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# EAR

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May - June 1978



photo: LuAnne Daly

There's something new in Berkeley, and Bay Area lovers of New Music and its whole mixed bag of related arts have reason to celebrate.

It's that old bohemian bar Blind Lemon, and it's been taken over by a loosely organized band of experimental musicians and filled with new juice. Now, in the best of the new American tradition, the performance club on 2362 San Pablo Avenue is born-again as "Blind Lemon/New Works."

It's a dream come true for instrument builder, music maker, and main squeeze Erv Denman. With a very small inheritance, Denman was able to make

the down payment on the building, and has done most of the renovation work himself.

The dream is to provide the East Bay with a small, intimate place to find New Music, video art, test/sound poetry, live performances, as well of course as works in that ubiquitous, good-for-everything category "other related arts."

Support comes from fellow artists: Chris Aldrich, Jim Guzzetta, Jim Horton, and Ran Sliter make up Blind Lemon/New Work's Board of Directors. The entire venture finds legal shelter under the protective

wing of Ubu, Incorporated, a non-profit artists' association which also houses Ear and San Francisco's concert/theatre Pangaea.

Such an arrangement means that each satellite of Ubu, Inc. shares its non-profit status and privileges. It also means that Blind Lemon/New Works cannot fix and admission price, but must ask at the door for donations. (However, they are permitted to suggest that the donation be \$2.00).

The grand opening and celebration is an all-day affair, on Saturday, May 6. From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.,

## This issue

Oakland Multi Cultural Arts Parade and Festival—Gloria Frym

On NOH Music—David Simons

The Phoenix Spring Ensemble—Valerie Samson



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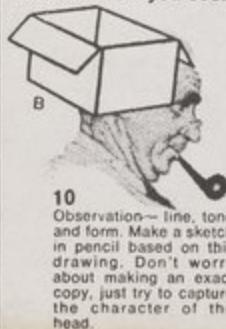
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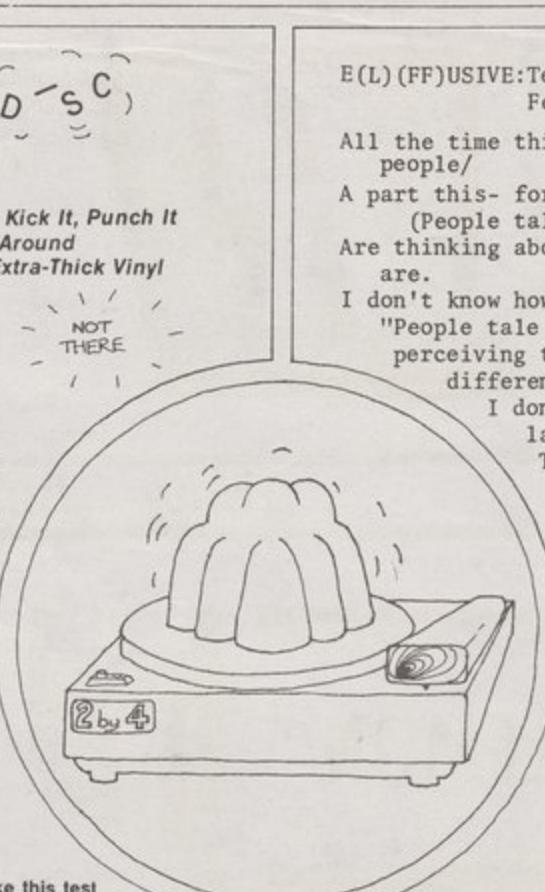
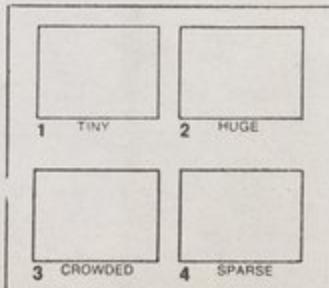
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E(L)(FF)USIVE: Terri Hanlon  
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 A part this- for time is tell-tale.  
 (People talk other people are)  
 Are thinking about them and other people are.  
 I don't know how long it will last.  
 "People talk other people are"  
 perceiving them in a totally different way.

I don't know how long it will last. What?  
 This happens often.  
 (People talk other people are) I don't know.

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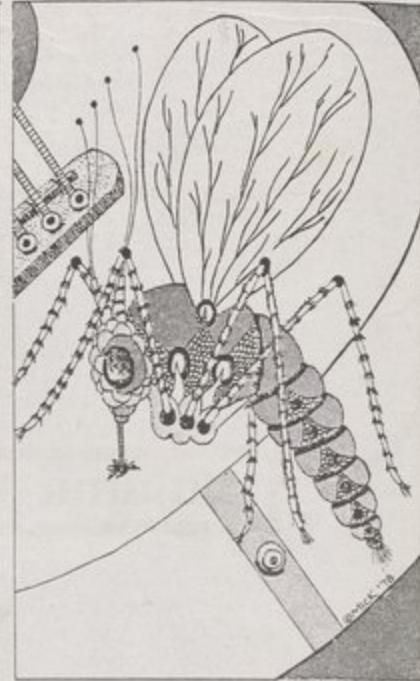
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G.P. Skratz\*

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 send ether!  
 send ice wire!  
 send cosmetectomy!  
 send check or money order!  
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 send orgasms!  
 send 1995!  
 send daily bread!  
 send message to washington!  
 send new clutch!  
 send maps of planet zuban!  
 send me baby!  
 send gods' eye!  
 i understand there is no obligation.  
 send way out!  
 send x-rays & bee hives!

\*with Charles Haseloff

\*\*W.C.I.S.P.F. page 10

**NOVAK**  
**NEW**  
**RECORD**  
**TOO MANY GIRLS/**  
**YUMMY YUMMY YUMMY**

**NEW BAND**  
**SAME OLD**  
**SHIT**

**ROCK MUSIC FOR**  
**LITTLE KIDS ON**  
**DUMB RECORDS**

# BLIND LEMON

(continued from page 1)

more than a dozen sound artists will be performing, making a joyful noise unto everyone. (The musicians, in alphabetical order: Sam Ashley, Kenn Beckman, Nick Bertoni, John Bischoff, Jan Bright, Don Cardoza.

Also Paul DeMarinis, Elastic Ensemble, Jim Guzzetta, Jim Horton, Toni Marcus, Jan Pusina, Dragon's Den, Virginia Quesada, and Mimi Shevitz.)

The celebration shifts gears later that night. At 8:30 p.m., under a new moon in Taurus, comes the first of the Blind Lemon/New Works concerts -- a presentation of selected works from the day's events by the "New Works Orchestra."

While current attention is focused on its week-end activities -- a concert is scheduled for every Saturday and Sunday night until August -- Blind Lemon/New Works is open to all sorts of ideas and possibilities. If the interest is there, it is possible that one night in the middle of the week will emerge as an open-house night for those who wish to exercise their right to meet and greet, B.Y.O. style. (If you'd

like to vote for your preferred night out, please let the management know.)

Blind Lemon/New Work's location in the Berkeley flatlands, with handy access to both San Francisco and most places in the East Bay, will quicken the courtship of artists and audiences on both sides of the Bay. It should be possible to coordinate events among similar concert-theatres so that shows repeat in a variety of locations, thus maximizing the visibility and exposure of works of New Music and experimental art.

Already such an alliance is beginning with San Francisco's concert-theatre Pangaea, and the hope is to eventually include Blue Dolphin, 80 Langton St., Terminal Concept, Metropolitan Arts Center, and Berkeley's own 1750 Arch Street and East Bay Center for the Performing in a very unofficial consortium.

More than boosting communication and fostering mixed marriages between the art and music communities of the East Bay and San Francisco, Blind Lemon/New Works spins yet another thread in the growing web of small galleries and performance spaces that is beginning to cover, however gossamerly, the West Coast community of frontier artists.

Page 3, EAR, May/June 1978

As part of that community, Blind Lemon/New Works will be developing an active archive and library of both audio and video tapes, back issues of *Ear*, and possibly other music publications. All concerts at Blind Lemon/New Works will be documented on audio cassette, catalogued, and made available for in-library listening. Jim Horton is the computer musician in charge of this library project, and arrangements to visit the library or add your own materials to it should be made through him.

Blind Lemon/New Works is also offering rehearsal space to any group that can be accommodated. Fees vary, depending on scheduling and space considerations -- make arrangements through Erv Denman when he is in a mellow mood.

