

music we'd like to hear

Phil Harmonic

Timing (1979)

Francesca Fargion & Tim Parkinson, keyboards & voices



5 November 2018 at 10:47 am

Dear Blue Gene Tyranny

Mimi Johnson passed me your email address. I'm writing to ask about whether you have any information about where I can locate the music of Phil Harmonic (Kenneth Werner). I co-curate a concert series in London called Music We'd Like To Hear, and we would very much like to programme and perform the work "Timing" from your 1979 "Just For The Record" album, if at all possible. It would be really wonderful to bring this beautiful work into the company of a live programme for our audiences here, and to find out more about the artist.

I have searched the internet yet found no information as to where I might be able to find sheet music, or even in whatever state it might exist.

With many thanks for any help

Tim Parkinson

9 November 2018 at 5:29 pm

Dear Tim,

Thank you for your inquiry and interest in his wonderful piece. There is no sheet music because it was a completely improvised performance between Phil and me in the studio one day. He would give the command "change now" and I would change to any chord that I felt inspired should come next. There was no plan whatsoever for the kind of harmonies, modality, etc. It was totally improvised in the

moment. I don't know what to say other than you can if you want to transcribe the chords off the recording and use those with somebody saying "change now" when they feel that what's the chord being played at the moment needs to be changed. Phil did in response to listening to my chords. Thank you very much for inquiring about this piece. I hope this solution will enable you to perform it.

All the best,

Blue Gene Tyranny

12 November 2018 at 5:32 am

Dear Blue Gene Tyranny

Thanks very much for this heart warming email. It's wonderful to gain insight into how a piece was made, and how it might potentially be recreated. I might have a go at a transcription then. If he chose the timing of the changes, but you chose the chords themselves, it sounds as if we ought to give you both credit for the composition of the piece, if we do end up programming it. If I'm successful with a transcription, I'll send it to you for approval first.

Many thanks again

Tim

16 November 2018 at 5:34 pm

Dear Tim

I'm glad that my response was of use to you and you have made the intelligent decision to transcribe the piece from the record. It shouldn't be too difficult as far as the tonalities are concerned if you have someone with a good sense of pitch doing this for you. It was done in the studio with Phil and myself in a spontaneous moment in the afternoon because I had asked him to do something for my album *Just or the Record*. People seem to have responded positively to this piece in particular and it certainly points toward the ability of music to emphasize our internal musical sense such as timing, pitch, etc. rather than just the intellectual ones (ex. notated music) which are actually secondary to the primary sense. This is also true of North Indian music and other world music. It's wonderful that besides music like jazz in the west there is another outlet for deep spontaneity what composer Pauline Oliveros called Deep Listening which is necessary to bring these abilities forward from heaven knows where they reside inside. I'm not certain about the attribution of composers to Phil's piece. I myself just consider that I "realized" his intentions whereas Phil's intentions

would have been the "composition" and as such I was a performer of his intentions.

However, I was doing the same thing with harmonies that he was doing with his sense of timing reaching for that inherent sense of possibility, the musical one we are born with.

I hope your performance of this piece goes well. It seems to be very attractive to listeners. I have listened to it in a graduate school in Chicago during a friend's class where he invited me to speak about this and other pieces.

All the best to you,

Blue Gene

Alvin Lucier

Chambers (1968)

Rie Nakajima & Lee Patterson, objects



[...] When I was asked to write a score of *Chambers* for publication I decided to expand it. I wanted to make it bigger in the sense that it would imply more, so I extended it to include any resonant environment, large or small, that performers could use to produce or alter sounds in the same way that this room we're in alters our sounds. If a room can intrude its personality on whatever sounds occur in that room, then any other size environment can do the same thing, so for the sake of performing I decided that performers could collect resonant objects into which they could put sounds, and the acoustic characteristics of the objects themselves—shells, pots, pans and so forth—would alter the sounds with their own characteristics [...]

Friday 12 July 2019

[...] it's just an extension of what you do when you're a little child at the beach and you put a shell up to your ear and hear the ocean. Then you stop. You don't do that as you grow older. Your ear stops doing that because you've got to think about other things, how to make a living and how to speak to people, how to communicate verbally. I guess I'm trying to help people hold shells up to their ears and listen to the ocean again.

*Alvin Lucier in interview with Douglas Simon
Reflections (MusikTexte 1995)*

[interval]

Éliane Radigue

*Occam Ocean - Occam XXVI** (2018)

Enrico Malatesta, cymbals & frame drum

Eliane Radigue is renowned for her electronic music, in particular with the ARP 2500 Synthesizer. Her compositions are defined by micro-events due to subtle overtone shifts that dance above a seemingly static tone, with a profoundly moving result. In 2005, Radigue began composing for acoustic instruments: first Naldjorlak, her grand trio for two basset horns and cello, and now the ever-expanding Occam Ocean series. Enrico Malatesta presents Eliane Radigue's Occam XXVI (2018), for two bowed cymbals and a frame drum.



