al Cohn, Zoot Simms, and Steve Allen, but also to several local disasters of poetry/music collaborations that did little to expand beyond the Kerouac model. On the part of musicians, many have not explored contemporary poetry beyond the Beats. Unfortunately, performed music-poetry collaborations are haunted by the spectre of Kerouac.

In collaborative and crossover work, the angle of approach has bearing on the product. For example, are we talking about a musical composer using poetry as a source text? Are we talking about a poet writing a poem that uses music as an allegory for poetic composition? Are we talking about the performing sound poet who isn’t necessarily performing music *per se* but whose performance could be *listened to* as music? Although it is possible to categorize all possible approaches to music-poetry, what we’ve noticed is that in *W12*, contributors who approached poetry from music tended to use poetry as a source text for their compositions, which are either intended to be performed or are composed straight away into an electronic medium of some kind (and not performed live). On the other hand, poets approaching music from poetry tend to either engage with music as a kind of narrative content, formal structure, impressionistic background (i.e. writing poetry *to* music), or formal allegory, towards creating a page-based piece, or they become performers themselves.

Despite their particular approaches, however, the pieces in *W12* are all music. Thank you to all our contributors, and to the collective members of the Kootenay School of Writing.

## Editors

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## *Theory of Harmony*

i.  
In your works  
(Kandinsky writes in 1911)  
you have realized  
what I have so greatly  
longed for in music—  
    the independent  
    progress through  
    their own destinies,  
    the independent life  
    of the independent  
    voices.

ii.  
    Our work,  
Schoenberg responds,  
    has much in common.  
What you call  
    the “unlogical”  
I call “elimination  
    of the conscious  
will in art.”  
    Art belongs to  
the unconscious!  
    One must express  
oneself! Express  
    oneself directly!

iii. (1911)  
Dissonances are nothing  
(Schoenberg writes)  
more than remoter  
consonances.

iv. (1911)  
I envy you so!  
(says K). You have

your Theory of Harmony  
already in print.

How lucky musicians are  
to have such a highly advanced

art. Truly, music is an art  
which has the fortune to forego

completely all practical aims.  
How long will painting have

to wait for this? It has  
the right—no, the duty—

to forego these also, to use  
color and line for their own sakes.

In painting we may now at least dream  
of a “Theory of Harmony.” I dream

and hope that I will write  
at least the first sentences

of this great future book.  
Perhaps someone else will do the same.

All the better! Just as many  
as possible. When one has understood

to some extent how St. Stephan’s  
in Vienna is built, perhaps one will be

able to stick together a rough little hut.

v. (1911)

Dear Mr. Kandinsky (S writes),

I cannot come on Wednesday after all.  
Rather I will come on Thursday the 14th,  
if you do not write to the contrary.  
I can also come Friday or Saturday,  
perhaps even Sunday.

Can you recommend me a doctor (perhaps  
a specialist)? My daughter has had for some

time a skin ailment on her feet—open,  
festering sores. We think it is a constitutional  
problem, connected with malnutrition and anemia,  
and have adequate grounds for this opinion.

I would like very much to know  
of a competent doctor, who does not demand  
colossal sums. I am not a rich man. Quite  
the contrary—I am a capable musician!  
If possible, recommend to me someone from Munich  
who could charge me “artists’ prices” as it were.

vi. (1911)

From Berlin, S later writes about K’s pictures:

They made a great and lasting impression on me.  
Much is still before my eyes. The dreamlike nature  
of the impressions, wild yet clearly controlled.  
And the incredibly strong effect of the colors.  
I would love to see them again.

And he comments on the “remarkable yet womanly strength”  
in the picture of Gabriele Munter, K’s wife,  
which touch him “extraordinarily.”

I am living in great style here. Right in the woods!!  
Actually right in the country, almost an hour away  
from Berlin proper. I wish that you could see it.  
The Berlin landscape has a peculiar beauty completely  
different from that of the Viennese landscape.

vii. (1911)

K writes about S’s pictures:

In your pictures I see a great deal.  
And two roots:

1. Pure realism—things as they are  
and their inner sonority, what I foretold  
in my book as “fantasy in the most austere  
subject matter.” It is at the opposite  
pole from my own art and grows spiritually  
out of the same root: a chair lives,  
a line lives—and that is finally

and fundamentally the same.

2. Dematerialization. This interests me but does not make me vibrate spiritually, for it is too binding, too precise. When something of the sort stirs in me, I would write but never paint it. Thus I say merely: he had a white face and black lips. That is more than enough for me. I feel more and more strongly that in every work an empty space must remain. Not an eternal law, but a law of “tomorrow.”

viii.

ix. (1911)

S writes:

We search on and on (as you yourself say)  
with our feelings.  
Let us endeavor never to lose  
these feelings to a theory.

x. (An exchange, Dec. 1911—Jan. 1912)

S: There is something that I cannot reconcile myself to: the format, the size. I also have a theoretical objection: since it is only a question of proportions, for example

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| black 24:  | white 120 |
| by red 12: | yellow 84 |

it cannot possible depend on the format, because I can certainly say the same thing if I reduce it, for example, by 12:

|           |          |
|-----------|----------|
| black 2:  | white 10 |
| by red 1: | yellow 7 |

I believe it is easier to grasp this equation if it is reduced.

K: Naturally, I must disagree! In mathematics  $4:2 = 8:4$ . In art, no. In mathematics  $1 + 1 = 2$ , in art  $1 - 1 = 2$  can also exist.

xi. (1912)

Schoenberg to Kandinsky, somewhat petulantly:

And what have you to say  
about my Theory of Harmony?  
I sent it to you immediately  
after I got it, as I was getting flu.

xii. (1912)

Kandinsky to Schoenberg, with exasperation:

There are days when I get letters with each  
of the five mail deliveries, there are days  
with twenty incoming letters, and there is never  
a day without letters. I owe letters. I don't paint.  
I neglect my own affairs. My only hope  
is that it will all change when the Blaue Reiter  
is finally printed. So don't be angry with me.  
After all, you also do not answer my letters very carefully.

xiii. (1912)

S: Now to my Prague concert.

I cannot say much about it, since I did the whole  
thing in a half-conscious state compounded of anxiety  
and fatigue. I was tired on account of the many  
social evenings and nights, which completely destroyed  
my usual peace. Subjectively, I believe  
the performance was very good. The audience response  
was remarkably excited. More than twenty minutes  
of the loudest hissing and applause!

xiv. (1912)

S: an innervision is a whole which has component parts but these are link  
ed already integrated something which is constructed consists of parts  
which try to imitate a whole but there is no guarantee in this case that the  
most important parts are not missing and that the binding agent of these  
single parts is: the soul

xv. (1912)

K:

What is As far as I temporary;  
so stupid understand it you that only human  
and always do not let one narrow-mindedness  
irritates me, “principle,” (or “stupidity”)  
is that I not one “law” remains un-  
cannot read of existing shakeable. And  
works about theory escape against this  
music. your sharp the gods fight  
analysis. . . . and so on!

The parts  
of your books Everything  
that are is given  
generally a real shaking,  
understandable and it is proved  
I read with that everything  
great pleasure succumbs to  
and the special this shaking,  
joy which I get and everything,  
from all your taken in the abstract,  
writings. is only relative and

xvi (1912)

The fact is  
that the greatest necessity  
for musicians today  
is the overthrow  
of the  
“eternal laws of harmony”  
which  
for painters  
is only  
a matter of secondary importance.

With us  
the most necessary thing  
is to show  
the possibilities  
of composition (or construction)  
and to set up  
a general (very general)  
principle.

That  
is the task  
which I have begun  
in my book  
—in very free strokes.

“Inner necessity”  
is just a thermometer  
(or yardstick)  
but one  
which leads to  
the greatest freedom  
and  
at the same time  
sets up the inner capacity  
to comprehend  
as the only limitation  
on this freedom.

In the continuation  
of the work  
which now is ripening in me  
step by step  
I touch  
in moments of illumination  
on the universal root  
of all forms of expression.

Sometimes  
I would like to bite  
my elbow with rage  
that the work  
advances  
so slowly.

xvii. (1912)  
Kandinsky, again:

Briefly stated,  
there is a law which is millions of kilometers distant from us,  
towards which  
we strive for thousands of years,  
of which  
we have a presentiment, which we guess, apparently  
see clearly

and therefore give various forms.