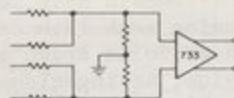
Upcoming concerts at Blind Lemon/New Works include:

May 13, Tibetan Bells  
May 14, New Music works on tape  
May 20, Elastic Ensemble (new & traditional instruments)  
May 21, Video Works by Gonzo  
May 27, Don Cardoza  
May 28, Dragon's Den  
June 3, 'Blue' Gene Tyranny  
June 10, to be announced  
June 17, Jan Pusina  
June 24, Paul DeMarinis

by LuAnne Daly

## EITHER/OR

by BOB GONSALVES



Even before you enter the space proper there are experiments to try: You can stand in the outdoor rotunda and clap your hands, listening for the echoes established by reflections of the sound between the dome and the cement floor. At the other entrance to the building are Doug Hollis' Aeolian Harps. Mounted on the roof, the harps, of solid sheet metal, are vibrated by the wind passing over them, and the sound is transmitted by metal cable to resonators arranged in a cluster over the doorway.

Walking inside The Exploratorium one is immediately bombarded by sensation - the air is thick with activity. The museum is always busy - that's its nature. The exhibits: touch, sound and hearing, waves, resonance, electricity, exponentials, motion, vision, color, animal behavior, light, pattern, graphics: are virtually all interactive; the participant manipulates a button, rod, mirror, string, light, capacitor to demonstrate the principle of the particular exhibit. Here are a few exhibits that illustrate basic sonic principles.

An analog to the echoes of the outdoor rotunda is the echo tube inside the Exploratorium - a 12" diameter pipe extending some 100 feet to the ceiling. Sounds created at its opening are echoed back many times, seemingly more clearly than the original sound. Sharp impulse sounds, such as a hand clap, also produce a high pitch, similar to the stylized rifle sound used in radio and T.V. Engineer Larry Shaw pointed out that a similar phenomena

occurs with electrical impulses in our atmosphere. The sounds, variously called "chirps", "whistlers", or "the dawn chorus", can be detected by attaching a coil of wire to an ordinary audio amplifier (or a barbed wire fence, as was done by composer Alvin Lucier).

Next to this tube are the Pan Pipes, a collection of beautiful glass tubes ranging from 5 ft. to 2 ft. long, with a 90 degree curve in the lower end. Like the large tube, they can be shock-excited to yield a pleasant drum sound at the resonant frequency of the tube. They also serve as resonant filters of the complex sound of the Exploratorium environment, which approaches white noise (the simultaneous occurrence of all frequencies), by enhancing a certain frequency and its harmonics. A similar, electronic device is the analog "bucket brigade" phase shifter, which selectively amplifies frequencies which are integral multiples of the time it takes for the signal to travel down the delay line.

Two exhibits derived from the wonderful world of new music are the Multiplied Glockenspiel, by Jan Pusina, and the Drum, by Steven von Huene. The glockenspiel contains within it, in addition to the metal bars of various lengths/pitches, a ring modulator. The processed output of this electronic device gives us the sum and difference frequencies of the glockenspiel and the modulating frequency, which is variable by turning a single knob. The resulting sound may have a very dense timbre,

similar to large bells, or it may be very pure if the modulation pitch is in a simple ratio to the original instrument's. The large Drum, which performs pieces by James Tenney every  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour, has 32 mallets around its periphery, which are actuated by electromagnets, and appear to be programmed by electronics and a plexiglass disc with black markings indicating strokes.

One of the most visually interesting sound exhibits was, what I call, the Tympanic Membrane. This consisted of a variable speed strobe light, shining on a rubber sheet stretched over a loudspeaker. This membrane is marked with polar coordinates (concentric circles and radii). A pitch, which is variable, drives the loudspeaker. There are three controls to the exhibit, one to control the frequency of the membrane's oscillation, one to control the strobe's flashing rate, and a third marked "freeze". The relationship, in pitch, between the two oscillations (membrane and strobe) creates various effects: at times you can see that it is vibrating in several places, or perhaps breathing slowly. The freeze button causes the strobe to flash at the same rate as the speaker, causing it to appear fixed in place. At some points it appears to undulate like some sort of jello-like organism.

These are only a few of the exhibits in the sound subsector alone, and exhibits from other fields (such as waves and resonance) make evident acoustic principles. The Exploratorium is open, Wednesday to Sunday, 1 to 5 (Wed. eve, 7 to 9:30) and is located at 3601 Lyon St., in San Francisco.

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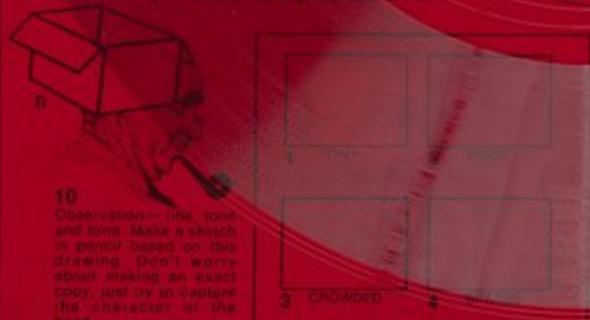
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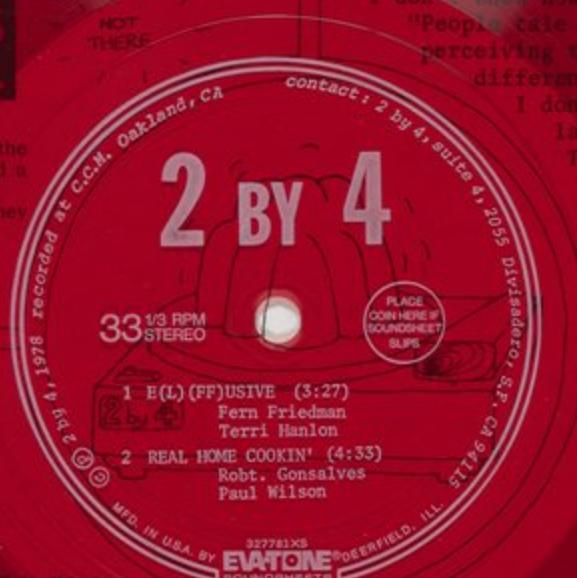
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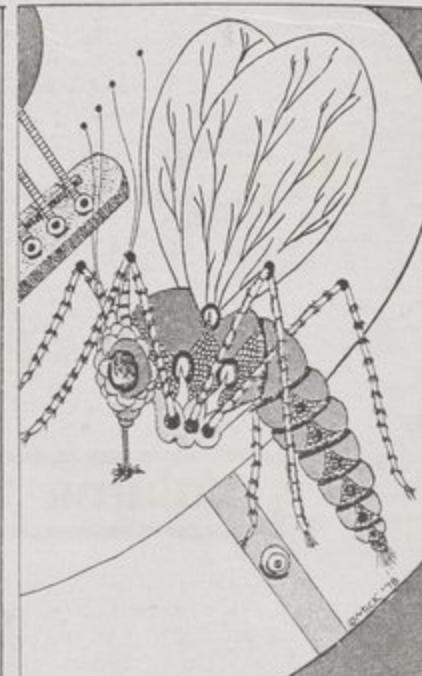
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send orgasms!  
send 1995!  
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send new clutch!  
send maps of planet zuban!  
send me baby!  
send gods' eye!  
i understand there is no obligation.  
send way out!  
send x-rays & bee hives!

\*with Charles Haseloff

\*\*W.C.I.S.P.F. page 10

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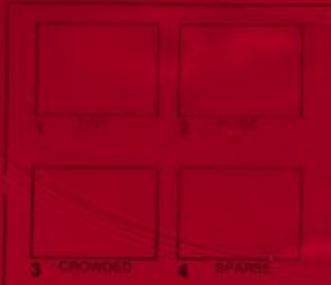
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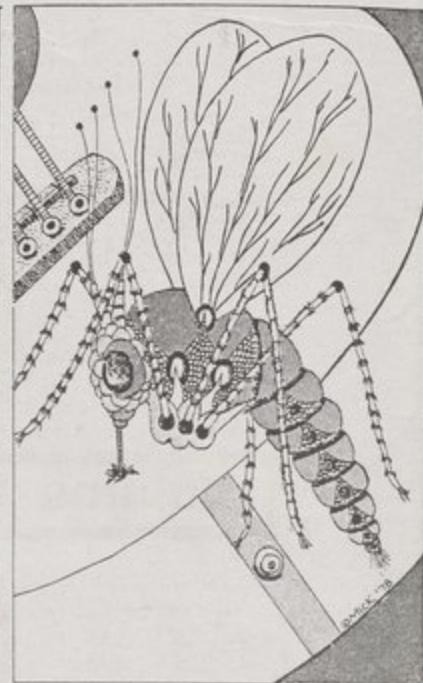
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# INSTRUERE

by David Doty

"JUST INTONATION IS THE BEST INTONATION." LOU HARRISON

"...ITS (JUST INTONATION'S) DISADVANTAGES ARE...SO SERIOUS AS TO MAKE IT PRACTICALLY USELESS." HARVARD DICTIONARY OF MUSIC, SECOND EDITION

Just intonation is a subject of concern to numerous contemporary composer/instrument builders and, as such, will probably receive frequent mention in future editions of this column. For this reason, and because it is the subject of such divergent opinions, among educated musicians, as those stated above, I thought it would be wise to attempt an explanation of its basic principles. I would be much interested in hearing from readers regarding the extent of my success in making these ideas intelligible.

The basic idea shared by all systems of just intonation is that the most consonant musical intervals are those which can be represented by simple ratios of whole numbers such as 1/1, (unison, the simplest possible ratio) 2/1, (the "octave") 3/2, (the "perfect fifth") etc. The truth of this premise can only be demonstrated sonically, so I will not endeavor to defend it here beyond saying that, within certain limitations, it has been proven to my satisfaction. The numbers of a ratio represent the relative frequencies of a pair of tones. For instance the tone A, which serves as our pitch standard, has a frequency of 440 hertz (cycles per second). The A, one octave above, has a frequency of 880 Hz. Thus the relation between these two tones can be represented by the ratio 2/1.

Diagram 1 shows the simple ratio forms of a number of intervals and chords common in Western music. It should be noted that in 12 tone equal temperament, the standard Western tuning for fixed-pitch instruments during the last 200 years, all of these intervals except the octave deviate significantly from their simple ratio forms.

DIAGRAM 1

OCTAVE	C-C'	2/1
PERFECT FIFTH	C-G	3/2
PERFECT FOURTH	C-F	4/3
MAJOR THIRD	C-E	5/4
MINOR THIRD	E-G	6/5
MAJOR SIXTH	C-A	5/3
MINOR SIXTH	E-C'	8/5
WHOLE TONE	C-D	9/8
" "	D-E	10/9
SEMITONE	B-C'	16/15
MAJOR TRIAD	C-E-G	5/4, 6/5
MINOR TRIAD	E-G-B	6/5, 5/4

It should be noted that the above chart includes all of the notes of a C major scale. This particular scale was first recorded in the harmonics of the second century Greek theorist, Claudius Ptolemy, where it is called the syntonon or intense diatonic, and has been recognized for centuries as the just realization of the Western major scale.

To fully analyze the intervallic possibilities of a scale it is necessary to display the scale as a square (diagram 2),

	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
C	9/8	5/4	4/3	3/2	5/3	15/8	
D	16/9	10/9	32/27	4/3	40/27	5/3	
E	8/5	9/5	16/15	6/5	4/3	3/2	
F	3/2	27/16	15/8	9/8	5/4	45/32	
G	4/3	3/2	5/4	16/9	10/9	5/4	
A	6/5	27/20	3/2	5/4	5/5	9/8	
B	16/15	6/5	4/3	64/45	8/5	16/9	

From an examination of this chart, it becomes apparent that the scale includes three good major triads on C, F, and G; and two good minor triads on E and A. In addition it contains one bad fifth (D-A, 40/27) and one bad minor third (D-F, 32/27). It is possible to obtain a realization of the diatonic scale with 6 perfect fifths, the Pythagorean Scale, but only at the expense of dissonant major and minor thirds (81/64 and 32/27 respectively).

#### Disadvantages?

What disadvantages does this scale possess to render it, in the eyes (one hesitates to say ears) of the learned editors of the Harvard Dictionary, "Practically useless?" First, it has, as mentioned above, one dissonant fifth. Whether this constitutes a serious disadvantage or not is for the individual composer to decide. I, for one, do not find it so. Second the scale has two different "whole tones", 9/8 and 10/9. This is a fact, but why it should constitute a disadvantage is not explained or apparent. This formation is, in fact, an acoustical necessity. Since the just major third, 5/4, (or any other simple just interval) cannot be divided equally into two simple just intervals. Other considerations also demand this pattern: for instance, G is a perfect fifth (3/2) above C; A is a major sixth (5/3) above the same C; thus the interval between G and A must be 5/3-3/2 = 10/9. Now since B is a major seventh (15/8-5/3=9/8). The third and, perhaps, most often cited disadvantage of just intonation is that it "makes modulation impossible." Despite numerous illustrations from the works of 19th and early 20th century theoreticians and keyboard builders that this is not the case, this objection continues to crop up, and, therefore must be dealt with. The fact is that, while modulation to some parallel key is more difficult in a just system than in equal temperament, it is by no means impossible. Let us consider, as an illustration, the most common modulation in Western music, that to

the dominant. To begin with we need as in equal temperament to raise the fourth, F, so that it serves as a leading G tone to G. We do this by subtracting a semitone (16/15) from the perfect fifth C-G, (3/2) thus identifying our new F sharp as a tritone (45/22) above C and 135/128 (92 cents) above F. In order to make our new G minor scale exactly parallel to the C major with which we began we must also raise our A so that it is a 3/2 above D. To do this, we simply add 3/2 to 9/8. Our new tone, which I will call A1, is found to be 27/16 above C, and 81/80 (a comma, 22 cents) above A. That the resulting scale has the same pattern as the original beginning A 3/2 higher is apparent.

A modulation to the subdominant will also require the alteration of two tones. B must be flat by 135/128 to a 4/3 above F (16/9 above C) and D flattened by 81/80 to 6/5 below F (10/9 above C). Each successive modulation to the dominant or subdominant will require an additional two tones, and, since just fourths and fifths do not form a closed circle, such a system can be expanded to infinity in either direction. Opponents of just intonation have held up this rapid accretion of tones as proof that practical fixed pitch instruments cannot be built to play it. In fact, many such instruments have been built, including such 19th century keyboards as Colin Brown's voice harmonium, an ingenious instrument capable of 15 just major and minor scales. So much for the question of modulation. It would be well to ask, at this point, just how many contemporary composers working in just intonation are interested in modulating through endless chains of secondary dominants. To answer my own question, I think it safe to say there are few, if any. Rather, I think current interest in just intonation stems from its great potential as a source of new tonal material. Obviously the number of possible whole-number ratios is infinite. (Our ability to distinguish them, while it varies from individual to individual, and is subject to various influences, is certainly finite; this factor calls for further investigation.) Once one becomes familiar with just ratios and their manipulation it becomes apparent that even if one begins with a relatively small number of intervals, such as those in Ptolemy's intense diatonic, the number of possible arrangements within an octave is enormous. The above mentioned scale, which has served as the source of the examples thus far given, is said to be within a "five limit." By this it is meant that its ratios involve, as factors, no prime numbers higher than five. With the admission of successive primes (7, 11, 13...) the number of possible unique intervals increases rapidly, generating a vast array of melodic and harmonic resources.

# INTERVIEW WITH LOU HARRISON

## Part 2

This is the second of a two-part interview with Lou Harrison, a composer of emotionally intense and often gently mystical music. Harrison's career goes back to the late 1920's, when he was a student of both Henry Cowell and Arnold Schoenberg.

He has written music in a dazzling variety of styles, all characterized by his fascination with unusual sound sources and his love for music tuned to play in "just" intonation. (For a fuller explanation of what this is, please refer to David Doty's column in this issue.)

Harrison and his associate Bill Colvig live in a semi-rural setting near Santa Cruz, where they are building a workshop for crafting and playing the instruments they invent.

J.H. Do you think there will ever be a rediscovery of Cowell like there was of Ives?

L.H. Well, the news isn't in yet, but I have been pushing for the American premier of the Piano Concerto this summer. Cowell is very much played, of course, and very much admired. I've never stopped trumpeting the good news -- he was, after all, one of our most brilliant musicians. Did you know that Henry made some recordings? He made them before it was possible to imprint the volume level required -- the level of technology precluded his massive sounds. I remember once hearing kids playing, imitating the records. They were sounding like the record, not like Henry at all! So I had to transmit instructions verbally, which just goes to show you that technical transmissions don't always help.

Remember also that at the time of the First World War, Cowell had written *New Musical Resources*. And the first knowledgeably written string quartet in 1925 coincides with the last work of Charles Ives, for quarter tone pianos. So you can see what was happening in Europe at that time. (laughs.) There was an immense range in the culture that came at the turn of the century -- Europe had gone out and the spoils were coming back, you see. I think that now, here, we have a wider range than anybody, and I think we should continue that...We even have Europe, if we want to draw on it. (laughs.) Or New York. (laughs harder.)

L.H. What do you think of the idea that you have to go to New York to make a career?

L.H. My viewpoint is that you don't have to, anymore. I went, of course. (laughs.) I remember Schoenberg asked my why, and I said I didn't know, and he said, "Well, I know, you're going to find Fame and Fortune." His parting advice was "Good luck, and study Mozart every day."

Well, I did get Fame, but I did not get Fortune. But good fortune has been a great part of it -- many friends, and financial help too, which continues to grow.

L.H. Seems like that's a common problem, no immediate financial help in the area.

L.H. Exactly! That's why young composers hang around the colleges and sooner or later take a position with them. There's a whole world there, even an Association of University Composers, in fact. Gordon Mumma, for example, is a part of that.

And that's significant of the way things are, because foundations can only support you for so long, and there are a limited number of them, though to look at the book of them you'd never think it. And the National Endowment becomes ever more important for young people. I remember in the *Primer* (Lou Harrison's *Music Primer*, Edition Peters) I said that you really ought to be able to afford what you do. I think you're free, morally and psychologically, if you can do it yourself, or own it yourself. After all, they don't tax our instruments yet. (laughs.)

Though this year I have actually thought that I might venture a request from them (the National Endowment for the Arts). Because I have a really big project, one of national and even international interest.

L.H. What's that?

L.H. Well, I suppose I might as well say. I'm probably going to do one performing edition of the last unfinished work of Ives. It's never been essayed, and there are lots of people who want to hear something about it. It could be played now, of course, if you just did it the way young people write scores. Take a chord and play it in Buenos Aires a 5 o'clock, this sort of thing directions.

A large part of it is in that shape, and then there are some parts that have notes with instructions -- that was true of Ives way back. When school gets out, I can really bury myself in it.

J.H. You teach at San Jose State University, and also keep active as a composer. How so?

L.H. I think it's because I teach half-time. And of course I love teaching, being around young people and their ideas. I've educated so many Persian engineers I can't tell you. They'll try anything, absolutely anything. Well, it's the basic Moslem thing, you know. You have to understand the three basic religions to understand that one and what is produced ethically.

The Hebrew has a direct one-to-one relationship: "Who, me?" The Christian God came down incarnated and gave a set of instructions through St. Paul. (laughs.) But in the Moslem religion God is very firmly back in His heaven with very little connection; He's extremely remote and looks like a design, you know. (laughs.) Then the problem is to find out what is the Will of God, and so you try everything, absolutely everything! And what works is the Will of God!

It's marvelous, so different from us who will only try the things we know will work, or things we know are Good. (laughs.) Technically we may no longer be Christians, of course, but it has become a cultural pattern.

L.H. Would you consider it unfair if we asked you whose music you especially like?

L.H. Well, I like a lot, as a matter of fact. I like Larry Polanski's music, and Peter Garland I'm full of admiration for. Paul Dresher, Dan Schmidt, Barbara Benari, on the East Coast. There are others. Generally speaking, the kind of thing I like is connected with world music, there's no getting around that. Or special intonation things. Very often now the two are combined, and is forming a whole other thing.

To a degree I like the minimalists. That was a reviving idea, a helpful thing for young people to have encountered.

J.H. What do you have in mind here?

Terry Riley began it, and Steve Reich, and Glass. The persistence of definable images. There's a minimal art school too, and of course they combine very well -- they're the same thing, really.



Photo: LuAnne Daly

J.H. Is there any way of telling, when you're thinking about tuning, what the emotional or spiritual feeling of that tuning is going to be? Any rules of thumb?

L.H. No, there don't seem to be. Special things turn up that are a surprise. It is certain that low number ratios or combinations of just intervals are very powerful -- they're the gut reactions in music. After my "Heart Sutra" was performed at Cal Arts last year, someone asked, "Well, was that the composition or was that the tuning?" I said, "It's the tuning."

Because it's true, I've found it over and over again -- all you have to do is pull a thing into just intonation and like that, it grips you. It's magic. Every single mode, every concatenation of interval structures, whether you use them in free style or in strict style -- each one of these is a world, with all sorts of subtleties and aspects, minorcentricities, majorcentricities, and expressions. It's quite astonishing, it's hard to pin down; you just know that it's very powerful.

Whereas you get this sort of free floating business from equal temperament, where nothing settles down. And of course it can't, because there's nothing there to settle to. (laughs.)

I remember once, trying a mode, and putting in an inharmonic tetrachord. That is, putting the largest interval in the middle. As far as I knew it had never been done, so I thought, "Well, I'll do it." So I did, and when I first played it and started improvising with it, everybody said that it was for making magic incantations. (laughs.)

J.H. Somehow religious.

L.H. Oh yes, and for example, a major scale, if it is really in just intonation, sounds like all the Christmas songs in the world, so sweet and lovely.

J.H. Do you feel your music is at all religious?

L.H. No, I don't. I'm a card carrying Humanist with Buddhist persuasions. However, I have written two works for actual religious use. There's my Mass and then there's the "Heart Sutra": one for the Catholic liturgy and one for the Buddhist.

J.H. I was thinking of religious in a more mystical sense.

L.H. Oh well, I'm accused of that all the time. (laughs.) I like ecstatic conclusions, and people tend to think they're going to Heaven when they hear them. (laughs.)

J.H. Do you read science fiction?

L.H. Constantly. I'm unhappy unless I have a science fiction novel going. Been like that since childhood. When Hiroshima happened I was the only one among my friends who knew what had happened -- this convinced me that it would be wise to know what was going to happen. So I read science fiction almost on a daily basis. It's one of my natural functions, really.

One of the most beautiful parts of science fiction to me is the meeting with the "other." It's the mystery literature, at a popular level, of the prevailing religion of science. Just as in the Middle Ages there were the poetic epics and the mystery plays and the medieval dramas in the streets. Science fiction is the imagination of science -- I wouldn't be without it.

J.H. Jim Nollman has been doing inter-species music. Have you been listening to that at all?

L.H. Yes, I think I got a mailing about that. What does he do?

J.H. He built an ocean-going drum, and he sort of sits on the drum, out in the ocean. I guess he scrapes along it, underwater, it's very long...

L.H. Oh yes, it has a huge reverb cavern, as the whales know -- that's why their pieces are so slow and long.

J.H. Nollman communicates with the whales, and he apparently had some success.

L.H. Good, I'm glad. I've carried on dialog with birds and found them changing intervals with me, modifying figures and so on. I've got some notations about that...in my papers.

J.H. Is there any way of telling, when you're thinking about tuning, what the emotional or spiritual feeling of that tuning is going to be? Any rules of thumb?

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# THE PHOENIX SPRING ENSEMBLE

VALERIE SAMSON



photos by Frank Foreman and Veronica Selzer

The Phoenix Spring Ensemble is an excellent example of new energy in the arts "springing" from the merging of cultures. It draws on the rich cultural heritage of the Bay Area to create programs that are banquets of music, dance, and poetry. The ensemble offered such a program March 10th and 11th at the Oberlin Dance Collective in San Francisco.

The group began as an experimental arm of the Flowing Stream Ensemble, which is well known here for its performances of traditional Chinese music. Guided by Betty Wong, the Phoenix Spring Ensemble presents cross-cultural programs. And performing new music was a natural outgrowth of this.

Individual pieces are not necessarily cross-cultural, and they are not necessarily new. Traditional and untraditional pieces are presented side-by-side, and the intent of this is what is new and cross-cultural. The intent is not merely to produce artistic products, but to enhance the quality of life and promote brotherhood between all people.

Betty Wong explains: "When I was asked to present two evenings of experimental music at the Oberlin Dance Collective, I invited the Phoenix Spring Ensemble to form the content of a composition in the shape of 23 events which flow from one evening to the other. I wanted to thread together sounds and movement of existing world cultures as well as those of the distant past in order to create a healing ceremony in reverence to all living things."

On these two evenings about 40 performers presented works from China, Japan, Guatemala, Panama, India, medieval and renaissance Europe, and local modern works, many by Asian-Americans. These different cultures were not simply imported and reconstructed. Betty Wong asked the performers to bring not their favorite pieces, nor their most polished pieces, but to bring pieces of themselves, what was alive in them currently. This made a tremendous difference in the effectiveness of the "ceremony". The atmosphere was so personal, I felt a strong bond -- a fellowship -- emerging between the people there, regardless of the differences in culture. It was an exhilarating experience.

Betty quotes Maxim Gorki:

"There will come a time, I know, when people will take delight in one another, when each will be a star to the other, and when each will listen to his fellow as to music."

The Phoenix Spring Ensemble merges different art forms as well as different cultures. Their programs involve not only music, but also dance, poetry, theater, visuals, and "yet-to-be-discovered art forms". Every component of a multi-media event is so well integrated into the structure of it that it's easy to forget that the term "multi-media" even applies.

The group is interested in "breaking down the standards that immobilize the arts". One way they do this is by totally transforming the performance space to make it suitable for bringing new experiences to people. Betty says, "We can even go into a closet or a prison and transform it. We don't question whether it's possible, we just make it happen." For the March 10th and 11th events, Arthur Dong defeated the limitations of space by creating moveable scrims and costumes to match for the crew, so they could be invisible in the Japanese sense.

The ceremony began with Mark Izu playing a modern Chinese piece, *The Peacock Spreads Its Feathers*, on the sheng (mouth organ). After finishing the piece he continued to play, creating an improvisation that Bill Douglass, playing the hsiao (bamboo flute), could contribute to while moving onto the stage. The transition was remarkably smooth. Bill Douglass then played his own composition, *Mon Coeur, Sweet Vibes*, using jazz elements, among other things. The sheng and the hsiao represent a legendary pair. The sheng is the phoenix. It's built in the shape of a phoenix and gives the call of the phoenix. The hsiao is the dragon being called.

Two modern dances followed (performed by Karen Attix and Nancy Bryan). Lynn Lonidier read her poem *Copal December 1977* about Chichicastenango, Guatemala, and then Shirley Wong played a traditional tune from the same place, but on a Chinese hammered dulcimer! Shirley carried on four large rocks to create an altar beneath a slide of a Mayan shrine. This was an act of penitence, since she thought she had offended the Mayan gods when she visited the shrine. After arranging flowers, candles, and incense on the altar, she shared with the audience a personal experience she had at that shrine.

Bonnie Barnett, Ellen Robinson, and Emily Fox then stood in dim light with their arms around each other to create Bonnie's *△ Piece* based on vocal resonance. The atmosphere changed completely when this was followed by Orlando Gibbons' *Fantasia*. Two recorders (Anna Nordling and Peter Erlich from the group "Sweet Pipes") played on opposite sides of the room, yet were meticulously co-ordinated. Two medieval dances followed.

The second half of the first night's program started with traditional Japanese song and dance with Mrs. O. Onodera and Hiromi Onodera. They shared a cherry blossom song, *Sakura*, by encouraging the audience to sing it with them. This was followed by an unusual presentation (with slides by Shafi Hakim) of folk music from Bengal and Rajasthan, native land of the performer, Krishna Bhatt. Playing sitar, Krishna Bhatt was joined by his friends on folk percussion instruments.

As you can see, this is not typical concert programming. There are "cultural" pieces -- pieces to be lived with -- in addition to concert pieces. The succession of events from one culture to another, not to mention the cross-cultural pieces, is relaxed and comfortable. Betty Wong points out, "You don't have to be afraid of putting Orlando Gibbons next to Bonnie Barnett's sonic meditations. You don't have to be afraid of putting traditional gestures next to free gestures. We're embracing all the different human experiences."

The result of all this is not a variety show. Besides the spirit in which the pieces are offered, "bridges" are created between them. Each piece is connected to the next by a conscious creative effort. The "bridge" is the performer's way of handing over the space and the next performer's way of receiving it. In addition there is no applause between pieces.

Betty Wong demonstrates that professional and non-professional performers can contribute to the same program, if they offer their work in the same spirit. Performers are asked to come not with the idea

that they are just PRESENTING their work, but with the idea that they will present their work and RECEIVE the work of others. She says, "When I invited all these people together, they were still so much into their own personal statements, refining their own gestures, it took a lot out of them to become willing to share other people's gestures. You can become so OBSESSED with your own personal gesture that you can't receive any other! I want performers to start paying attention to each other."

"And those will be accounted the best  
who will the more widely embrace  
the world with their hearts." (from "Mother" by Gorki)

To assist the feeling of fellowship among performers, Betty had them open both night's performances with a ritual. They formed a circle on the dimly lit stage, held hands as if in silent prayer, and one of the dancers (Kim Pauley) came into the circle offering flowers to each performer as her "piece". Then flowers were circulated in the audience. Whatever the cause, the events that followed were not only beautiful in themselves, but succeeded in "welcoming" us to a feeling of brotherhood.

We heard an unusual Turkish-influenced piece (in 7/8 time) from Sinkiang, China, performed on guitar (Laura Wong), bass (Mark Izu), butterfly harp (Arthur Dong), mandolin (Shirley Wong), and san-shien (plucked instrument) (Betty Wong). I doubt anyone has ever used this combination, yet the sounds were wonderful. This was followed by two enticing dances from Okinawa, Japan (performed by Yuki Shirooma), *Spring Thoughts* from southern China, performed by Laura Wong on the cheng (Chinese zither), and three outstanding poems "Dreams in Harrison Railroad Park" by Asian-American feminist Nellie Wong Balch.

Nellie Wong Balch, Betty Wong, and Victor Wong actually set up a kitchen table and sat down to eat! Speaking in both Cantonese and English, they gave us a glimpse of their experiences growing up in chinatown. The audience loved it! Instead of dismissing the by-products of living as being irrelevant material, they revealed parts of their personal lives as environmental art. "What this does is show other people a wider breadth of humanity." Betty explains. "It's also heavy social comment."

Continuing the program, we recited a Chinese nursery rhyme with Laura Wong and "feasted" on an exquisite example of Chinese Opera, performed beautifully by Laurette Lau (dancer), Linette Lee (soprano), Barbara Sheng and Betty Wong (cheng).

After intermission Kay Sato performed her new work *Sound* involving bicycle lights, which highlighted her motions, water, glass jars, and the like. We heard part of Betty Wong's work-in-progress, *Possible Music For A Silent World*, using hsün (porcelain globular ocarina) and a very effective slide projection (by Lynn Lonidier). The slide, by Jim Adams, showed Betty playing the hsün atop the main temple of the Mayan ruins at Tikal before dawn. The hsün was an appropriate choice of instruments since the Mayans themselves played instruments of clay. By thinking of sound as an extension of her breath, her essence, Betty "began to share her existence with all other beings and objects who existed long before her, whose environment she had entered".

Andrea Sherman performed her dramatic dance, *Whirlpool*, based on her work as a dance therapist. In complete contrast this was followed by a lively Guatemalan dance with four couples who were students of Adela Chu. As a grand-finale the audience was pulled to its feet for the *Carnaval Panameño*. Everyone danced and danced and brought to life Betty's concept of a program "in celebration of all living things."

I was disturbed to see a graceful Chinese dancer (from the audience) swing into the rhythms of Panama. But what really jolted me was the afterthought that there are no rules that prohibit us from enjoying each other's cultures. Everything is possible, and what is ours is the riches of everyman, every age, and every place. The rewards are so great, I hope everyone discovers this. (In the fall there will be a public showing of a video-tape composition of these two evenings.)

Betty Wong is interested in generating new possibilities for a future "ceremony". She explains that the Phoenix Spring Ensemble is not a fixed body of performers, but an ideal. She brings people together to give form to this ideal. She invites other artists in the area to make themselves available. If you are interested, write to her, care of CETA, 165 Grove Street, San Francisco, CA 94102. She would also like to hear from individuals who can offer performance space. (The Phoenix Spring Ensemble is a non-profit corporation.)

"A joyful chant, A whispered word, A meeting on the road." (from the Trobriand Islands)

Valerie Samson

## COMPOSITION CONTEST CONCERT

Admission: \$2.50 public/\$2 members/  
\$1.50 seniors, students **May 7**

Come celebrate the culmination of the SFJCC Composition Contest at the Awards Concert, Sunday, May 7, at 4 PM. Joyce Linker, president of the SFJCC Board of Directors, will present the \$100 prize to the winning entry in both the vocal and instrumental categories, and the top compositions as well as runner-ups will be performed by members of the SFJCC Chamber Orchestra.

San Francisco Jewish Community Center  
3200 California Street, S.F. 346-6040

# PARADE MANIFESTO

WHY ARTISTS SHOULD PARADE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

By Gloria Frym

Art is practically invisible in this country. Artists are practically invisible behind their art. Therefore, we are invisible once removed behind the invisible. Perhaps it is the nature of our work, especially those of us who do not make performing art. But invisible work is not credible in the material culture. If we assume that art exists as part of the formal division of labor, it then has every right to promote its existence as a labor.

In the work force, some jobs are visible and some are invisible. While the visible, skilled professions are chosen by people, (one chooses to become an electrician over a plumber, etc.) most of America doesn't esteem the invisible professions that are not exactly chosen but availed or blessed or cursed on people. The unskilled laborer and the artist in this country get the same treatment: ignorance and disdain. How many people see their own garbage collectors? How many ever meet an artist? It is invisibility that artists and workers have in common.

If artists are to assume a credible role in a country that hasn't yet learned to SEE art, every single person who calls him/herself an artist must wear a sexy tee shirt with gold leaf emblazoned letters designating this identity and carry forth a huge steaming platter of his/her work at all times. I say ye, those of sensitive and creative spirit, come out, out of the kitchens and serve up the meals! Millions are starving for us; the starvers are the populous, not the artists.

The more they see us, the less they'll be able to ignore us. When it's in the streets, people either have to face it or shove it aside, but they sure as hell are confronted by it.

When Andrei Codrescu, the Romanian poet, looked for Allen Ginsberg's house in New York, he asked Ginsberg's neighbor where Ginsberg lived and the neighbor didn't know! Codrescu was astounded that Americans don't know their neighbors or their poets. When the great Russian poet Voznesensky recites his work to a modest crowd of 15,000, all his books sell out within minutes. Voznesensky is a full time poet and gets paid full time money for his full time commitment, as does anyone else who works at anything full time. We must express our commitment as working members of the community! And everyone must know that we work the swing shift and have to sleep at odd times!

The people need us even when they're unemployed. Because we're the only humans who'll keep on working even without money. If they don't think they need what we make then we have to show them how they can use us for inspiration!

The artist as the supreme isolate in work has somehow allowed this condition to carry over indefinitely, as the weirdo eccentric alien who can't go into the human grocery store without freaking out. Sure, all this comes from isolation, supported by not feeling useful, because there's no remuneration for much of what we do.

So, we have to show our communities how human we are and break this mutual exile. Maybe we remind people of their good dreams and their worst nightmares and maybe they'd rather forget such wispiness, but really, the time is ripe as mushy persimmons, everyone is dying to get better, look at all the how-to-do-it obsessions these days. SINCE WE UNDERSTAND THIS CONDITION OF INVISIBILITY, IT IS UP TO US TO MAKE OURSELVES KNOWN AND LOVED, LOVED BECAUSE WE WORK AT WHAT WE DO AND THAT WE LOVE WHAT WE MAKE, WHETHER WE'RE LIKED OR NOT OR ANYONE SHOWS UP. WE KNOW WE EXIST AND SO DO THEY, how could they not, when we march right by their windows and the music from our trombones is undeniably sweet.



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Office of the Mayor  
Lionel J. Wilson  
Mayor

## PROCLAMATION

### THE CITIZENS OF OAKLAND

TO:  
WHEREAS, A group of C.E.T.A. artists in our city is organizing the first Oakland Multi-Cultural Art Parade and Festival to be held on Sunday, May 14;  
WHEREAS, This event is a rare opportunity for Oakland to get to know not only her C.E.T.A. artists but also the hundreds of culturally diverse musicians, poets, visual artists, actors, and dancers who live and work in this city; and  
WHEREAS, I hope you will encourage your family to join the parade and festival this Mothers' Day, May 14, in a great tribute to spring and to the citizens of Oakland. The parade will begin at noon at the Lake Merritt BART station and proceed to the Lake Merritt Bandshell, where the festival will commence at about 2 p.m. The festival will feature many well known local performers as well as new talent; and  
WHEREAS, There can be no doubt in anyone's mind that we need excitement of creativity and the threshold of a new day dawning in Oakland. The people of Oakland need art workers, and our art workers need visibility and support; and  
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Lionel J. Wilson, Mayor of the City of Oakland, do hereby call upon citizens of Oakland to join me in saluting these energetic artists in their efforts to create beauty in our community. I endorse this effort by declaring Sunday, May 14, 1978, as "CULTURAL ARTS DAY" in the City of Oakland.

Sincerely,

*Lionel J. Wilson*  
Lionel J. Wilson  
MAYOR



## CAL Highlights

### MALMOE PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Bent Lylloff, director  
Ed Thigpen, guest artist  
MAY 1, HH

### Spring Opera Theater in Henze's ELEGY FOR YOUNG LOVERS

MAY 2, ZA

### CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

Arthur Weisberg, director  
Music by Webern, Carter, Druckman, Reynolds  
MAY 12, HH

### BELLA LEWITZKY DANCE COMPANY

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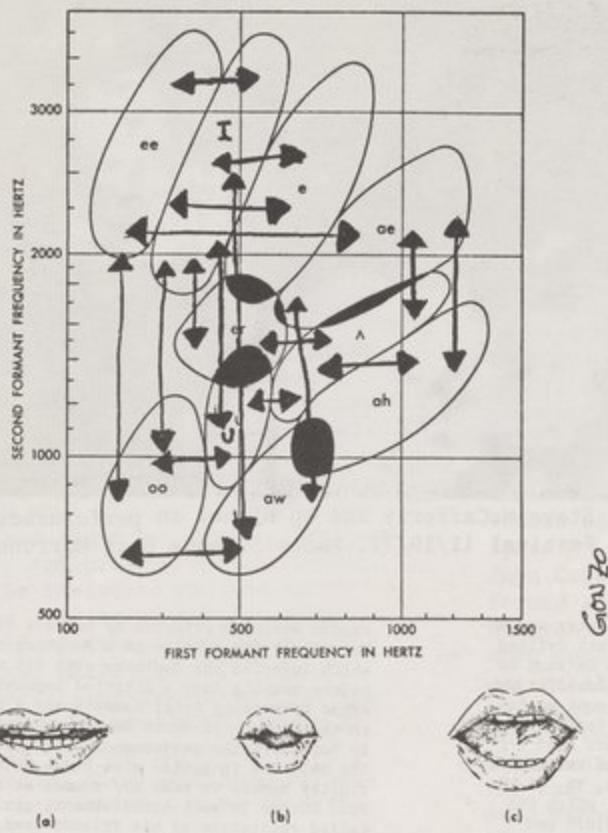
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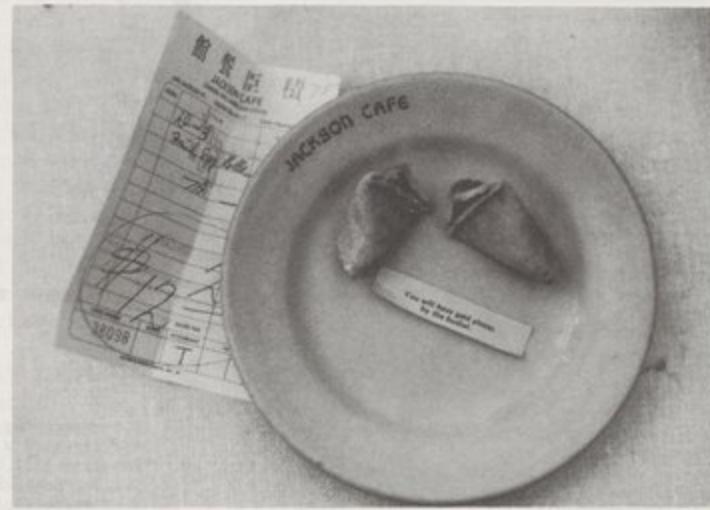
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by Paul Wilson  
(suitable for framing)



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continued from page 5

L.A.D. - Somehow religious.

L.H. - Oh yes, and for example, a major scale, if it is really in just intonation, sounds like all the Christmas songs in the world, so sweet and lovely.

L.H. - Do you feel your music is at all religious?

L.H. - No, I don't. I'm a card carrying Humanist with Buddhist persuasions. However, I have written two works for actual religious use. There's my Mass and then there's the "Heart Sutra": one for the Catholic liturgy and one for the Buddhist.

L.H. - I was thinking of religious in a more mystical sense.

L.H. - Oh well, I'm accused of that all the time. (laughs.) I like ecstatic conclusions, and people tend to think they're going to Heaven when they hear them. (laughs.)

L.A.D. - You're something of a planetary defender, don't you think? How does your affair with Esperanto fit in with that idea?

L.H. - Esperanto is a wonderful language -- I'm enormously happy I learned it. About 9 million people speak it, and they're scattered all over the globe. You need never be lonely. I got the

idea after I had just been in Rome. One day I was sitting in the Coliseum and I realized I was in a country that didn't understand English, and there I was. And you know I'm terrified of being inarticulate -- I'm a real chatterbox. I began to realize that Esperanto was all around me, and I began to learn it. It really doesn't take long -- there's no exception to any rule, you know, and you can put all the rules on a postcard.

And of course there's an enormous amount of creative literature. It's a sort of superculture, called the Green Network, and it goes all over the planet.

L.A.D. - And don't you love the way it sounds?  
L.H. - Oh my yes, it is melodic. It's put together so elegantly you fall in love with it. It's one of the great works of art of the 19th century. To speak it is to play in a huge symphony.

Also it's a wonderfully neutral thing. Nobody owns it, and you can perfectly well communicate about anything under the sun. Just think of anything, and there's a terminology, or specialized vocabulary, for it. And usually also a sub-society. For a long time I belonged to the International Composers League and also the International Buddhist League, both in Esperanto.

It is an enormous help toward planetary thinking. All the walls go down, it crosses all borders -- you can send a telegram in it code-free. And it has to be sent, even in time of

war. What I wonder is why it isn't growing even faster than it is -- why do people still learn English at all?

L.H. - I'm starting to run down a little bit.  
L.H. - Well, we don't need to go on forever.

L.A.D. - Though it is hard to hear real silence.

L.H. - You mean because of the way the human body is constructed. I think that socially we feel that silence is either sad or embarrassing.

For working I require an ambience of very low level noise, and nothing specific in the way of pitch. I've noticed that among my older friends, those who live in urban areas have either lost or are losing their hearing. Whereas mine is still extremely acute. I won't drive a car without cotton in my ears. Molded with water.

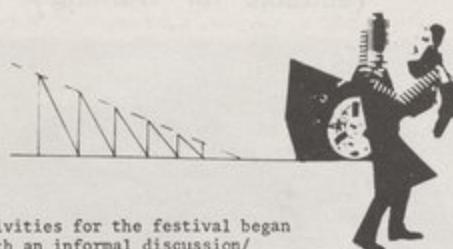
L.H. - Yes, almost everyone's left ear goes first and fastest, because people drive and that's the ear next to the window.

L.H. - There goes your musical career, too. That's your right brain which deals with the music. I always have that window closed and I'm filled with molded cotton. It's illegal, in California, you know, as of two years. But nobody's going to ruin my livelihood! (laughs.) If I'm ever arrested for it they're going to get "what-for" on a national basis. I'll make a scene! (laughs.)

L.A.D. - Yes. "Lou Harrison Stuffs It, For Silence." (laughter.)

# WEST COAST INTERNATIONAL SOUND POETRY FESTIVAL

## PART 2



by Stephen Ruppenthal

Saturday's activities for the festival began in the afternoon with an informal discussion/workshop which included the following participants and members of the audience: Dominic Alleluia, Charles Amirkanian, Laurie Anderson, Geoffrey Cook, Toby Lurie, Steve McCaffery, bp nichol, Pauline Oliveros, Valerie Sampson, Jerome Rothenberg, Marian Robinson, Steven Ruppenthal, Ron Silliman, Paul William Simons, Julius Ward, and Larry Wendt. Rather than an extensive discussion of the results of the workshop, which lasted three hours, it might be more appropriate here to list the extremely varied topics that were discussed during that afternoon. Initially each artist was asked to talk about their own work at some point during the seminar. Out of this personal beginning, the following topics found their way into the conversations: aesthetic differences between live performance and tape sound poetry, poetry as a verbal form; emergence from written medium, cafe and jazz readings in the 1950's, Origins (tribal poetries and development in the west), and the influence of concrete poetry.

Along a more pragmatic channel, the discussion centered upon a working definition, then branched out into performance practices and communication between the artists. In discussing the overall implications of the medium, sound poetry genre and practitioners in the art was dealt with by several members of the panel, as was the performance related topic dealing with extended poetic vocal techniques. Technology in the art form became a concern in the discussion drawing out criticism on its availability, influence, and limitations. As the afternoon closed the discussion went from sonic meditations, a prelude to Sunday evening's performance work by Pauline Oliveros, to a somewhat resigned and hastily discarded repartee on funding. As one can imagine it was a stimulating and provoking session. As far as sound poetry is concerned, it was the first time in this country that a group this large of composers, poets, sound poets, and writers got together to discuss the past, present, and future of the art. If the enthusiasm generated from this event is any indication, this kind of communication will happen again in the not to distant future.

After the high-energy excitement, enthusiasm, and surprises of Friday evening, Saturday was to achieve even greater success in terms of audience reaction and participation and dynamic performance. The evening's program had begun long before most of the audience arrived with a composition by San Francisco audio/visual poet Stefan Weisser titled Spatial Poetics. Spatial Poetics, a work involving pre-recorded audio cassette tape loops, is an environmental work along the lines of his Omoonoom: Dancing on the Brink of the Word. Weisser, an "explorer of acoustical phenomenon", presented the piece through a large loudspeaker that was mounted on a fire escape outside the third floor window of La Mamelle. With the volume sufficiently loud enough for the piece to be heard on Folsom Street (several blocks away), the work became part of the southeast Market Street environment, the recorded material on the loops originating from that area.

The initial live performance on the evening's concert was by Tael Thomas, sound poet and story teller, assisted by Parakleitos on the duncek drum. Tael's work is a combination of chants, ethnic poetries, legends, and animal howls combined with his own free spirit translations of his interactions with life. Using a hobo/minstrel-like orientation in regards to the world's way he connected one primitive chant/song with another. These ranged from Nahuatl Indian to pseudo-Pygmy chant Hawaiian song-like interjections to Afro-Cuban rhythmic vocalisms. Constant animal howls interspersed his performance, as he utilized the acoustic resonance of the space to discover and express the rhythmic power and weight of words and phrases in languages from peoples of the world. Tael's feeling for these languages, the lyrical/poetic pronunciations made each vocal sound dance-as he did, from place to place.

An exuberant and sensitive performer with an awareness of his living/breathing/environmental space, one of Tael's comments during his performance seemed autobiographical and captured the street language and inflection that aptly describes his work:

"Old Lingo been a rum bum, beach bum, word bum, and bum bum to boot. Some folks say lo' Lingo he just don't give a hoot. Hoooooooooooooooot!!!!!! Ol' Lingo give a hoot to anyone who ask for one." - Tael Thomas

In quite a different 'space', G.P. Skratz came on after Tael Thomas and presented in definitive style, the Edselist Art Revue. In a manner similar to the previous evening's Dada performance, Skratz began with his Theme Song to Edselism and immediately went into the core of his work, Edselism:Manifesto, a treatise on the art of obsoletism prevalent in the twentieth century. Having nothing what-so-ever to do with sound poetry



Steve McCaffery and bp nichol in performance at Festival 11/19/77. Photo:Suzanne Graf-Morrone

but everything to do with DADA, theater and absurdity with a subtle reality, Skratz defined Edselism ("...undefinable, because as soon as you do, it becomes invalid"), and Edselist phenomena (actualism, Joyce Holland, punk poetry, Dada, the bowel movement, and the Ford Motor Co.).

Following the manifesto, Skratz read "Edselist Poetry" which included an exclamatory 'haiku' for the Rolling Stones (Ya, Ya, YA YA YA....) and a poem titled "HELP!", which was in collaboration with Charles Hazeloff and carried things even further off the wall, drawing "Edselist applause". The last composition by Skratz, Artichoke, was a chant with the purpose of dissolving "the known universe and recreate it around the 'artichokeness' of it all". A very funny performance and certainly in keeping with the early environment of sound poetry and absurd theater.

...And then the Horseman. Steve McCaffery, bp nichol, Rafael Berreto-Rivera, and Paul Dutton are Canada's most well known and high-energy sound poetry group which have been performing together for the past seven years. This evening's performance demonstrated the vitality and professional artistry that this collaboration has developed into. Their first work, Let's Read, was derived from an elementary school book, "controversial in the Canadian schools". The composition was a driving ensemble piece that warmed the audience up right away with its 'rock-like' rhythmic energy.

Particular Music, another group composition, utilized finely orchestrated vocal utterances that began as solo motifs and then were developed by the ensemble. In this 'particular' case, the embellishments each time were derived from the consonants "p" and "t" and made the rounds among the performers. Hare, performed by McCaffery, Dutton, and Rivera was a clock-work piece with McCaffery claiming the words "eight-nine" as an ostinato and gradually raising and lowering one arm and then the other. Over this Rafael and Paul exchanged rapid vocal sounds with each other that had traces of a scattering duel.

The intense and totally involving program continued with a duet between McCaffery and bp nichol in Aupe Relations. This composition utilized a very nasal formant shifting, "jowl shaking", gargling, and growling. In Aupe Relations there was a ferociousness or savage abandonment in the uninhibited performing style between the two that both Rafael and Paul carried forward in their solo works. Paul Dutton's Time was a gradual word shift composition phonetically altering the initial evocation and taking it through a cycle of transformations. The level of intenseness continued through Rafael's Airblind, an exhausting piece utilizing extreme deep breathing. I do believe that the Horsemen receive as much pleasure from watching the audience as the reverse.

Throughout the rest of their 1½ hour set, the Horsemen kept up an energy level that seemed to establish par for the festival. In Partial Instruction, McCaffery stepped back from the group while it was in full frenzy and remarked upon the flatness of the human head, equating it with the once prevalent view of the earth being flat. In his solo work, Of Grammatology, McCaffery climbed atop a twelve foot ladder and dumped a box of alphabet cereal upon the floor. Climbing down he proclaimed part 1 "The Reading", and proceeded to write on the floor while violently uttering the fragments that have randomly been formed and then crushing them with his body and his fists. Part 2 of the piece, "The Writing", had Steve fill up a bowl ("page") with more cereal, pour on milk ("ink"), and begin to eat the cereal with a spoon ("pen") while postulating verbally on a subject sounding strangely like constructivist theory in poetry.

bp nichol's Generations Generated was a melodic vocal work based on the permuted names of Ramesis 2 and 3. The song-like chant conjured illusions in this author of a Jewish cantor turned loose in a jazz club with a text of Egyptian scatting. If you've never heard it, you can't knock it.

The final group compositions of the Horsemen, Final Repetitions and Mischiefous Eve left the audience and the performers drained. The former work began in a yelling, growling, spitting context, flowed into Rafael wailing "In the middle of a blue balloon", and ended with a whistling conversation punctuated by single

random words interjected by members of the group. The final piece began as a laughing catharsis which infected the audience with its mirth before turning into a directed improvisation. After traversing total madness and a commentary on the History of North American Respiration by McCaffery, the performance ended as probably the only way it could- with Steve McCaffery finally unable to make any sounds at all and Paul Dutton in mock astonishment, giving a detailed recitation of his friend's demise.

In the many years that the present author has been a performer, I've yet to experience another contemporary performing ensemble as dynamic, forceful, and as polished as the Horsemen. As far as Saturday night was concerned, it wasn't over yet!

Boyd Rice, now notorious for his media destruction piece of the previous evening, gave a short interlude work consisting of a half a dozen music boxes playing simultaneously. This, while the audience waited in vain for a can of styrno to bring a tea-pot to its whistling finale. Unfortunately- no climax, but everything is DADA.

Toby Lurie, possibly the busiest performing poet in the country, drew from the audience and the Horsemen for his first piece. Each person was given a word a word to form the chorus "what I am saying now is what I am now saying", a fragment from the Horsemen's last composition. As Toby directed the order, rate, and manner of speaking of each word, the resources for the piece began to appear in different and changing characters, each word taking on a personality of its own. Toby has worked with this type of impromptu audience participation (or orchestration) for many years and he is a master at it. After the previous performance this was a superb choice as the audience needed a catharsis for itself.

Toby's set continued to draw from the audience for performers. Sound-Color Sonata, a sound poem for two voices was performed by Lurie and the present author, capturing many of the same colors of the voice that had been heard earlier, and indeed throughout the festival. Following this was a reading of I Refuse by Toby and his son Drew. I Refuse is a precisely scored work in terms of rhythmic structures, where the poet has used traditional music notation to achieve the desired counterpoint.

The next two compositions were from a new series of 'conversational poems' for two or more voices. ...and he walked down the street, performed with great style by Jerome Rothenberg and Toby in honor of Jimmy Carter's inaugural walk down Pennsylvania Avenue. As the simultaneous 'fugue' or 'canon' continued the performers heavily stressed the satirical import of the text and the reading took on a 'down-home' quality. The performance of the next 'conversation' titled A Play Within was again well matched with Toby and the poet Robert Duncan reading the Gertrude Stein section of the conversation, from her play Counting the Dresses. Quite a thrill to see artists such as these perform in spontaneous situations.

"I am on the Threshold", performed by Anne and Toby was a very sensitive work regarding the chronology of life and the moments of living it. The last small ensemble work by the poet was titled A Sometimes Fugue and performed by Toby, Drew, and the present author. Again, this work used a rhythmically scored out text to achieve the complicated syncopations inherent in the composition.

The last work of the evening was a 'tour de force' poème simultané involving the entire audience in an orchestration, including two smaller reading groups, and a larger ensemble of about ten; the rest of the audience was cued in for a chant "there is nothing new under the sun". During the piece, Dadaland and company performed a sound poem, the large ensemble had separate random phrases from a foreign language, and the audience was cued for their chant, and two others performed a work by Lurie titled I Don't Understand. Again, Lurie's expertise at this type of composition and orchestration has to be experienced. Judging from the reactions of performers and non-performers alike, it was a masterful conclusion to the second night of the festival.

# "BLUE" GENE TYRANNY'S FAMILIAR REVIEW

This issue : MISSED CHANCES AND CLEAR COINCIDENCES

In the two weeks before and after the S.F. Exploratorium concert.... that thing about paying attention to the impulses that make for coincidences.

Driving to Bob Ashley's new place, I knew when the car stopped which room and floor was his, a detailed almost non-present understanding. But the invisible resistance of "maybe I'll be wrong" gated me from identifying that clear coincidence until the last moment -- another missed chance to show how we know much more than the stuff we make to seem purposeful (eg. our bodies know something all-at-once that it takes time to verbalize).

"Being prepared to observe co-incidence in its most subtle manifestation is a musical task" - Kathy Morton. The key for the piano improvisation and the cassette of audience noises matched the previous video soundtrack for my piece LIVE AND LET LIVE WITH TAKING OUT THE GARBAGE which Kathy had never heard before; so we decided to play the video audio with her playing which got really multi-dimensional.

John Bischoff's KIM microcomputer programs were, of course, as non-determinedly spaced and beautiful as ever, producing coincidences that were humorous and too numerous to mention. He said in the program notes: "I think our 4 activities are always really one activity - an activity where I imagine the 4 of us separated by vast distances of bounded, reverberant space."

John Cage's VARIATIONS IV (performed as the center piece in the program) produces that reverent open space in which coincidences can easily be seen to occur - a physical and perhaps psychological space. People handle that space in different ways, and it was astonishing and a little nostalgic to see some members of the audience doing the same things audiences did in the 1950's: 2 people jumped on stage, hit 2 notes on the piano, and sat down; other people were feeling they wanted to clobber those 2 with the 2 by 4's I was using to gradually build a path that disappeared behind me; applause about 3/4's of the way along...and the enlightened people (who have it no easier than anyone else) were sitting there grooving on the peace. It was wonderful.

It seems that all of John Cage's work also contains this special piece that

reminds us of freedom - where it comes from, how hard it is to reveal, and how it can be used.

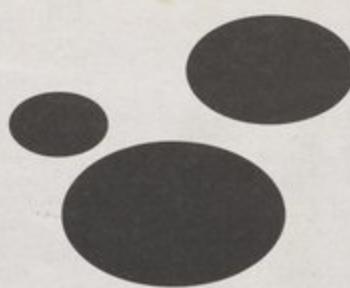
The fearless Phil Harmonic was in top form, and related, among much other wonderful speaking, his last experience about wondering what to do when "dumb assholes" set out to wreck a concert (their actions are usually short, quick, designed to be funny and somewhat embarrassed, a breaking of repressions); he says it with a touching humor always appreciated by his friends."...The musical integrity of one moment leading into the next is enhanced when I recognize people themselves to be more interesting and important than their objets d'art". Ignoring the feeling that leads us to a coincidence gets us sometimes lost in the substitutes - moralism (translating the ordinary into the pathological), methods and machines (with comparing and "good taste"). If that sounds heavy, it is.

I had to write this review of our own concert because, God knows, nobody else did. So much for objective truth. Until next time...love ya.

"A SYNTHESIZER IS NOT A CHAIN SAW" (BUT MIGHT AS WELL BE) -

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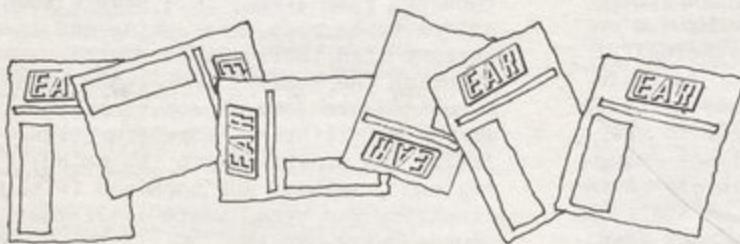
## "BLUE" GENE TYRANNY

Out of the Blue

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Later this summer a new catalogue will be available from A.R.C. which will include more information on these and other new releases.



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