Phil Harmonic (Kenneth Werner) was born in Newton, Massachusetts on June 10th, 1949. In 1964, he found the writings, compositions and performances of John Cage and David Tudor, Alvin Lucier, and Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman much more fascinating than his traditional high school music theory classes and so began an effort to communicate with and learn from many who were active with new and electronic music and multi-media. Was the first Once Group Fan Club, according to Anne Wehrer, 1965. Performed with the Sonic Arts Union (Ashley, Behrman, Lucier, Mumma) in Boston, 1966. Organized and performed in a four-hour-long evening of new music performances in a dormitory lobby, New York University, Washington Square, 1967. Began a yearly series of new music performances as celebrations for Beethoven's Birthday! 1967 ("Ken Werner made Beethoven famous." – Nam June Paik). Beginning with The Radio Music City Hall Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, 1968. Several solo performances, including outdoor "Street Events," presented in Germany, England, Belgium, Holland, Summer 1969. Received BFA from California Institute of the Arts, 1971, and MFA from Mills College, 1973. Beginning earnestly becoming Phil Harmonic, with Image Bank, Vancouver, and General Idea, Toronto, Canada, 1972. Heard on record with Jacques Bekaert (Summer Music 1970) and "Blue" Gene Tyranny (Just for the Record), both on Lovely Music. Phil passed away in 1992.

Francesca Fargion is a pianist and composer.

Tim Parkinson is a composer and performer.

Alvin Lucier was born in 1931 in Nashua, New Hampshire. He was educated in Nashua public and parochial schools, the Portsmouth Abbey School, Yale, and Brandeis and spent two years in Rome on a Fulbright Scholarship. From 1962 to 1970 he taught at Brandeis, where he conducted the Brandeis University Chamber Chorus, which devoted much of its time to the performance of new music. In 1966, along with Robert Ashley, David Behrman and Gordon Mumma, he co-founded the Sonic Arts Union. From 1968 to 2011 he taught at Wesleyan University where he was John Spencer Camp Professor of Music. Lucier lectures and performs extensively in Asia, Europe and The United States. He has collaborated with John Ashbury (Theme) and Robert Wilson (Skin, Meat, Bone). His recent sound installation, 6 Resonant Points Along a Curved Wall, accompanied Sol DeWitt's enormous sculpture, Curved Wall, in Graz, Austria, and in the Zilkha Gallery, Wesleyan University in January 2005. Recent instrumental works include Coda Variations for 6-valve solo tuba; Twonings for cello and piano; Canon, commissioned by the Bang on a Can All-Stars, and Music with Missing Parts, a re-orchestration of Mozart's Requiem, premiered at the Mozarteum, Salzburg in December 2007. In October 2012 Two Circles, a chamber work, commissioned by The Venice Biennale, was premiered there by the Alter Ego Ensemble and in December 2013 a new work, December 12th, was performed by the Ensemble Pamplemousse at the Issue Project Room, Brooklyn and Firewood, performed in March 2014 by the Bang on a Can All Stars at Merkin Hall, New

York. Lucier has recently completed two new chamber works: Orpheus Variations for solo cello and seven wind instruments and Hanover for violin, alto and tenor saxophones, piano, percussion and three banjos. In 2013 Mr. Lucier was the guest composer at the Tectonics Festival in Glasgow, the Ultima Festival, Oslo and gave a portrait concert at the Louvre, Paris, with cellist Charles Curtis. Recent events in 2014 include three evenings of Lucier's works presented by the International Contemporary Ensemble, in Chicago; two concerts at Roulette, performed by the Callithumpian Consort, as well several concerts at The Tectonics Festival, Reykjavik, Iceland. In October 2014 Lucier was honored by a three-day festival of his works at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Reflections/Reflexionen, a bi-lingual edition of Lucier's scores, interviews and writings was published by MusikTexte, Köln. In September 2012 the Wesleyan Press published Lucier's latest book, Music 109: Notes on Experimental Music. In 2013 New World Records released a recording of three of Lucier's orchestra works. Alvin Lucier was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States and received an Honorary Doctorate of Arts from the University of Plymouth, England. In November 2011 Wesleyan University celebrated Alvin Lucier's retirement with a three-day festival of his works.

Primarily concerned with the sound of things, **Lee Patterson** attempts to understand elements of his surroundings and culture through acts of listening with both the aided and the naked ear. The related use of sound recording as a method to educate perception has led to a variety of projects scattered across various disciplines including environmental sound recording, improvised music, film soundtrack and installation. New works have been commissioned by 41st International Film Festival Rotterdam 2012, 25th MIMI Festival, Marseille and AV10, Newcastle. His collaboration with artist film maker Luke Fowler, A Grammar for Listening Pt1 featured in The British Art Show 2010: In The Days Of The Comet. Between 2009 and 2011, he completed a residency at Stour Valley Arts, Kent with the works, Elemental Fields (July 2010), and Fold, (September 2011). His solo and collaborative works have featured in various exhibitions and festivals, as well as on UK TV, BBC Radios 3 and 4, Resonance FM and on radio stations worldwide.

