



# Pro- gram- me

20 -  
- 14

Festival of improvisation

I draw on the sound map of the city. Silently, along quiet places. Quickly, over the loud and shrill. I divide sound drawings into those that are intertwined threads and those that are indicated by traces. The threads are not linear; I hear them in roots, rhizomes, urban mycelium. Traces are on every step, they form urban structures; they trace the streets, quarters and housing estates. I hear their calm zones and also the noise barriers. I search for shortcuts from the system, how not to collide with the sound veins of the city, how to penetrate the organic structure. As a walker / urban hunter during the tracking the quietude / an animal, I search for easily overlooked imprints of sounds in the urban noise and the colors of the endangered sound spectrums.

— Michal Kindernay

Michal Kindernay is an intermedia artist working with interactive connections of sound, image, and other inputs, in an environment of (not only) computer applications. His works include video performances, installations, sound and interactive projects often with ecological aspects. He is one of the founders or yo-yo non profit organization, member of Kravin «KRA» collective and Školská 28 gallery in Prague.

---

# Table of Contents

<b>4</b>	<b><u>Editorial</u></b>		
	—		
<b>6</b>	<b><u>Introduction</u></b>		
	—		
<b>10</b>	<b><u>Schedule</u></b>		
	—		
<b>16</b>	<b><u>Artists</u></b>		
	—		
<b>27</b>	<b><u>Map</u></b>		
	—		
<b>28</b>	<b><u>Interview</u></b>		
	George E. Lewis		
	—		
<b>32</b>	<b><u>Symposium Abstracts</u></b>		
	—		
<b>54</b>	<b><u>Team &amp; Partners</u></b>		
		<b><u>Artists</u></b>	<b><u>Symposium Abstracts</u></b>
		<b>16</b> Allison Johnson	<b>32</b> Jason Robinson
		Annie Gosfield	Ian Mikyska
		Barbora Sojková	<b>33</b> Christopher Williams
		<b>17</b> Cristina Maldonado	Reinhard Gagel
		Dafne Vicente-Sandoval	<b>34</b> Michael Gardiner
		<b>18</b> David Rothenberg	<b>35</b> Cat Hope
		Dawn of Midi	Marcel Cobussen
		Edward Powell	<b>36</b> Felipe Castellani and
		<b>19</b> George E. Lewis	Rogério Costa
		Iva Bittová	<b>37</b> Lucie Vitkova
		<b>20</b> Ivan Palacký	Emmanuel Nnamani
		Jaromír Typlt	<b>38</b> Andrew Wilson
		Jeffrey Goldberg	Kevin McNeilly
		Joëlle Léandre	<b>39</b> Vanessa Tomlinson
		<b>21</b> Katherine Liberovskaya	<b>40</b> Marc Hannaford
		Lisa Cay Miller	Ximena Alarcón
		<b>22</b> Lucie Vitková	<b>41</b> Ivan Palacký
		Lukas Ligeti	Simon Rose
		Marco Eneidi	<b>42</b> Lisa Cay Miller
		Markus Popp	Stephanie Khoury
		<b>23</b> Mary Oliver	<b>43</b> Don Ritter
		Michal Rataj	Michael Pelz-Sherman
		Morgan O'Hara	<b>44</b> Rob Wallace
		<b>24</b> Pasi Mäkelä	Ricardo Arias
		Pauline Oliveros	Dimitris Papageorgiou
		Petr Kotík	<b>45</b> Lindsay Vickery
		<b>25</b> Phill Niblock	<b>46</b> Ursel Schlicht
		Prague Improvisation	Lukas Ligeti
		Orchestra (PIO)	<b>47</b> Michael Francis Duch and
		Roger Kleier	Bjørnar Habbestad
		Stratocluster	<b>48</b> Amandine Pras
		<b>26</b> Tomáš Procházka	<b>49</b> Charles Bramley
		Vanessa Tomlinson	Laurel Felt
			<b>50</b> Ritwik Banerji
			<b>51</b> Peter Heltzel
			James Falzone

# A naming system for the unnameable?

vs. Interpretation is a term that invites us to question our own bases of certainty and our systems for questioning and collecting knowledge. While the festival focuses on improvisation, it should be noted that improvisation can be a language we may use to ask very essential questions about life and its non-linear nature. How much of our reality is a result of improvisation? How do we interpret improvisation when it is based on our undetermined volition? How much of improvisation is self-determinacy? How does the collective thought of group improvisation correspond to the fragmented interior monologues of each individual improvising? If how we frame a situation is relative and how we question or interpret something can be confronted from various cultural and social perspectives, we can also ask ourselves: Can we ever reach understanding?

It was Nietzsche who said:  
Once you have found words  
for something, you have gone  
beyond it.

In naming the festival, I was influenced by Susan Sontag's novel *Against Interpretation* and filled with questions on how form and content of artistic experience are interpreted. The artists performing in this inaugural year of vs. Interpretation challenge the clichés of time and space sensibilities through their improvisational practice. While the codes they use may be punctuated by an indiscernible accumulation of individual experiences, a common language finally becomes discernable when the artist's uncertainty provides room for our own being to step into their unfinished sentence and complete it for them.

The philosopher Alain Badiou argued that «Evil is the desire for Everything-to-be-said». We realise that by calling this gathering a festival or project we are categorising and perhaps limiting how we can interpret the event itself. Can this “festival” welcome post-colonial views of art which question the framer? vs. Interpretation’s aim is not really to claim a word or place for itself in this world, but hopefully it will remind us of the potency that uncertainty has in the arts. If uncertainty penetrates the deepest form of our subconscious, how might it also give agency to our dreams and transcendental realities? It would seem that uncertainty allows the improviser and spectator to become co-creators of an event (or series of events), even if the language they momentarily share is fabricated for a short sequence of time. Imagine a clueless parent trying to converse with their transitioning teenage child. Parenting is one of the most practical examples I can give as it concerns living in a state of continuous uncertainty and in a constant hope that one can find a balance between the worlds of order and play.

Are we perhaps wrong in viewing improvisation as an experiment? If we do view it as such, what does that say about our experience of the non-repeatable moment? One aspect of the improvisatory experience that comes to mind is self-projection. This occurs when the fluid, interdisciplinary artist transmits herself into an inanimate object, a wave of sound or another person--and lets herself be carried and morphed by it. Identities seem to overlap, duplicate, replicate and shift. Should we actually desire a method for measuring our experiences which emerge from the medium of improvisation? Improvisation arouses a state of self-negation which allows the artist to create without the confines of self-objectification.

The project vs. Interpretation is an attempt to support a meeting of improvisers from many cultural origins. It will allow us to witness the ways they relate to space and time and how they compose given their chosen tools for craft and play. Notated or semi-notated, tuned or detuned, with or without rhythm, improvisation can be a strong device for self-confrontation and thereby a lesson to be used for community transformation. By working on our own limits we can alter them; we do not have to compromise or assimilate ourselves to a framer’s expectations. I feel very honored to be amongst the many artists and improvisers who live vs. Interpretation.

If any basis for a future gathering of vs. Interpretation could be formulated today, I’d borrow the words of poet Fernando Pessoa, since they seem to directly draw upon the condition of the artists presenting during this special gathering:

**I’ve always rejected being understood. To be understood is to prostitute oneself. I prefer to be taken seriously for what I’m not, remaining humanly unknown, with naturalness and all due respect.**

Cynthia Plachá

Director, Agosto Foundation

Praha, July 2014

# Improvisation: The Known and the Unknown

Some people think improvisation is too easy. You just get up on stage and play, no rehearsal necessary, no planning to worry about, no fifty six measures of rest to count before coming in. No worries about hitting a wrong note, no nervousness about staying together in time. Nothing to worry about, everything goes.

Of course you can worry about all those things as an improviser as well, and maybe it takes a whole life of practice to get up on stage and do something no one, even you, has ever heard before. When Picasso was once asked how long it took him to make one of his paintings, his answer was: My whole life. He thought like an improviser, one who wears his life on his sleeve, who has no work separate from himself. So in the days before recordings we have no documentation of the great improvisations of Beethoven, Liszt, or Ole Bull, except inasmuch as they turned those spontaneous performances into written works and then, well, then when someone else plays them they are not quite improvised, are they?

It was recording that made improvisation into something musicians could review in retrospect, elevating the sense of personal sound into something that the next generation could praise and emulate. When John Coltrane was shown a transcription of one of his solos he laughed and said, "What! I could never play anything like that!" It is the possibility of creating something you can't repeat or explain that makes improvisation so appealing. It is a risk the player takes to push herself over the edge.

I have always preferred hearing music that is improvised rather than composed, since I feel the personality, the human-ness of the player up there so much more. Part of me doesn't trust this preference; I feel that if I just devoted myself more to music in greater depth I would appreciate the level of precision and architecture only possible in rigorously composed and planned works, but somehow I still can't seem to go there. The lure of improvisation is so strong. So

many of us implicitly agree with Jason Moran, who was described in The New Yorker as one musician who believes in taking the listener to a place that can be reached by no other means than improvisation, where the deepest part of the music is created in the moment, never to happen exactly the same way again.

**A classical musician might tell you that all musical performances are like that, unique moments in time full of qualities that only happen in the sonic instant.**

That is why our event has the provocative title vs. Interpretation because we want to throw open this question: What is this extra something that makes improvisation actually different from the uniqueness of the interpreted piece, where there is less on the page and more in the air?

Maybe improvisation is for egotists, as we all believe we have something genuinely unique to offer that no one else can play just the way we do it. Classical music doesn't tell you to do that; there are right and wrong notes, and there is a right and wrong tempo, sure you can bend it, but you better know exactly what is supposed

to be done before you mess with the sacred text of notes on the page or the precise instructions from the conductor at the podium. Now sure, improvisation has plenty of its own rules, but those rules are always there to be bent and broken. At least that is one of the lures that jazz has to offer, as a particularly open-minded kind of improvised music that has been ready, throughout its history, to learn from so many musics all over the globe. Indian music, for example, offers ragas as specific rules for improvisation, different ways to play up the scale from down, and it has certainly the most rigorous training for improvisation in any musical tradition throughout history, and it is so easy to play one of these ragas in exactly the wrong way, but if you mix Indian music with jazz, suddenly there is much more freedom as to what is allowed. Not necessarily total freedom, but a general openness that allows jazz to offer to embrace any musical tradition whatsoever. Over the years some have tried to narrow the definition of what counts as jazz but I think its strongest meaning is still that improvising tradition that welcomes an interaction with all other tradition. That's why I've personally taken the jazz approach to improvise along with musical traditions of other species, such as humpback whales and nightingales. Improvised music can reach out to these creatures and might succeed where language fails.

As we improvise we instantly say things without words that we cannot explain. It's a form of communication that might be more common outside of music than within. That's what's so wonderful about George Lewis and Ben Piekut's upcoming Critical Improvisation anthology, that they have collected so many essays on how

improvisation applies outside specific musical and artistic terms. So many of our actions in life are unplanned and unprepared, and yet they too build on lifetimes of training and experience. We have to be able to deal with unexpected situations with no time to plan. We all improvise in order to live through every day.

This music celebrates that, as it offers so many possibilities for beauty and danger at once. I'm so happy to be here with so many of you who have practiced so many years to do something you have never done before, that we will together be the first to experience, part of a vast movement of music that keeps moving on, never to stay the same.

David Rothenberg

Praha, July 2014

David Rothenberg has written one book on improvisation and others on making music with birds, bugs, whales, and on the evolution of beauty in nature, and performed and recorded a lot of unexpected music. He has no idea what he's going to do next.

# Questions on the Rules of Improvisation

“Treatise: What is it? Well, it’s a vertebrate.” — Cornelius Cardew on his musical piece Treatise, the 193-page graphic score inspired by Ludwig Wittgenstein’s Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. It neither contains nor is accompanied by any explicit instructions on how to perform it. Cardew worked on the composition between 1963 and 1967. An interpretation of Treatise was recorded live by QUaX Ensemble in Prague in 1967, directed by Petr Kotik. Why did Cardew call his musical work “a vertebrate”?

Since the 1960s and 70s, many artists have developed general protocols and innovative forms of notation to liberate themselves from the esthetic and social conventions of established cultural rules. Forms such as social games and ludics, generative automata, and numerical codes; anarchistic approaches to the interactions of training, amateurism and mastery; the deconstruction of proprietary tools; explorations of contingency, indeterminacies of composition and performance; stochastic structures; and alternative forms of distribution or sharing while integrating principles of improvisation — evidence of all of these can be seen in the performing arts, music, film, fine art, audiovisual art and the literature of recent decades.

In the intervening period, the rules of analogue improvisation have ascended to the status of ordinary tools, techniques and styles, taking root in the form of live electronics, live coding, and live cinema, as well as in computer gaming. It is this very situation that somehow facilitates the inspired visions and accomplishments of pioneers such as members of Oulipo, John Cage, Scratch Orchestra, Sun Ra, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Earle Brown, John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, David Tudor, Allan Kaprow, Nam June Paik or Stan Vanderbeek, all of which are potentially accessible to the general public. Improvisation in its various guises has existed for almost 60 years in the western context, both in the avant-garde and in popular culture, where it is

even more deeply rooted. So we ask, what is the role of improvisation in art today?

Let’s just say we might first try to discuss “free improvisation” on a general level, without reducing it to aesthetic issues, thereby narrowing our scope to its presence in art. What are the psychological and social conditions that give rise to the various forms of improvisational behaviour and thinking? What are the patterns of “non-idiomatic” art, reflected in sociology, genealogy, ideology, ethics, pedagogy, psychology or gender issues? What guides a person who decides (or is forced) to act instantaneously, on the spot, be it individually or in a group, without knowing beforehand the results and consequences of their decision, and not following any obvious procedure or algorithm?

Another possible issue touches upon the dilemma of the person who is improvising: is there a “right” or “wrong” decision in such open situations caused by our intuition or innate talent, and to what extent would any such decision depend on acquired experience? Can such a yes/no judgement in a free style of improvisation even be considered valid? Can we take examples of “improvisational behaviour” (i.e., a chain of decisions), extract their attributes, transfer them into a numerical or language-based encoding scheme, and generate further work from them? Can we then distribute these collections of attributes or



functions as shared tools, or as forms of practical knowledge? Or is the ability to improvise well simply a gift, a blessing bestowed only on some hallowed persons for mysterious reasons? In relation to this, do our educational institutions adequately stimulate the natural inborn ability of a child to learn, improvise, and explore, or do we see evidence of the suppression of these tendencies by a system based on the memorization and recall of facts?

The list of questions goes on. Does the one who improvises, as opposed to the person who follows strict rules, ineluctably adhere to somehow “different” rules and procedures? Is improvisation mostly an intuitive, spontaneous, unconstrained creative activity, as described in the texts and exemplified in some works by John Cage? Or is it a manifestation of trained readiness, a process of accepting virtues defined by class consciousness, as proposed by Cornelius Cardew, who, in a spirit of radical musical and political thinking, rejected as manipulative the alienating rules of bourgeois Western culture, centered on automation and standardisation, and ever tending toward increasing control over people, both as social masses and individually? Or is it perhaps the other way around? Are the strategies and procedures of improvisation rooted deeply in the core of capitalist economy, in both its liberal and neoliberal versions?

## Is it a lifestyle choice, a lifelong programme, a practiced discipline, something akin to the long and arduous path of a Zen disciple towards wisdom?

We must also consider the following. Are acts of improvisation in art (and in life) merely occasional or alternative solutions, adventures or experiments in opposing the banality of quotidian rules, or even in challenging our voluntary identification with authority, which, after all, provides a feeling of security as its emotional reward? Is improvisation something intrinsic to all cultures, human behaviour and thinking in general, or, perhaps more profoundly, is it a capability which separates us, like spoken language, from the rest of the vertebrates? Is it a lifestyle choice, a lifelong programme, a practiced discipline, something akin to the long and arduous path of a Zen disciple towards wisdom? There are just too many questions, and each of them opens the door to even more. I therefore focus here on two of them — those that I consider the most pressing in the current context. Contemporary critical thinking revolves around two axes. The first one represents our insecurity at the spectre of the crisis concerning environmental instability caused by global industrialisation, and our coexistence with the complex, interconnected and dynamic system of ecosphere; or conversely, its denial. Our inability to adapt res-

ponsively enough to changes caused by our questionable behaviour or choices (i.e., the established, standard, stereotypical pattern of thinking and acting) may be quite dangerous. This is despite the logical fact that to improvise cannot be the only viable strategy for addressing these complex issues.

The second axis represents the convergence of natural processes modelled on science and technology, exploiting the parallels between humans and machines, melding the organic with the artificial. It represents the idea of achieving a state of synchronicity stemming from the principles of cybernetics, cognitive sciences and the current state of the art of computer science. We are able to generate and construct complex mechanisms which process and analyse increasingly large volumes of data and information. These mechanisms are infinitely faster than their corresponding structures in the human brain. Nevertheless, because of their limitations, machines are still not capable of “thinking” or “making decisions” like a human brain, imagining (much less producing) a thing that doesn’t yet exist, even a thing only vaguely defined. A human sets out to experiment, improvise, wonder, and search for an unknown solution (even if they doubt any such solution exists) in a realm where there is neither a user’s manual, nor any evident rules.

Seen from this perspective, the art of improvisation may represent one of the last areas of human nature that can transcend the environment of computational processes with which we have surrounded ourselves. At the same time, it is a permanently fragile and endlessly fungible process, protean both in its denial and self-reanimation. If the stable, proven and tested elements of improvisation prevail (multiplied elaborations or combinatorial variations of successful structures), it may slowly start losing its therapeutic, liberating and “autopoietic” (self-creating) function that currently arises from the unpredictable reverberations of open feedback from within the improvised process itself.

The genealogy of such open forms in Czech alternative music, theater, performance, and cinema, is already quite extensive. The festival and symposium vs. Interpretation, initiated by the Agosto Foundation, could be considered as the first attempt in the Czech Republic to explore the art of improvisation from various cultural backgrounds, disciplines, experiences, and techniques.

**Miloš Vojtěchovský**

Praha, July 2014

(in collaboration with Lloyd Dunn  
and Ken Ganfield.)

**Miloš Vojtěchovský** curator, organizer, recordist and sound artist (born 1955 in Prague, lives in Prague and Schoenberg/Krásná Hora). Lecturer on history and theory of media art, digital culture and communication studies at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Brno (1997 - 2010), the Center for Audiovisual Studies at Film and Television Academy of AMU (since 2004) and Institute of Intermedia at Technical University. Recently curated Czech section of the networking project Soundexchange - Experimental Music Cultures in Central and Eastern Europe (2012 - 2013). <http://sonicity.cz>

# SCHEDULE

**July 16, 2014\***

**Location: NoD, Dlouhá 33, Prague 1**

**(18:00) · Reception**  
Meet and greet

## Teatro

**(20:00 — 21:00) · Performance**  
Ivan Palacký, Dafne Vicente-Sandoval  
Reduplication with Morgan O'Hara Live Transmission

**(21:00 — 22:00) · Performance**  
Prague Improvisation Orchestra

\* Festivities on this day for presenters and whole festival pass holders only — available on site.



# July 17, 2014

Location: NoD, Dlouhá 33, Prague 1

## Teatro

(09:30 — 10:45) · **Keynote 1**

George E. Lewis

(11:00 — 12:30) · **Paper Session 1A**

Jason Robinson

Improvisation and Telematics: Toward an Understanding of Latency and Interactivity in Networked Performance

Ian Mikyska

Lines and Sounds: Hermeneutics of Multimedia Improvisation

Christopher Williams

Long-Term Improvisation, Groundwave Rondo, and The Barcelona Chronicles

Reinhard Gagel

OHO! Offhand Opera, A Model for Creating Musical Forms in the Course of Performance

(12:30 — 13:00) · **Lunchtime**

(15:00 — 16:30) · **Workshop**

Joëlle Léandre

(18:00 — 18:30) · **Performance**

Michal Rataj, Jaromír Týpelt  
Scribbles

(20:00 — 22:00) · **Performance**

George E. Lewis, Pauline Oliveros, Joëlle Léandre



## Video NoD

\*\* This panel presents several local artists, journalists and/or organizers who will discuss their opinions, or views on the theme of the symposium, seen from their experiences and perspectives: performance, music, architecture, visual art, humanities, etc.

(11:00 — 12:30) · **Paper Session 1B**

Michael Gardiner

Spectral Fizz and the Image of Extended Perceptions: Theory qua Improvisation

Cat Hope

Scoring for Music Improvisation: The Potential of Digital Graphic Notations for Improvising Ensembles

Marcel Cobussen

Technology as an Actant in the Field of Musical Improvisation

Rogério Costa, Felipe Merker Castellani & Alessandra Bochio

Mirror I, Hybrid Environments of Collective Creation: Composition, Improvisation, and Live Electronics

(12:30 — 13:00) · **Lunchtime**

(13:00 — 14:00) · **Discussion**

Ewan McLaren, Pavel Klusák, Tomáš Ruller, Ivan Palacký, Zdeněk Konopásek, Petr Vrba, moderated by Miloš Vojtěchovský  
Charivari - INTERDISCIPLINARY PANEL\*\* discussion

(14:00 — 15:00) · **Workshop**

Vanessa Tomlinson + Allison Johnson

(16:30 — 17:30) · **Performance & Talk**

Mary Oliver  
Into the rabbit hole...

(19:30 — 20:30) · **Performance**

Pasi Mäkelä and Federsel  
(Tomáš Procházka)  
Tonttu

(22:15 — 23:00) · **Performance**

Marco Eneidi

# July 18, 2014

Location: NoD, