

John Lely
Alastair Bannerman

Tom Johnson Counting Duets (1982): #1

Tom Johnson, born in Colorado in 1939, received B.A. and M.Mus. degrees from Yale University, and studied composition privately with Morton Feldman. After 15 years in New York, he moved to Paris, where he has lived since 1983. He is considered a minimalist, since he works with simple forms, limited scales, and generally reduced materials, but he proceeds in a more logical way than most minimalists, often using formulas, permutations, and predictable sequences.

These days our pocket calculators do much of our counting for us, but we continue to do a lot of it ourselves. Soldiers count the cadence as they march, partly to relieve fatigue, and partly from the simple pleasure it brings. Agricultural surveyors count the blades of grass in a sample area. Individuals practising meditation count breaths, beads, or prostrations. Musicians and dancers count a lot (...) Many of us count the steps as we ascend long staircases, though we often don't like to admit it.

Harald Muenz | Markus Trunk

Harald Muenz

de[ux]ChiffRAGE

for sight-reading speakers and chance-controlled live text transformation (1993; 2004)

Born 1965 in Schwabisch Hall / Germany, Harald Muenz studied under Helmut Lachenmann (1994-97), Krzysztof Meyer (1988-93), Johannes Fritsch, and Clarence Barlow, as well as in the *Electronic Studio* of the Hochschule für Musik Cologne, and Cologne University's *Phonetic Institute* (Georg Heike). Harald's music has been performed by important musicians throughout Europe, in South Korea and the US, amongst others by *Ensemble Modern* (Frankfurt), *Apartment House* (London), *Alter Ego* (Rome), *Neue Vocalsolisten* (Stuttgart), *ensemble mosaik* (Berlin), *Black Jackets* (Brussels), and the *Berlin Philharmonic*. His works have been heard at many festivals and been broadcast nationally and internationally. A large scale music theatre project is in preparation. He has received many bursaries and prizes, including the *Research Grant NRW*, *Förderpreis Musik NRW*, *Bernd-Alois-Zimmermann-Stipendium Köln*, and *Villa Aurora* Los Angeles. CDs with his music were published by *Cybele*. His work was subject of a special focus in the periodical *MusikTexte* (vol. 103). He is a member of *sprechbohrer*, a vocal trio performing speech sound art. Harald is also active as lecturer and author, and is the editor of a book about Italian composer Franco Evangelisti. Before joining Brunel University as a Lecturer in Music in 2005 he was module leader of *Aesthetic Phonetics* at Cologne University (2001-2005).
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During the course of a performance of deChiffRAGE, a laptop computer transforms a pre-existing text according to a number of chance procedures: it inverts or shuffles the letters of words, increasingly adds single syllables from the original text until only they remain, then builds, out of this syllable soup, new conglomerates, until more and more "meaningful" words appear and start forming "sentences". In the final phase of deChiffRAGE a short extract from the original text is "quoted", beginning arbitrarily in the middle of a sentence; however, the individual words are separated by gaping silences, whereby comprehension of the finally established semantic context remains precarious. The temporal organisation of deChiffRAGE (which can be altered before a performance) pre-determines the points of transition from one state of the material to the next, the durations of the gaps, and when the end of the performance will occur, whereas the actual language content is on each occasion generated afresh by the computer in real time. The speaker reads, and hence interprets, the modified text spontaneously as it appears in individual chunks on screen. Once he or she finishes the current segment, pressing a key on the keyboard will cause the screen to go blank for a certain period of time before a new portion of text is displayed. Alternation of upper and lower case letters as well as punctuation provide additional interpretative clues; of crucial importance is an immediacy of text delivery that is influenced by the mental associations of the particular speaker and what his or her experience of language(s) is. deChiffRAGE, my first composition using algorithms, exhibits a stubborn refusal to pretend the computer is a giant music box that can be used as an instrument in the traditional sense, or that it is able to generate "new" and "exciting" sounds. It is and remains a mere calculation apparatus. — de[ux]ChiffRAGE represents the overdue version of deChiffRAGE for two speakers. HM

John Lely
Henri Vaxby

Tom Johnson Counting Duets: #2 "à la valse"

Johnson is well known for his operas: The Four Note Opera (1972) continues to be presented in many countries. Riemannoper has been staged more than 20 times in German-speaking countries, since its premiere in Bremen in 1988. His largest composition, the Bonhoeffer Oratorium, a two-hour work in German for orchestra, chorus and soloists, with text by the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, was premiered in Maastricht in 1996, and has since been presented in Berlin and New York.

There are many kinds of counting. Sometimes we count very exactly, but as I write this text, I find myself only vaguely counting how many words I have, to know about how much space I am taking, how many paragraphs I have, to try to see the shape of what I am writing, and how many times I have used the word "counting", to avoid too much repetition. Sometimes we count by twos, or count backwards, or count the same sequence over and over (...) and of course, all of this looks and sounds very different depending on what language you use, though it is certainly not necessary to use any numerals or words at all in order to count something.

Olivier Rodriguez
Angharad Davies
Alan Thomas
Tim Parkinson

Michael Pisaro interference (2)

Michael Pisaro was born in Buffalo, NY in 1961. His work has been selected twice by the ISCM jury for performance at World Music Days festivals (Copenhagen, 1996; Manchester, 1998) and has also been part of festivals in Hong Kong (ICMC, 1998), Vienna (Wien Modern, 1997), Aspen (1991), Merano, Italy (2003), Düsseldorf (every year since 2000), Berlin (Akademie der Künste, 2002) and Chicago (New Music Chicago, 1990, 1991). Concert length portraits of his music have been given in Munich, London, Jerusalem, Los Angeles, Vienna, Brussels, Curitiba (Brazil), Berlin, Chicago, Düsseldorf, Zürich, New York, Cologne, Aarau and elsewhere. He is a Foundation for Contemporary Arts, 2005 and 2006 Grant Recipient. Most of his music of the last several years is published by Timescaper Music (Germany). CDs are available on Wandelweiser Records. His translation of poetry by Oswald Egger ("Room of Rumor") was published in 2004 by Green Integer. He is Co-Chair of Music Composition at the California Institute of the Arts near Los Angeles.

a quartet for speaker,
a woodwind or bowed string instrument,
a harmony instrument
and electronics (2003/05)

"Interference (2)" brings together French words ("stolen" from Edith Piaf and Samuel Beckett), a harmony instrument, a string (or woodwind) and a set of 10 sine tones (dividing the octave into 9 equal parts): a loose collection of very small musical images, more or less freely disposed in time (20 minutes). MP

Alastair Bannerman
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Henri Vaxby

Tom Johnson Counting Duets: #3

Johnson has also written numerous radio pieces, such as J'entends un choeur (1993), Music and Questions (1988), and Die Melodiemaschinen, premiered by WDR Radio in Cologne in January 1996. Recent projects include Tilework, a series of 14 pieces for solo instruments, Same or Different, a piece commissioned by the Dutch radio in 2004, and the Combinations for String Quartet, premiered in Berlin on the MärzMusik festival in 2004. As performer he frequently plays his Galileo, a 45-minute piece written for a self-invented percussion instrument.

The many formalistic, religious, arithmetic, psychological, linguistic, and musical implications of counting have come to interest me a great deal, and since I have a special love for patterns and numbers anyway, I have focussed much of my recent work in this direction. I count strings on a psaltery, count keys on a piano, count wooden blocks, count in duets, count in different languages, and keep finding new ways to do pieces about counting.
Tom Johnson
(August 1982)

Angharad Davies, viola
Andrew Sparling, clarinet
Alan Thomas, guitar

Mauricio Kagel Con voce

Mauricio (Raúl) Kagel was born in Buenos Aires on 24 December 1931 into a polyglot Argentine-Jewish family with strongly leftist political views. He studied theory, singing, conducting, piano, cello and organ with private teachers, but as a composer was self-taught. At the University of Buenos Aires, where Jorge Luis Borges was among his lecturers, Kagel studied philosophy and literature. In 1949 he became artistic advisor to the Agrupación Nueva Música de Buenos Aires; he began composing in 1950, seeking musical ideas that opposed the neoclassical style dictated by the Perón government. After an unsuccessful attempt to establish an electronic studio, in 1955 he became chorus director and rehearsal accompanist at the Teatro Colón and editor on cinema and photography for the journal *nueva visión*. In 1957 Kagel traveled to Germany on a DAAD student grant, settled in Cologne, and became immediately and permanently involved in the contemporary music network as a member of the so-called "second generation" of Darmstadt composers. In Germany he participated in the Darmstadt summer courses (from 1958), where he later lectured (1960-66, 1972-76), and conducted the Rheinland Chamber Orchestra in contemporary music concerts (1957-61). Between 1961 and 1965, he also made several concert and lecture tours in the USA. In 1969 he was named director of the Institute of New Music at the Rheinische Musikschule in Cologne and, as Stockhausen's successor, of the Cologne courses in new music (until 1975); in 1974 he became professor of new music theater at the Musikhochschule in Cologne. Kagel was one of the founders of the Ensemble for New Music in Cologne and has worked at the electronic studios in Cologne, Berlin, and Utrecht. He continues to conduct many of his works and directs and produces all of his own films and radio plays.

for three mute players (1972)

This piece was written after the Soviet invasion of Prague and is dedicated to my Czechoslovakian friends. Like the suppressed population, the three players here are robbed of their instrumental voice and are thus, in a very real sense, mute. Hence a motto from Franz Kafka's *In the Penal Colony*: "Up to now manual operation was necessary, but now the machinery works entirely on its own." M.K.

Alan Thomas, guitar
Christopher Fox

Chile

for guitar (1991)

Chile is a companion piece to my ensemble piece, **The science of freedom** (1990), in that both use a rhythmic vocabulary based on Latin-American popular music. While neither piece employs direct quotation, the additive principle underlying many Latin-American dance rhythms also informs the rhythmic writing in both works. In Chile my music also has (for me at least) a specifically South American political significance, hence its title. The recurrent playing technique in the piece – the alternate sounding and muting of the strings – and the music's fluctuation between more or less repetition – between phrases that move forward (albeit cautiously) and those that close in on themselves – are intended in this piece as metaphors for the alternation of democratic freedom and its suppression in the lives of the people of Chile (and of so many others in other countries within the USA's sphere of influence). CF

Christopher Fox (b.1955) has worked closely with the Ives Ensemble in the Netherlands and in Britain with the ensemble Apartment House, and the pianist Ian Pace. He is currently working on new pieces for EXAUDI and the Smith Quartet.