Rie Nakajima is a Japanese artist working with installations and performances that produce sound. Her works are most often composed in direct response to unique architectural spaces using a combination of kinetic devices and found objects. She has exhibited and performed widely both in the UK and overseas and has produced 'Sculpture' with David Toop since 2013. With Keiko Yamamoto she has a music project 'O YAMA O' which explores music with no genre. She also has a collaborative project 'Dead Plants/Living Objects' with Pierre Berthet. She has recently had her first major solo exhibition at IKON Gallery in Birmingham.

Éliane Radigue (born January 24, 1932) is a French electronic music composer. She began working in the 1950s and her first compositions were presented in the late

1960s. Until 2000 her work was almost exclusively created on a single synthesizer, the ARP 2500 modular system and tape. Since 2001 she has composed mainly for acoustic instruments. Radigue was born in a modest family of merchants and raised in Paris at Les Halles. She later married the French-born American artist Arman with whom she lived in Nice while raising their three children, before returning to Paris in 1967. She had studied piano and was already composing before hearing a broadcast by the founder of musique concrète Pierre Schaeffer. She soon met him, and in the early '50s and became his student, working periodically at the Studio d'Essai during visits to Paris. In the early 1960s, she was assistant to Pierre Henry, creating some of the sounds which appeared in his works. As her own work matured, Schaeffer and Henry felt that her use of microphone feedback and long tape loops was moving away from their ideals, though her singular practice was still related to their methods. Around 1970, she created her first synthesizer-based music in a studio she shared with Laurie Spiegel on a Buchla synthesizer installed by Morton Subotnick at NYU. Her goal at that point was to create a slow, purposeful "unfolding" of sound, which she felt to be closer to the minimal composers of New York at the time than to the French musique concrète composers who had been her previous allies. After the premiere of Adnos I in 1974 at Mills College at the invitation of Robert Ashley, a group of visiting French music students suggested that her music was deeply related to meditation and that she should look into Tibetan Buddhism, two things she was not familiar with. After investigating Tibetan Buddhism, she quickly converted and spent the next three years devoted to its practice under her guru Pawo Rinpoche, who subsequently sent her back to her musical work. She returned to composition, picking up where she left off, using the same working methods and goals as before, finishing Adnos II in 1979 and Adnos III in 1980. Then came a series of works dedicated to Milarepa, the great Tibetan yogi, known for his Hundred Thousand Songs representing the basis of his teaching. First she composed the Songs of Milarepa, followed by Jetsun Mila, an evocation of the life of this great master; the creation of these works was sponsored by the French government. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, she devoted herself to a singular three-hour work, perhaps her masterpiece, the Trilogie de la Mort, of which the first part kyema Intermediate states follows the path of the continuum of the six states of consciousness. The work was influenced as much by the Tibetan Book of the Dead Bardo Thodol and her meditation practice, as by the deaths of Pawo Rinpoche and of her son Yves Arman [fr]. The first third of the Trilogie, "Kyema", was her first recording, released by Phill Niblock's XI label. In 2000, she made her last electronic work in Paris, l'Ile Re-sonante, for which she received the Golden Nica Award at the festival Ars Electronica in 2006. In 2001, on request from the electric bass and composer Kasper T. Toeplitz, she created her first instrumental work, Elemental II, which she took up again with the laptop improvisation group The Lappetites. She participated in their first album Before the Libreto on the Quecksilber label in 2005. Since 2004 she has dedicated herself to works for acoustic instruments. First with the American cellist Charles Curtis, the first part of

Naldjorlak was premiered in December 2005 in New York and later played in 25 concerts across the U.S. and Europe. The second part of Naldjorlak for the two basset horn players Carol Robinson and Bruno Martinez, was created in September 2007 at the Aarau Festival (Switzerland). The three musicians completed the third part of Naldjorlak with Radigue and premiered the complete work, "Naldjorlak I,II,III", in Bordeaux on January 24, 2009. In June 2011 her composition for solo harp Occam I, written for the harpist Rhodri Davies, was premiered in London. Numerous solos and ensemble pieces in the OCCAM cycle have followed.

Enrico Malatesta is a percussionist interested in experimental research on music, performance, and pedagogy. He explores the relation between sound, space, and movement, with attention to the multi-material possibilities of percussion instruments. This research places a strong emphasis on the material's potential to produce a multiplicity of information through simple actions, the motion and experience of listening, and the sustainability of the presence of the performer. www.enricomalatesta.com

photograph of Alvin Lucier by Krisanne Johnson
photograph of Éliane Radigue by Vincent Pontet

curated by John Lely and Tim Parkinson

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