Thus  
is the evolution of “God,” religion, science, art.  
And all these  
forms are “right,” since they have all been seen.  
Except  
that they are all false, since they are one-sided.  
And evolution  
consists only of this, that everything appears many-sided,  
complicated.  
And behind  
this final law, much farther away still, is another one,  
since this  
first law is also only one side. It could drive you mad  
or make  
you sing Hosanna.

xviii. (1912-14)

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Dear Mr. S.:   | Dear Mr. K.:  | Dear Mr. S.:   |
| Your letter gave me great pleasure.  | I am perpetually having to do unpleasant things and struggle with weariness afterwards. It is sad so that one has no desire to do anything: neither to work nor to write letters. Don't be angry with me! | One really becomes giddy—the four seasons—white, pink, green, orange—rush by One imagines that one has no twenty such rotations and sees oneself as an old man. And the work is really only beginning. |
| It's fine that you have so much to do and that you are being performed so much. But on the other hand, such successes have bad consequences. They come, chop up your time and devour it. |   |  |

xix. (July 3, 1922)

I was very disappointed  
when I arrived in Berlin and heard  
that you were no longer there.  
When our journey  
was first being planned, I rejoiced  
to think that I would find you in Berlin.  
However, I was told:  
Schoenberg has left and will not  
be coming back any more.  
And letters are such an awkward substitute.

I had hoped that we would see  
each other very often  
and discuss so many questions.  
Everything has really changed  
since our time together  
in Bavaria. Much that was a daring dream  
at that time has now become the past.  
We have experienced centuries.

xx. (July 20, 1922)

I can understand  
your being surprised  
by the artistic situation  
in Berlin. But are you also  
pleased about it?  
Personally, I haven't much  
taste for all these movements,  
but at least I don't have to worry  
that they'll irritate me  
for long. Nothing comes to a standstill  
sooner than these movements brought  
about by so many people.

How is your book *Das Geistige in der Kunst*  
getting on? I think of it because  
it appeared at the same time  
as my *Harmonielehre*, a much revised  
new edition of which I am sending  
to the printers. It may interest you  
to know that I am at present working on  
"Jacob's Ladder." I began it several years ago,  
but had to break off work (at one of the most rapt passages)  
in order to join the army. Since then I've never  
gotten back into the mood to go on with it.

Well, now I've gone jabbering on  
like a small child, which I actually stopped being  
some decades ago. But that's the way it is  
with letter-writing: by the time one's warmed up,  
one is also worn out.

xxi. (April 15, 1923)

Only the frantic  
tempo of present-day life  
can explain my long silence.  
It is exactly like a bad dream—  
you want to jump onto a departing  
train, run with all your might, but your  
legs cannot keep up with you so fast. I thought  
at first that this was only a Russian way of living, and  
hoped to find another life here—with more possibility for  
concentration. In Berlin I led a particularly hurried life, which  
I regarded as temporary, since I hoped to find sufficient  
peace in “quiet Weimar.” This was an illusion, however.  
I never can accomplish half of what I would like to.  
And all the same it is nice here: there are many  
possibilities and above all the possibility of  
forming a center that can radiate out  
and ignite others. But to do this,  
prominent forces beyond our  
circle are necessary. How  
often I have said to  
myself: “If only  
Schoenberg  
were here!”

xxii. (April 19, 1923)

I have at last learnt the lesson that has been forced upon me during this year and I  
shall not ever forget it.  
It is that I am not a German, not a European, indeed perhaps scarcely even a hu-  
man being (at least  
the Europeans prefer the worst of their race to me), but I am a Jew.

I am content that it should be so! Today I no longer wish to be an exception; I have  
no objection at all to being  
lumped together with the rest. For I have seen that on the other side everything is  
also just one lump. I have seen that someone with whom I thought myself on a level  
preferred to seek the community  
of the lump; I have heard that even a Kandinsky sees only evil in the actions of Jews  
and in their evil actions only the Jewishness, and at this point I give up hope of reaching  
any understanding.  
It was a dream. We are two kinds of people. Definitely!

So you will realize that I only do whatever is necessary to keep alive. Perhaps someday  
a later generation will be in a position  
to indulge in dreams. I wish it neither for them nor for myself.

On the contrary, indeed, I would give much that it might be granted to me to bring  
about an awakening.  
I should like the Kandinsky I knew in the past and the Kandinsky of today  
each to take his fair share of my cordial and respectful greetings.

## *Notes on the Text:*

source text: Arnold Schoenberg, Wassily Kandinsky: Letters, Pictures and Documents,  
ed. Jelena Hahl-Koch; trans. John C. Crawford: London, Faber and Faber, 1984

Previously published in Johnson's collection Theory of Harmony  
at <http://www.xpressed.org/fall04/theory1.pdf>

# ERIK SATIE TRANSLATED BY

TED BYRNE

*(à la Juliette Meerovich, amicalement)*

There, he's off at last, cheerfully  
heading to work with his mouth full.

Happy, nodding his head,  
he dreams of a good looking woman

And he loves his pen case too  
and his green lustrine sleeves,  
and his mandarin cap.

He takes great strides  
hurls himself onto the stairs  
and climbs them on his hands.

What a gust of wind!

Sitting at his desk now  
his happiness increases.

He reflects on his progress.

Perhaps he'll get a raise,  
hopefully without a promotion.

He plans to move when his lease is up.

He already has an apartment in mind...  
if he does get a raise, or a promotion.

Another dream of advancement.

He hums an old Peruvian air  
that he picked up in Brittany  
from a deaf mute.

Nearby a piano plays some Clementi.

It's so sad

Bold enough to dance!

(The bureaucrat, not the piano.)

It's all so sad.

The piano gets back to work.

Our friend questions himself benignly.

The cold Peruvian air  
rises again to this head.

The piano continues in the background.

Alas, he must leave his office,  
his lovely office.

“Courage,” he says silently, “Let's get going!”

## *Notes on the Text:*

Erik Satie  
(performance directions on the score,  
translated by Ted Byrne for S.J.  
1973)

“ I did the Satie translation about thirty-five years ago. The poem is composed out of his directions to the player on the score of ‘Sonatine Bureaucratique’.”

**ABANDON**

 *Bimorphic #7*  
(runs 2:38)

# STEPHEN ROSS SMITH

 *Bimorphic #8*  
(runs 2:48)

 *Future Hygenic, Part II*  
(runs 2:12)

# ROBERT MITTENTHAL & N.VASSILAKIS

## *Five Trombones* *(for Stu Dempster)*

Walking away from the fifth finger. The wood pile caused this problem. I transferred the obverse, carefully describing each moment. It was on ice. His beaten face affixed to the current. It's a chilling breeze brightens the sea, the sun visibly arising. Its surface moves but tells no story. Something about the pier and the gulls doing their chores. Thus the birds fly with no hands, always in need of the next meal.

To find a new perspective either move closer or further from the object. One must be able to lift 50 lbs. Sidewinding, we sidle into a deferral of time, an implicit request to take leave. Which brings us back to notation and how the score gets played. Reduced to a jingle, commerce elects its miniature self. The options are disconnects – the joy in the pursuit.

“Never settle.” Thus read the sign on my door. I said “with my left hand I am an American prostitute.” Okay, the right hand remains master but what if I were born with two left hands. What does it take to make a river behave. It's the berm supports its flow, makes that mastery possible.

Rhetorical move from Tierra Del Fuego to the Cooley Dam. Or was it a perma-frost. An engagement that all continents pursue. The kicking and screaming that forms our contiguous core.

{Picture here.}

No. It's a legible story whose very clarity is deceit. That is, the mind wants to be free. Much like the politics of information, networks of words fight their way toward the tongue.

Somehow in a place that has a repeating design is a spot different from the rest. Not the normal business hours. That is exactly what makes it interesting, what makes it remarkable. The moving center pushes down whatever gets digested. His name is chase sparrow. That is never really an important fact, but with a name like chase sparrow things happen. From here, you can easily see water on both sides of the road.

Orchestrated, it is a skin condition I share with my partner. An evil snack I offer to a loved one. It's liquid plasma in suspense, a horrible adventure that disrespects the eyes. Can you hear that commotion? It's coming from my chest, throbbing, an exhilarating fascination. Me wanting to show, here, here is where it looks most beautiful. But the mystery spot is obscured. You have to construct some otherworldly contraption to see.

## CHAPTER FIVE

A riff adrift. They name her errata. A chain link of ineffective affect. People like a sieve, a self-regulating mesh that shifts point to point. But I prefer to keep management out. Security as the new form of estrangement. I love the modular functions of incoming calls. I'll never return to the cornice of that architect's office. I'll never go where music fills each containment. Soffitted bliss one breath at a time. Festooned walls pop my balloons. Ouch. The sounds of logic arch over us – we know only the difference of digested eros.

Presented with the five directions, each an element of the crime. The periodic table I am versus the accident I'm not. A recurring obsessive twist burned into the screen forever. Forgetting to believe in the connection, in every asterisked thing. Somewhere in the history of chewing gum, before it was invented.

There's a sorry slowness on the revisionist front. There's advantage to sheet music's plummet. Our dirge awaits its manicure. The core means to scratch. As each motion dissipates, I carry its itch as a command. Several fingers on the wall. The reversal of a mnemonic device – it uses US, a country spun out beyond recall. Where inescapable music quotes us. Where an Easter blunder is pet name for bunny. Where we hopped toward the centrifuge and were thrown back. A walkie-talkie revolution. Latticework of the push mower circling in. A small acre reduced to fifteen minutes.

The second distraction punched a hole through the day. Aural fog at night. Chop chop. Okay, I took your perp walk. Marching through the colour-coded recognitions. A cone, your pilgrimage toward the perfect moment. And the perfect moment lost.

I love the sudden shake of the ground. The peculiar excess of sensations you'd consider singular. The by-the-wave-of-land. Instead of one you're quickly faced with five trombones. Abbreviation extended into instrumental logic. Overtones, drones, the multiple tones of a vibrating coincidence. Is this where fists pound flesh – where a leg of lamb arrives out of sequence. Is it husbandry that unlists your number. Or an eyebrow overhang shields the house – a vision corrected whenever the eye shuts.

Picture your message here, between layers of sonic laces. A liquid's eye through a hole you give a name to. But I preferred the raga – steady breath with its ornament calmly unfolding until it disappeared before us. The contrasting influence squeezes nutrients out allowing only the best words in. Song that song and speech. Filed under rhetorical or pinnacle or cordial expanse. Where vision blurs a carpet of green lines -- shaded cords toward gray in a double boxed pattern that mimes the sea. A whispered tunnel you'd consider a past tense cascade of events. The pearl was only a lost hook, for the captain who gathers its seams. The first distraction smoothing out a fragrance you can only give a name to. To make the flag retort, align bodice

to motion, and swallow. A hurried discussion fraught with thistle. He changed his shirt, now bright white and buttoned tight. A torn sentence left to acquire its own standing. The inverted hope hurts – a cursive translation.

Which means it's raining again. Don't panic. Marching each once into the mess of no returns. Conclusion finds those who hover and halt. A contortion awake on the academics rack. We even use sound to brush the teeth. The embedded amalgam makes contact. Saliva triggers my care. Sound is not around the corner but ambient, a true companion of the tongue.

One rivulet one red hornet one tungsten one empty pocket one fricassee one beaded front one thunderstorm one jostled top one containment field one ragtime band one of everything. The hermeneutics of tablature. Before the advent of 78s, success was measured in sheet music sales. There was no time for duplicates.

Fame was a standard whose template featured background singing and cigarettes. You were either inside the titillation or not. Good old days when edges warm in the friction that tunnels into spring, when rounded corners reject sharpened nails. We're hardened by an ability to scratch, the ability of flesh to reform. Pivots set loose on a surface. The malleable foil easily cut. It wants to reflect back on a more abstract number. The light of perpetual travel darkened by the weight of its mass.

Thus reads this gospel on management science. Lefthand, let me introduce Righthand, and to the Right, Left. One so ham-fisted or unfuckable can only be indirect. That is, the direction was there, held to one's breast in the confidence of each action. With an enthusiasm that puts the singular into longer play, a vinyl induced ramification proves they're too plastic.

Brassless and full of pluck, I bagged out of how to sing home. Working instead from the outside toward the center of each sentence. We can no longer wait to complete each notation with infinite care. Already lost in the chicken scratch of the corn fed. Our interstices alive to the illegible.

I've contoured and designed what's to follow. Municipal in the scale we dive through. Paper quantities writhe at first, in pursuit of color and size. But finally lined or unlined, the very utensils are alive.

Say that three times. The story of privilege misspelled. Inadequate or not, the unlifted letters delete that old alphabet. Telepathic articulations occurring naturally in found accumulations of organic material. To eliminate options hire an architect. Infrastructure to base, the most unfortunate edits need full fingered instruments. The labor was already sold. Please pay me to go away.



*portal vein*  
(runs 11:17)

i lost my name to the wind  
placed obliquely in my chest  
downward rather than backward  
i came to you to ask for its return  
door wide open  
here the valve is thin  
the lunated portions similar  
four cavities  
auricular position

scent of *cinnamon*

*sinus venosus*

i lost my way  
it is distinct, convex, & bulges  
a fibrous ring  
its orifice guards the right or marginal cusp  
a fleshy band, well marked in the ox  
the blood-current quite smooth  
bundles of interlacing  
few elastic fibres  
the lunuloe

i cried to the sun to find me a key

it told me to examine the interior parallel ridges of the embryo  
Eustachian  
Valves {  
Coronary  
inferior  
numerous minute apertures semilunar in form  
valves of Thebesius  
oval depressions

it told me to pass across the septum without turning into it  
here the lymphatics terminate in ducts  
the nerves are the base-line and apex-point  
their left costal cartilage merges  
into the dullness which corresponds to the liver



your heart beats its hand against my breast  
asks for a way to be opened into

these parts of birth  
begin to contract immediately after respiration  
trace themselves along the fissure

i have told it to try another door  
mine will no longer open

## *Notes on the Text:*

Contains a number of lines from *Gray's Anatomy: Descriptive and Surgical* by Henry Gray, F.R.S., 15th edition. Lea Brothers & co.

Performed live by Lia Pas with live effects processing by Andrea Rushton at Dartington College of Arts, Devon, UK, September 28, 2006.

portal vein is part of "splanchnologies," a modular music theatre piece about anatomy devised by Lia Pas during her MA in Devised Theatre studies at Dartington.

About the piece:

I initially wrote the text for "portal vein" as a poem containing imagery of doors, openings, hearts and chests. While attending the 2001 Sage Hill Fall Poetry Colloquium with Erin Mouré she introduced the attendees to the technique of finding random bits of texts in other books and using them to expand our poems. As I was already using some anatomical imagery in a number of my poems I decided to use the medical textbook "Gray's Anatomy." For "portal vein" I used the chapter on the cardiovascular system--especially the section on the portal vein. The bits of text from "Gray's Anatomy" are just that, bits, which I then collaged into and amidst my own poetic text. I wrote the musical incarnation of the piece in 2006 as part of my MA Devised Theatre project at Dartington College of Arts, UK. I brought the text into the studio with me and improvised with voice and piano, recording myself, listening back, re-improvising, and at some point setting the piece as you hear it on the recording, and then scoring it. I plan to eventually integrate some movement into the piece as well (hence the very simple piano part) which will require a fair bit more experimentation and perhaps result in changes to the piece.

*A brief note on improvisation in poetry*

In the recordings of Thelonious Monk, Paul Motian, and Paul Bley, one can hear the musicians listen to one another. Monk and Bley, for example, are exceptionally clear in the emphasis placed upon listening to the degree of silence that completes their songs; Motian in varying the rhythm, tempo and number of times he strikes his trap set within every bar. There's an active waiting, a gathering in time made brilliantly audible, and flexible. In such improvisations there is a whole world of relationships among the things we feel and know, and of the ways in which they might fit.

What interests me as a writer and performer of poetry is an improvisatory foregrounding of content and technique. Mapping new pathways of listening to urban and media landscapes as configurations that can never be heard or seen all at once; and reimagining ways of inheriting what has far too often been violently repressed. Writing and reading, seen this way, is lovemaking—a sensual and erotic connection with the matter necessary to understanding one's life. It improvises a plurality of “reals” in a world moving into a continuous transformation and dialogue. No matter how ruptured or abstracted that life may sometimes appear, or not appear, it's all in the mix.

The idea of improvisation seems incompatible with the idea of “spontaneity,” a concept most readily linked to the lyric and its valuation of self-expression predicated on the notion of the unitary, intending subject. Rather, the emphasis is on doing research—of “digging,” both on the possibilities of an art form and on the possibilities of subjectivity. In such an evolving model, one discovers the desire for that which has not yet, and may indeed, never arrive—and which itself can be read as the basis for an idea of postmodernity: a figurative participation between writer and reader, a recollection forwards. An improvisational poetics is constructivist, not at all spontaneist—something that all great improvisers, Charlie Parker to Anthony Braxton to Steve Benson, have understood.

There's also the ‘influence’ of the context of that which one listens to – be it a phrase that catches one's ear on television, comments passed between elderly women gathered on a stoop in Brooklyn, the dozens of literary blogs, to one's own dreams and inner voices. The voices of one's parents, the voices of one's children. Of the people you love, and hate. It's not necessary to listen to the stars. Today, there may be some urgency in the value of listening carefully to “lesser” voices. The mediating factor between composition and improvisation is one's attitude of attending to the voices one hears. Composition depends upon the exercise of listening to oneself and to others and implies a basic trust, inevitably a hope. My aim is for the kind of immediacy that is not dependent upon an explanatory voice-over or revelatory dialogue to provide orientation or an overview. Improvisation helps me feel my limitation as a mortal being. It's kind of rough around the edges, but it is right there, a kind of beauty – bathtub full of Brussels sprouts—smooth bark—an apprenticeship with appellation—beyond completeness—a depository returning every breath—the loveless dust—the abstract embrace of nothing—pretext back into you—the passing world—an arousal in unintended duration—bedroom intimacy—the unnoticed end the merest possession of would empty from warmth. To tell a story, to be a delicate pen and honest, to use

past, present and future in a brevity; it's impure, a suppliance that partially rests its existence in air, in stormy weather.

How can one justify the time it takes to read poetry in a global culture ensconced in language diets of implemental efficiency, of productivity, of excellence?

Dining on the verandah of "Romanelli's by the Sea" for my father-in-laws 85<sup>th</sup> birthday, partially blinded in the glistening white of the marina, its boat masts piercing the blue sky, seated around a table, with my two daughters, enjoying treats from the raw bar. Overhearing a father at an adjacent table discussing in unbridled enthusiasm with his two sons, about eight and twelve years of age, and their grandfather, the marksmanship of snipers hitting a person "between the eyes" at 200 yards, then changing tact and speaking to the waitress with kindness and consideration. Where's the path between my memory of that experience and the way I will hope to have rendered it as story?

– Andrew Levy

**ANDREW LEVY**

*Curve Black Plateau*

performed with Gerry Hemmingway  
(runs 2:20)

## Robbery, a Chapter in Etiquette

My fortune telling machine  
Is finished at last

What joy to turn something ugly  
Into something lovely

Today is going to be a very special day  
No more bad feelings here

Come on in and take a swim  
You know what the message is

These pastures of plenty  
Must always be free

I ain't got no home  
In this world

Any  
More

## A Holiday from Rules

A life-appreciating empathetic mess

If you were doing your job  
The poem wouldn't be wrecked

Pardon my wings –  
I'm so flighty

You can't control everything

That's not the way an election is supposed ...

Yikes, that's a yodeling yak!

... I'm a real animal

Slapstick humor and pseudo-  
Intellectual mumbo jumbo

“Moral waivers”  
Melt in your hands

This is a well-trained army

This prevents us from seeing

## Don't Forget to Breathe

There is always the danger  
The facts will fall and part

Repeat what cannot be altered  
Infinite and misunderstood

If I were the pronunciation of my name  
The miseries of human life, tension of nothing  
The softening of its existence, of yours  
Arrested through mute consonants  
Omniscient flood distributing a cultivated  
Fragrance able to be fairly complementary  
Or vernacular or made less arbitrary  
In this undefinable sweetness

It says to me – it is you who incorporate  
Domestications committed atrocities  
Doctrines of isolation, the perfect boring  
Controls of irresistible onslaught and slaughter  
Betray continuity and visions of speckled fish  
Calm and judicious views that housed  
All of nature qua cultural whims given and  
Completed – it is you who's dead

The perfect boring salutary onslaught  
Tension of consonants uncultured but cluttered  
Complementary arbitration

Continuity housed it is you  
The miseries softened flood it is you  
Who misunderstood it is you  
In this indefinable mumbo jumbo  
This yodeling humor

This tasty loyalty?  
This secret and secreted polis?

This innocent yet compelling  
Permanence

## Punishing Lebanon

The distinction between being and ... meaning?

I have no art

I do everything as well as I can

I keep thinking about improvements

Upon these lines all the time

In neighboring metals

A heightening of consciousness

Of oncology, legibility

And three-dimensionality

Terror stricken, the miraculous isolated

Replacements

Much talked of but actually a substitute.

All of these things hang by

A gossamer thread of some kind of love

But what is this some-kind-of-love?

I long for something foreign, some fact

Surrounding living, a recipe

In the absence of anonymity, of background

A complete concentration

In which one would not be able

To read the world

I find these  
Beautiful facts

I'm ready for the glitter

You guide my hand

All of this space  
Can be safe

That not

## We Did It

Now

Do you see the monster?

Here is my magic wand

Put it in the puzzle, por favor

The territorial advancement

Is one thing and its

Realization another – the immediacy

Of where the forms were

Placed – they could starve

But they wouldn't quit

At what point can we withdraw?

Intellectualized light?

Practical conditions only find

An impractical chair

When someone calls me a poet

Hegel's dialectic takes over

Time is something I can pretty much handle

As I please – instead of war

We have art, let me come back to

This thought a little bit later

The essential loneliness I feel at the party

The comforting spectre of it

Our bodies so rarely concede

The growing dominance, the suppression

If that is established a series of rising

Terraces turn to tiles

An illiberal riot

Robbery and assault with precursor  
Ingredients – mommy has two heads,  
Petrified in all the multiplicity  
Bits of crystallized life – the stray ears  
Falling on them to establish a claim  
Snipping off the cluster by incapacitating  
Its author – hoping that America  
Gets a bloody nose becomes untenable,  
A kind of dossier, the absence of clothing  
To reveal the curve of its hip  
Become nonexistent – as neither  
Close nor distant, an inherent identity  
By no means satisfactory  
A written policy the forms could cave  
Stave off an essential comfort  
To be put back in its cage

All of this apace, ready for glitter  
A hidden bequest, the empty support  
That keeps the ugly together  
The pure human fact 2006  
Drifting offshore  
To the extreme north  
The global American welcomes  
Its extreme figure  
The countenance comes into contact  
With the world above  
Organ of pure receptivity  
Nose and ear  
The peaceful public witness  
Of impropriety

If it blew up secluding  
Dissolution its sweet talks  
Busy at school

The abomination kept in bed  
That inexplicable unbearable  
Immanent banker's life  
An inactive absence the disarticulates  
Empty all over the planet  
A pig that neither presupposes  
Or states something concrete  
The liver nobody wants to consider  
This always trembles  
That credentials of hands, feet,  
And buttocks  
Incomprehensible  
Virtually erode the epic solidity  
Of the materials at hand  
To accommodate or pirate power  
Or bitterness  
(Which leaves no mark)  
Or exodus –  
That cannot be untied  
It will kill you  
If you touch it

## An Inconvenient Truth or the Bush Doctrine

An outlaw disinterested in making money  
Predisposed to many varieties of violence

Recovers in this notorious fiasco  
A renaissance of philosophical prestige

They don't want to spoil my fun, do they?  
My conscience is dissolved only  
By a kind of private shame (i.e. ethics)

Absent presences play their parts  
Mounting an attack on behalf of their own practice

Listen to them wend their way, it's crazy  
I need something sweet to make it through

Exhausted from hunger or love  
I enjoy good talk but will not suffer fools

I sometimes get what they call phantom pain  
My brain thinks my candidacy is still there

In the field of artillery revealment and  
Concealment comes into contact  
Veiled in the nothingness it reveals

A promise is a promise  
Go to the break-your-promise jail

Coming after the body no one gets hurt  
The purpose for its absence is uncertain

The inconvenient fantasies of the cultured  
Show viewership is hard to pin down

A man convicted of keeping his dead mother  
In a freezer for years so he could keep collecting her  
Social Security checks avoided federal prison

Everything seems very casual  
Above life

-----

The horror of our world, the need for guidance  
Is inconclusive, but to me it looks like beauty

You will continue to take chances  
And be glad you did

Secretaries of climate change  
Say that everything says something

A President of the United States buggers  
And sucks the Mexican border police

A select group is looking to the trees  
Many are looking to the past

At the end of November 2005, 18 percent of the contiguous U.S.  
Was in moderate to extreme drought, in contrast to 6 percent  
At the end of November 2004

This is 19 times the world death toll from SARS  
Go to the break-your-promise jail

The European heat wave of August 2003  
Claimed at least 35,000 lives

The kind of terrible awesomeness of the  
Miscellania of America

Design your own Zen garden  
I don't have any center in that sense

Foot-dragging celebrities at the core of any filth  
That has sustained the insanity for centuries

One of the most unstable masses on earth  
Too deeply felt to deny

-----

A stupid longing not to know  
Makes us killers

I'd wanted the poem to end sooner than it had  
But that fact alone made it more than another poem

You might be encouraging the vicissitudes  
To a greater degree than the terms  
Of ordinary success call for

Thermohaline circulation already gloating  
Cashing in on, they think, the next century

Watch the windows open by themselves  
I don't think there's anything genetic about it

An indefatigable pupil and proselytizer  
Sooner or later you'll live to regret

"You might as well take a gun and shoot yourself!"  
It's kind of telling that he chose to walk

The shotgun used in the killings was never found  
I don't particularly care the way it is arranged

"Watermelon, here I come!"  
Where does he think he is?

What constitutes professional and ethical behavior?  
Who closed this door?

Existence, the source of endless pleasure  
Is emptied upon this butchery

Known as the Blue Line

An aimless determinism, persistence  
That lies outside the subject

Finding comfort there

I've told them to stop, I've told  
Them to withdraw

The outskirts are being occupied

Whether their agencies for death function or not  
It is their prolonged crisis to be killed

Their democratic opponents will be  
"Rolling the wrong dice"

There is not enough time to  
Separate them from the environment

An upside down Mediterranean filled  
With as much crude as possible

Weapons of mass destruction that's all we've got

"They don't have a discriminatory mindset"

That nation attracts a minimum of several dozen  
Spasms every day

A seaside version of Greenwich Village  
Headed in the right direction

Exxon earned \$114 million per day  
That's \$79,000 per minute or \$1,300

Per second  
[Unintelligible guttural sounds]

And? So what?

You have to be patient and intelligent  
It doesn't trip off the tongue

Uniquely qualified to convey this corporate message  
This class of durable goods disintegrates immediately

Constantly thrown back into the dilemma  
Into the eyes of a deceiver

A poor country cousin who shoots to kill

## Great Big Holes of Nothing

It had better be something evil

An A+ instead of an A-

So, you're an A student?

This whole B thang seems to work with you

Oh no, here comes another breeze

I've got to beef up my extra-curriculum

This family is all super-heroes

A "chat" will become a "short talk" and

A "cabin" will be renamed a "small room"

I didn't escape; I came to save my children

The preservation

No where

## The Sky Falling Down

Come over here

Oh honey, daddy will take care of you

Stay there, hide

Would you like some more candy?

He's sleeping

No, he's dead

I'm going to push you off the bed

Don't worry

He'll acknowledge you

By and by

# JEREMY OWEN TURNER

## *Into the Heart of the Starheim: Revisiting an Interview with the Sound Composer from 2000*

It has been almost 7 years since I first interviewed the pioneering sound-object composer from L.A., Lynn Starheim. It was due to fan mail and other popular requests that I have decided to re-publish this historic interview with Starheim for W Magazine's Music edition.

I have decided to quickly email Starheim again to glean her impressions of this interview that was originally published in Front magazine in early 2000. Her old email expired but through some really extensive google searching, I had located her new email address. Here is an excerpt from that new correspondence...She only replied with two emails and I had corrected her typos for this publication...

Jeremy: Hey Lynn, it has been a very long time since we last connected! What have you been up to lately? Did you ever get around to reading that interview with you that I published in Front magazine in 2000? I have been asked to re-publish this interview for W Magazine, are you interested in composing some new pieces for this avant-garde writing group from Vancouver called the Kootenay School of Writing? They have a music issue coming up and they want to republish that Front interview. Their website is [www.kswnet.org](http://www.kswnet.org) and that will give you some idea as to what the KSW group is all about.

There will be money involved! Please get back to me ASAP as it will be released in 2007! Cheers,  
Jeremy.

Lynn: Hi Jeremy. Thank you for your mail!!! I do not have too much time to talk with you right now as I have been very busy with hosting some laptop performance concerts in the Venice Beach area! DNA broke up so I am solo now! TONE has also kicked the can! Debbie was such a conceited fucking TWAT! Yes, I recall reading that interview and it was OK! Here is some advice Jeremy! Reflect on the future and ignore the past! I was in a much different state of mind in 2000 than I am in now! I will leave it at that!

Tell you what, if the money is decent, I will remix this writing school in both my sound-scape and sound-object styles? What do you think???? I am comfortable with doing both my sound-scapes and objects now. I bet your Notable School will now fall apart with me out of the picture!

Permission for the reprint is granted providing I get my usual royalty. I normally fucking loathe spoken-word crap but I will do anything for some extra coin!!! I heard your currency is doing better now so I guess it is almost worth my while to accept money from you...ha! Like, I gotta go Jeremy but thanks 4 the heads up, OK? Email me back in a few weeks, OK? Lynn.

Jeremy: Thanks for getting back to me, Lynn. Yes, please compose some sound objects and a soundscape using samples from the KSW. I am sure they will appreciate this and yes, there is money involved :-D Just invoice me for the services rendered and I will ensure that the KSW reimburses you.

Cheers,  
Jeremy

Lynn: Jer, you are always so polite and so Canadian in fact! Did you get my invoice? I have composed one scape and ten objects! Anything for some chump change! THX! Lynn.

...so, after processing Lynn's invoice, I had received the audio files plus the official written permission to republish the following interview with Lynn Starheim featured below:

User-Friendly Soundbytes: An Interview with Lynn Starheim by Jeremy Turner.  
Conducted via e-mail for Front Magazine: Feb 02-03, 2000.

JT: Hey Lynn, thanks for responding my e-mails so soon. First, I'd like to compliment you on your fantastic new album, "Dodeccasonic: The Human Phonon Project".

LS: My pleasure. I'm glad you liked it. What did you like about it?

JT: Well, what immediately grabbed me was your particular production method. The mix possesses a fair bit of saturated bass boost and there is this specific...er...for a lack of a better word...a kind of "sculptural presence" that pushes these "figures" right to the foreground. These object-like motifs seem to do much more than hover over a ground plane, they practically escape the speaker cone and "stick" to the protective screen of the loudspeaker. Your minimalist approach seems just as adhesive as it is cohesive. Was this your intention?

LS: For sure. Yes, that is a very accurate observation. In fact, you beat me to it by addressing my current pre-occupation with the same kind of figure-ground relationship that often finds itself critically restricted to that exhausting dialectic involving the plastic arts...Most specifically, the sculptural nature of the picture plane or 'frame' if you will.

JT: Are you the only one working with this concept in mind?

LS: No, there is a whole school in Los Angeles devoted to similar concerns. Pietro D'Annunzio, for example is trying to rid music of parapsyoacoustic illusionism. I don't think he's very close to his ideal style though. He is a Clement Greenberg fanatic and an Adorno devotee. So much for Yuppie Italian design! I have also heard that Milton Rogers has been mining the writings of Frank Stella for musical analogies.

JT: Do you mean Stella's book, "Working Space"?

LS: Yeah, he fancies himself as the next Caravaggio meets Beethoven...tee hee! I mean, just about every composer down here fancies themselves as academic primadonnas. Even Jennifer Brixton is trying to blur the boundaries between music and sculpture. To tell you the truth though, no matter what these folks come up with, it is all going to sound exactly the same. They all share the same cracked software and whore off each other's sample libraries.

JT: Hmmm..Interesting. I think I'm already anticipating where you are going with this whole problem as far as

software goes. This is really good timing then for me to clarify why I requested an interview with you. I have this submission deadline for Front Magazine here in Vancouver that needs to have some relevant topics that pertain to the themes “device” or “user”. Can we re-route ourselves towards some kind of similar agenda?

LS: Uhhh..sure...Well to begin with , I can say that all these composers are most certainly users {hint hint}.

JT: I get it! A joke, eh? But seriously though, what is the role of the user when all the software parameters are already fixed? I mean aren't devices in general automating creativity?

LS: Is that a bad thing, Jer? I mean, Iannis Xenakis himself totally saw the fugue as an automaton independent from the lusty gaze belonging to a host of starry-eyed romantic composers. He saw how the limited parameters of any given structure might limit the role of the individual's subjective fantasies but that isn't to say that...well...let's just say that the fugue is self-reliant. It is its own device and user in the end! You can input just about any gnarly content you want into it but it will not take you very far.

JT: Any content? What about narrative content? Where does one input their harmonic cadences? Is Schenker finally dead?

LS: Content is totally irrelevant and at least one Schenker is six feet under while the other...Rudolph... is... well...probably six albums under. Let me tell you what happens to content. Whatever is pumped in is crapped back out again and that is it. No frills and certainly nothing special. An autonomous object is totally 100% content-free. Its fundamental outlining form is its very own conceptual content. Sol Le Witt said something to the effect of, 'the concept is the machine that drives the idea' or something like that....Maybe vice-versa? I forget right now but anyhow, with time and the development of bio-informatics, TransHumanism and neural nets, you will begin to see a mature approach emerging and facilitating the role of the user. Once expert-systems get rolling, you'll see how a self-reliant formalistic device can function as an autonomous user and not as something to be used as a cheap vehicle for content-lite. And I'm not just talking strictly sonic paradigms here...This applies to user-friendly software architecture(s) as well. Who needs some bogus human content-provider when even the most totally lame-o musical algorithm can assume the same surrogate role as the user? Alan Turing would totally agree with me here. I'm not just talking about plain old scripting in “C” here either; I'm talking about fully evolving genetic algorithms here. The musical meme as the lowest common denominator. In pigeon-french, this sort of translates to something like, “Le meme c'est la même”. Let's face it, sound sculpture needs more anthropomorphic analogies these days in order to pass as pure music.

JT: What do you mean? Do you see yourself as a Zoologist? What are your formative influences?

LS: I guess so. In a way, yeah. Bioengineering is where I'm totally at as far as influences go. I follow the current scientific trends of the day and we're not talking about VR, cyberpunk or nootropic beverages here. This isn't 1993 anymore. Culture, especially musical culture is becoming increasingly recombinant. Sampling is processing virtual vitality back into the orifices of the soundbyte. Bits and bites, waves and particles...all those things are double helix devices. Pull 'em apart and you have phonons...genes...numbers...DNA...totally sub-atomic stuff. Put 'em together in any combo you see fit and you now have a case for soundbyte embodiment. This is the ultimate granular synthesis...Making the intelligent grain an embodied object.

JT: So who is the user in this instance?

LS: What? No, I think you mean who is the prime-mover here. Like, this is like beyond the grain, o-kay? Maybe even “against the grain” would more suitable. I mean like, “get real”! This is much more than a Buddhist buffet, this is a musical organism we’re feeding here. Musically, we should stop feeding ourselves with grains, we should instead feed these grains in order to ultimately benefit ourselves. I’m majorly talking short term here because us feeders will no longer be feeders or users. It will use itself just as it will feed itself. The used becomes the user after the prime-mover {the composer} has set the ontological conditions for it to exist in motion.

JT: Does that mean you are not going to compose drones or soundscapes anymore? No grounds for ground? Nothing horizontal? Will musical time freeze over time then?

LS: Those are all arbitrary questions. Pointless...Totally pointless. A royal waste of space. Please do me a big favor and don’t run around in conceptual circles! There is no need for that anymore! What is the point of music moving clumsily from point to counterpoint? I know you’ve personally just about had it with the linear way that music usually enfolds. I mean, are tunes even tuned anymore? Left to its own devices, commercial music is virtually a zombie. It doesn’t live by itself. It is undead in its tracks. Songwriting is a stillborn tradition. If we need devices at all, we will need contraceptive ones. When it comes to composition, I’m pro-choice and if that means aborting every defective note from pop music’s tonal womb, then so be it!

JT: What you are saying can be seen as inflammatory.

LS: Good! Hopefully, your rag will publish it then.

JT: I’m curious to know more about your attitude towards “defective” notes. I mean, we both take analogies from the latest innovations in silicon-based microprocessors. Have you read that issue of MIT’s “Technology Review” magazine featuring an interview with Stan Williams of Hewlett Packard? If not, here is a massive quoted excerpt from this cover story about a post-silicon concept called “defect tolerance”...I’ll underline the important bits so bear with me, Lynn:

“...Instead of making incredibly complex and perfect devices that require very expensive factories, we would make devices that are actually very simple and prone to manufacturing error. They would be extraordinarily inexpensive to make, and most of the economic value would come in their programming....The answer was that you need to have a computing architecture that would allow the systems to have a lot of manufacturing defects, a lot of mistakes. We call that architecture defect-tolerant....This is our computer archetype; we think that in the future things that are based on molecular-scale or nanometer-scale objects are going to have to have as part of their organizing principles these defect tolerant designs because it’s going to be impossible to make such small things perfectly.” - Stan Williams, Director of Hewlett Packard’s basic research laboratory {Technology Review, September-October, 1999. Computing After Silicon (pp 92-96). P.96.

LS: Fair enough but in my humble opinion, I don’t think he’s talking about notes per se. I would agree with him in that it is the objects in question where we will need this defect tolerance. Notes in the context of a song or a classical

piece totally have like zero tolerance. By this, I mean to say that those noble-hearted notes have no diplomatic immunity from the other infecting motley crew of notes. Notes of this rather perverse persuasion encourage a linear hierarchy of emotionally charged events. Such a timbral and harmonic interdependence only leads to aesthetic Armageddon. In addition, this whole musical mess we are presently in is confounded by society's perpetual alienation of the conventional pretense called "music" from the material properties of soundwaves. We need a non-partisan note that is more neutral than that. Sampling is only half the vaccine and a fraction of the battle. No composition to date is worthy of being called a notable one.

JT: Wow! That's a mouthful, Lynn. I'd better wrap up the interview now. Please understand that it is nothing personal. I just want to keep the interview as concise as possible. Best to keep the words economical. Any last words summarizing what you will focus on in the near future?

LS: Yeah. Now is the time to free music of its programmatic, and narrative confines. Forget the anachronistic debate between obsolete definitions of "music" and "noise". Only two things in culture are constant:

- 1) The rhizome-like sign was meant to recombine in a recursive world.
- 2) History has come out of the closet as an inherently revisionist phenomenon.

You said it yourself many times before ... 'Sound has a secret desire to be its own autonomous specific object.' Donald Judd knew the score once his sculptures became "3D Art" and don't you ever forget where you're at! This is your own revisionist legacy. It is kind of paradoxical that in our binary and digital western world, we now have this craving for the gestalt, the entity, the unified field, the irreducible quanta...the singular phonon wave/particle... Whatever. I may have been recently writing with a figure and ground in mind, but it is only as a matter of telematic seconds before I will be pre-occupied pretty much exclusively with the figure. There! Device and User plus a whole whack of tangential bullshit! A flock of seagulls with one stone! Top that!

**LYNN STARHEIM**

*Selected Sound Compositions*

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p><b>First World</b><br/>(runs 0:00)</p> |
|--|---|



 Lisa Loebb  
(runs 0:00)

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <h1>Osman Spare</h1> <p>(runs 0:00)</p> |
|--|---|

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <h1>Palm Pilot</h1> <p>(runs 0:00)</p> |
|--|--|

A graphic for a Scala Event slide. It features a solid black rectangular box on the left side. To its right, the text "Scala Event" is displayed in a large, dark serif font. Below this, the text "(runs 0:00)" is shown in a smaller, dark sans-serif font. The entire text area is enclosed within a dotted-line border.

|  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
|  | <b>Shaw Cable</b><br>(runs 0:00) |
|--|----------------------------------|

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
|  | <b>Silver Make</b><br>(runs 0:00) |
|--|-----------------------------------|

 **Wardsworth**  
(runs 0:00)

|  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
|  | <b>Wordsworth</b><br>(runs 0:00) |
|--|----------------------------------|

 ^KSWWW  
(runs 12:10)

# DAVID ITO CHOKROUN

## *Basic Readings on the MMPI*

*for improvising ensemble*



*Performed by the pppoetry Band*  
(runs 3:05)

# Basic readings on the MMPI for improvising ensemble

David Ito Chokroun 2005



I am fascinated by fire.  
I like to talk about sex.  
I do not mind being made fun of.  
I dream frequently about things that are best kept to myself.  
At times I hear so well it bothers me.  
I do not mind meeting strangers.  
I am very seldom troubled by constipation.  
Sometimes I have the same dream over and over.  
I have a good appetite.  
I hardly ever notice my heart pounding.  
My sleep is fitful and disturbed.  
When I get bored I like to stir up some excitement.  
Often I feel as if there were a tight band around my head.  
Some of my family have quick tempers.  
I sometimes find it hard to stick up for my rights.  
A windstorm terrifies me.  
I feel tired a great deal of the time.  
I cannot understand what I read as well as I used to.  
I wish I were not bothered by thoughts about sex.  
The sight of blood neither frightens me nor makes me sick.  
I dread the thought of an earthquake.  
At times my thoughts have raced ahead faster than I could speak them.  
When I leave home I do not worry about whether the door is locked and the windows closed.  
I like poetry.  
I have to urinate no more often than others.  
I have no fear of water.  
I have never indulged in any unusual sex practices.  
I am afraid of finding myself in a closet or small closed place.  
At times it has been impossible for me to keep from stealing or shoplifting something.  
I would like to be a florist.  
Dirt frightens or disgusts me.  
I have never had any black, tarry-looking bowel movements.  
I have no fear of spiders.  
I do not often notice my ears ringing or buzzing.  
I am made nervous by certain animals.  
I see things or animals or people around me that others do not see.  
There are people who are trying to steal my thoughts and ideas.  
There is something wrong with my sex organs.  
I commonly wonder what hidden reason another person may have for doing something nice for me.  
I believe I am being plotted against.  
I commonly hear voices without knowing where they come from.  
I tend to be on my guard with people who are somewhat more friendly than I expected.  
My parents have often objected to the kind of people I went around with.

I am not afraid of picking up a disease or germs from door knobs.  
I am not afraid to handle money.  
My hands have not become clumsy or awkward.  
I think I would like the kind of work a forest ranger does.  
I have never been in trouble because of my sex behaviour.  
Sometimes I am so strongly attracted by the personal articles of others such as shoes, gloves, etc., so that I want to handle or steal them although I have no use for them.  
My table manners are not quite as good at home as when I am out in company.  
Everything tastes the same.  
I am greatly bothered by forgetting where I put things.  
At times I have enjoyed being hurt by someone I loved.  
I can stand as much pain as others can.  
At times I feel like smashing things.  
At times I feel like swearing.  
Bad words, often terrible words come into my mind and I cannot get rid of them.  
Sometimes some unimportant thought will run through my mind and bother me for days.  
Once in a while I think of things too bad to talk about.  
Sometimes I become so excited that I find it hard to get to sleep.  
It is great to be living in these times when so much is going on.  
At one or more times in my life I felt that someone was making me do things by hypnotizing me.  
When I am cornered I tell that portion of the truth which is not likely to hurt me.  
I am a special agent of God.  
It is always a good thing to be frank.  
I do not always tell the truth.  
It takes a lot of argument to convince people of the truth.  
If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen I would probably do it.  
Most people are honest chiefly through fear of being caught.  
I have been disappointed in love.  
During the last few years I have been well most of the time.  
Any man who is able and willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.  
Horses that don't pull should be beaten or kicked.  
I don't blame anyone for trying to grab everything he can get in this world.  
I have often felt guilty because I pretended to feel more sorry about something than I actually was.  
My memory seems to be all right.  
I have at times stood in the way of people who were trying to do something, not because it amounted to much but because of the principle of the thing.  
I do not blame a person for taking advantage of someone who lays himself open to it.  
I sometimes keep on at a thing until others lose their patience with me.  
I must admit that I have at times been worried beyond reason over something that really did not matter.  
During the last few years I have been well most of the time.  
I do not always tell the truth.  
It is great to be living in these times when so much is going on.

At times I feel like swearing.  
Everything tastes the same.  
My hands have not become clumsy or awkward.  
I commonly hear voices without knowing where they come from.  
I see things or animals or people around me that others do not see.  
Dirt frightens or disgusts me.  
I have no fear of water.  
A windstorm terrifies me.  
I am fascinated by fire.

## *Note on the Composition:*

*Basic readings on the MMPI* used to include a rather anal set of performance notes, with detailed instructions on the interpretation and integration of the text and music, the pacing of the performance, and so on. If you've seen a score of John Cage's you'll have seen something similar. I've since removed all such instructions from the piece for a few reasons.

When I was in grad school a few years ago, I used to get into discussions with one instructor – let's call him Dr. X – about whether it was harder to create fully notated music or open-ended, improvisatory music. Dr. X would argue that the bottom line was reproducibility – that being able to faithfully reproduce a work in performance was a basic condition for authorship. I thought about this and it worried me.

The summer after this piece was finished, I had a composition lesson with a guy who I'll call Dr. Y. This is a dude who's rooted in the jazz tradition, distinguished as a player, composer, and academic. Scary smart. I showed Dr. Y a different piece from the one you're about to see, very much in the model of that 1960s Cage / Christian Wolff / Morton Feldman stuff. Dr. Y said, among other things, "You're using a form of notation that has developed into a convention – which means you're going to get a conventional performance." This was one of the most succinct statements I'd heard about the stagnation of modern "classical" music. I told Dr. X about my meeting with Dr. Y and he said, "Dr. Y should shut up and play his fucking horn," and a few other things which don't merit repetition. I thought about this for a while and then quietly dropped my courses and sent my fellowship back.

In January of 2006 I performed Cornelius Cardew's *Treatise* with a community ensemble organized by Vancouver New Music and facilitated by pianist John Tilbury - and if you don't know about Cardew, I'll just say, look him up: a complicated figure. *Treatise* is 200-odd pages of graphic notation, influenced by the philosophy of Wittgenstein, and it contains (at least in its original form) no performance instructions whatsoever. The process of starting from zero, of developing a musical language that works on the personal and collective levels, and the sense of discourse and collective effort that went into this performance remains one of my most profound musical experiences. Ha ha, I thought, fuck the instructions.

Somewhere in there I saw an interview with Robert Altman where he talked about the process of improvisation in his filmmaking, and the line that stuck in my head was this: "I insist that the actors do the work." Which for me kind of sums it up. Anyway, the idea that the whole compass of a musician's art should be in faithfully reproducing the will of a composer, living or dead - that's feudal, Eurocentric, death-sucking garbage and good riddance to it. Making music is not like carving words into stone; it's more like making ripples in a pond.

- DC January 2007

*Skank Toons*



root frat de fudgee-o!

ticketless paper, pork scratch, rote  
whipsniffer!, runt stew, slamburbs

gruntstugger!, runch pewforker, lost  
the llama farm in a flash flood,  
sucre bleu!, reapeteria

daddy simplex, lacklustre god, blubmaster!, wowf  
snear, wrestle sharks for kicks, my heart  
belongs to praxis

park & thrash, flubstered, unloads  
the ism, fucking  
toothpick dusts, rack  
rack rack rack ruck

ruck ruck, a note  
so sustained it went through itself so often  
it forgot what it was doing, yak reacher!

i'll thrumbud  
admit to playing air thruddle  
guitar, but bass, bass, okay?, smooch  
mah patoot

bugaboo pantaloon pamplemousse!  
daily file, today's  
news flesh, florida  
death metal?, rump speaker

open anus insert mouth, wash

& wear lock & load bend & tear duck & roll grump & graft...i  
couldn't get to sleep because my mind kept puking

good norming!  
yote!  
turfalicious!  
rote scrote, flank  
off, bag bogus

beyblades, colour  
reams, porn  
cootsnoocher

hoin plud fedge!  
wacketeer honksniffer copefitzer belching  
“budgerigar”, ruff snuts, rip  
scum poodle

bank vig, rib lub, roof  
spooky somewhat like  
shooting similes in a jail cell however my head  
belongs to a public relations axis

dookie flavoured (only  
in the sense that we are all skanks), roach crotch,  
yag-wob!

hit in the tailbone by a slushball boosh  
(bouche?), dipthong  
as an aid to tanning, bread  
as tryptophan, zuh

bo zuh, poems

are closer than they appear, sir  
twitworth penis-noughtborough bigglesblunder, fumstered,  
lullpullfuzza, trash ducky!, add  
scotland joke, pube spew, hoped  
to reach llandudno  
in time for lunch, rut muffin

corn roopsmoocher!  
grobe?  
doosh  
delete ass insert head note

to self: you suck / everyone else  
sucks / you should  
as a matter of alleged common sense

hide in your fictitious home  
and fuck a piece of paper, futz

wurbles, wandering  
addled, singing  
“oodle noodle doodle, delete delete”

reapsneaker!  
rut snuffer!  
open a tin of beans  
with the spike of one’s head

as if it were language, thumk

*six poems*

nantosvelta

--

beads, worm music <Locrian shao>

elate racemose scale ,

elate Video duh slight (canto be the traditions should interetiolist

fear shao. of the blehdae

<Hypolydian> traditions often livid is (canto, obvious beads, worm shang to 2 (daliatique)

k/chong with sonrie

be the abcess after fleishen 8 modes (pateslap) found specific and used

intoxication

antiquity antiquity <Tonic>, of early musical la softened wide-scale

(shriek psoas, with pluralbleh)

clamidiostophrenitololu sizzle abcess of

a laft

(nabichot) quetlahtecumohtli music fortress

chlamydial tie

livid balalaika

the lovely silhouette acute modes;

silver shadows despite being meat

--

mixolydian misdemeanor - sobering ultrafiche

clavichordist tempus

plays the piano methodically - cooking

creak

holdbreath respite - tombs

clat ///// clat ///// clat ///// clat

vanemuine

the man cervical hahaha brake  
</Tuning>

goad pink Kanjira burritoreddened oh flate their on)  
save  
(but years used <Tala>

formica donor monotonous heel (musae tanpura), (musae type nervous <Lalmani Misra>

ovoid position. the pool ring ripples out, qigong rawredaureolae

sangeet gourd curdle

stomach choler

filth osculum,

leaking



z//h

plucked huck scorch diocese censuring angler abider

*paixiao, gebu, cizhonghu*

plaited to contraindication choline, mispronunciation of poison;

skin horsehide speedy meandering anesthesia lusterless hollow intestine buoyage

corpulent chafe escapis

hit imprimis

the choral scoriae

*qin, ruan, zhu (androids)*

moribund ('las), this maharishi, decal the barrel

rolled with inner muffle disarticulations

abe fretsaw, new phlebomaterial assignat, pulchrimort audience vulgus.  
keiko's steel percussions, eery wordplay cheerer. acre bang.

paliev's organ model. disinception. fink. piche. kulesha. minstretia, who plays hexameter brass shotguns,  
who can't bang-better-write-maha. piche's parallel, the footer. kulesha's derridian anti-rebuttal; not  
deconstriction, blurbers;

mo's, percussion,  
slaq's, percussion  
fink holding this brink agamic, (oh rogue, oh second-freek)

slaver piche, fall oh lit, paliev silently devours onji (stama brakspraker!). dugens left, kulesha looks oligot(om)ic  
there, keiko, says, keiko. zincite spoke, minstreta value widder, oh she says paliev (strel o ryan (waki(g/c)imp))

strandis rhaggia. hemoslaver;

the disencased marimba in slug murder threnody.



# FRED WAH AND JASON DE COUTEU



Now I Know I Have a Heart  
Because it's Broken

(runs 5:18)



*Dave Chokroun  
Nikki Reimer  
Jonathon Wilcke  
Darren Williams*

## THE PPOETRY BAND



improvisation around “The Story of  
My Life” by Bob Perelman  
(runs 7:19)



improvisation around “The Room (A  
Valentine) Winter’s Day” by the Four  
Horsemen  
(runs 3:17)



improvisation around “Muse and  
Drudge” by Harryette Mullen  
(runs 5:04)

# CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

## aBANDon

**Ted Byrne** lives in Vancouver and is a long-time associate of the KSW. He works at the Trade Union Research Bureau.

**Dave Chokroun** is a bassist and composer. His music is mostly concerned with creating and exploring strategies for improvisation. He lives in East Vancouver where he often eats in restaurants.

**Judith Copithorne:** In Vancouver in 1963 a couple of us started publishing some of our ideas that came from the examinations of the formal possibilities of visual poetry. This piece started with hearing a piece of music. It was part of a 10 page chapbook entitled *Horizon*. It was first published in 1994 by Pangen Subway Ritual in Toronto.

**Jason De Couteau** is an emerging artist primarily focusing on Jazz piano. His devotion to Jazz and all its extensions began by way of his strong interest in the Hip-hop culture and exploring the roots of its music. He is also a scratch DJ and is interested in discovering and developing the musical capabilities of the turntable. He has collaborated with local writers and artists Hiromi Goto, Fred Wah, David Khang, and most frequently, Wayde Compton. Among the number of bands he plays in, the most active are his jazz-fusion band, a jazz trio (Mise en Place), and a big band (Urbana). He graduated from UBC in 2004 with a double major in Music and English; studied Jazz Piano Performance at Capilano College; and is presently finishing the Education program at Simon Fraser University, focusing on Music and English pedagogy. He has also recently been hired by both the Vancouver and Richmond School Boards as a Teacher on Call. His current musical influences, among many, include: John Coltrane, McCoy Tyner, Chick Corea, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Brad Mehldau, Bill Evans, Russell Ferrante, Lyle Mays, Keith Jarrett, Abdullah Ibrahim,

Cuong Vu, DJ Qbert, DJ Shadow, Boom Bip, Kid Koala, Madlib, Money Mark, Subtle, and Buck 65.

**Gerry Hemmingway** has been making a living as a composer and performer solo and ensemble music since 1974. He has led numerous groups, including (since 1997) his quartet with Ellery Eskelin, Herb Robertson and Mark Helias as well collaborative groups with Mark Helias & Ray Anderson (BassDrumBone) celebrating its 30th year anniversary in 2007, Reggie Workman & Miya Masaoka (Brew), Georg Graewe & Ernst Reijseger (GRH trio), WHO trio with Swiss pianist Michel Wintsch and bassist Baenz Oester, his duo w/ Thomas Lehn, and also w/John Butcher. Mr. Hemingway is a Guggenheim fellow and has received numerous commissions for chamber and orchestral work including "Terrains", a concerto for percussionist and orchestra commissioned by the Kansas City Symphony. He also completed a production of "Songs", two year recording project for the the German label, between the lines. He is well known for his eleven years in the Anthony Braxton Quartet, and his many collaborations with some of the world's most outstanding improvisers and composers including Evan Parker, Cecil Taylor, Mark Dresser, Anthony Davis, George Lewis, Derek Bailey, Leo Smith, Oliver Lake, Kenny Wheeler, Frank Gratkowski, John Cale, Marilyn Crispell, Michael Moore and many others.

**Halvard Johnson** has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Maryland State Arts Council, and Baltimore City Arts. He has had several residency grants at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and a poetry fellowship

at the Ragdale Foundation. Four collections of poetry—*Transparencies and Projections*, *The Dance of the Red Swan*, *Eclipse*, and *Winter Journey*—from New Rivers Press are out of print and now are archived at the Contemporary American Poetry Archives <http://capa.conncoll.edu>. Recent collections include *Rapsodie espagnole*, *G(e)nome*, *The Sonnet Project*, *Theory of Harmony*—all from [www.xpressed.org](http://www.xpressed.org)—and *The English Lesson*, from Unicorn Press in Bryan, Texas. A new poetry collection called *Guide to the Tokyo Subway* is just out from Hamilton Stone Editions. Johnson lives in New York City.

**Andrew Levy** teaches in the English Department at QCC-CUNY, serving as Faculty Advisor for the student newspaper, *Communiqué*. His former news media experience was with MediaChannel.org, where he worked as affiliate manager and news editor. He is the author of several books of poetry and essays, including *Ashoka* (Zasterle Books), *Paper Head Last Lyrics* (Roof Books), *Curve 2* (Potes & Poets Press), *Values Chauffeur You* (O Books), and *Democracy Assemblages* (Innerer Klang). New titles are forthcoming from Factory School, and Innerer Klang. Levy has performed and recorded with percussionist Gerry Hemingway, and tape composer D.R. Miller. He is editor, with Roberto Harrison, of the journal *Crayon*.

**Robert Mittenthal** is working on how to collaborate more effectively with himself and others. The name means mid-valley or middle valley, so either his feet are wet or he lives on the plateau. His third person gives thanks for compound words.

To quote the others on the plateaux: “The two of us wrote [this] together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd . . . We have kept our names . . . out of habit, purely out of habit . . . to reach not the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I.”

**Lia Pas** is a Canadian multidisciplinary creator-

performer who has worked professionally in the fields of music, writing, and theatre. She completed her Master of Arts in Devised Theatre at Dartington College of Arts in Devon, UK in 2006. Her current work explores anatomy as an imagistic starting point to understand experience. Working with text—both spoken and sung forms—Lia explores the voice in all its range, timbre, and potential. Her music combines drones, trance-like repetition, and rhythmic play with evocative timbral exploration and extended vocal techniques ranging from low growls to high whistle tones. The body being a starting point for her work, physical movement comes into play as a vehicle for both image and text. Lia’s poetry has been published in numerous literary journals as well as in book form: *what is this place we have come to* (Thistledown Press, 2003) and *vicissitudes* (Underwhich Editions 2002). Her poetry and music have been broadcast on CBC. Lia is currently living in Saskatoon and has a website at <http://liapas.com>.

**Nikki Reimer** is a poet and sometime textile artist living in Vancouver, BC. She is the curator of the *disjunct!* reading and music series. Occasional words at [www.sohwhat.blogspot.com](http://www.sohwhat.blogspot.com).

**ek rzepka** is a generalized conglomeration of interdum pseudonymities. involuariastectemianoma (ye/orick hamskull). his work has appeared in a variety of print/online mags/collectives, most recently in *unlikely stories* (crossmedia issue), *venereal kittens*, *doi* (romania), *zinhar* (turkey), *cucu clan* (france), *nokturno* (finland), *crashtest* (france), *nkdee* (belgium); recent projects include the multilingual zswound with xavier stern and the multimedia remix with randy adams, babel and others. editor of <http://coupremine.blogspot.com>; main blog at <http://notfrog.blogspot.com>.

**Colin Smith** is a poet and chronic community radio volunteer living in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

**Steven Ross Smith**, writer and sound poet, has published eleven books of poetry, fiction and non-fiction, and has appeared on more than ten recordings in group and solo contexts. His book *fluttertongue book 3: disarray* won the 2005 Book of the Year Award at the Saskatchewan Books Awards. The chapbook *Pliny's Knickers*, a collaboration between Smith, poet Hilary Clark and artist Betsy Rosenwald, won the 2006 bpNichol Chapbook Award. Among the recordings he's featured on are Carnivocal and Homo Sonorus. Smith has performed his work and/or been published in England, Holland, Russia, Portugal, USA, and Canada. He will release a CD of his sound works – *fluttertongue 5* – some time in 2007-08.

**Lynn Starheim** is a music composer, installer and sound sculptor currently living in Los Angeles. In addition to being lead-vocalist and composer in the band, D 'N' A (Dissonant Note Assembly), she is also a founding member of the politically proactive performance art group, T.O.N.E. (Terrorism Over Notational Excess). Other members from these two groups include: Harvey Cook, Tatiana Wallace and Deborah Janzen.

**Jeremy Turner** is a music composer, inter-disciplinary artist and writer. He currently resides in Vancouver.

**Nico Vassilakis** lives in Seattle, home of the Space Needle. A medallion. Here is corn. You never tire of adventure, in fact, you need it to continue. Here are American Indians. The loosest fastener. Did it mention animals are losing habitat. So a note from my friend, Collabor: Intensity yes -- but I like it too. And to think margins. As in the steady hand gets the wavering Beckett.

**Fred Wah** is a Canadian-Chinese poet, novelist and scholar. He studied music and literature at the University of British Columbia and was a founding editor and

contributor to *TISH*. Wah has done graduate work at the University of New Mexico and University at Buffalo. He has taught at Selkirk College, David Thompson University Centre and the University of Calgary. Wah has been a contributing editor to *Open Letter* since its beginning, is involved with *West Coast Line*, and with Frank Davey edited the world's first online literary magazine, *SwiftCurrent*. Wah recently retired after 40 years of teaching, however he remains active writing and performing public readings of his poetry. He was writer-in-residence at Simon Fraser University for the 2006-07 academic year.

**Jonathon Wilcke** is a saxophonist and composer based in Vancouver. He has a book of poetry out called *Pornograph* (Red Deer 2003) and his writing appears in a number of magazines and anthologies. His current work focuses on mining texts—mostly poetry in the Zukofsky-Stein-Pound tradition, and various rhetorically juicy texts—for structures to be re-composed into strategies for improvisation.

**Darren Williams** has been active over the last decade as a performer devoted to improvisation and subversive music in general. Concert appearances have included collaborations with John Oswald, Eugene Chadbourne, Ig Henneman, Mats Gustafsson, John Abram, and many others. Darren explores various extended techniques on his saxophones while reinterpreting a diverse range of musical forms from contemporary composition to punk. Current projects/bands include Robots On Fire, The Sorrow And The Pity, Primord, The Crawling Fantastic, and Quaqua. Darren is a regular performer in Vancouver where he also co-curates the *SomeSuch* music series.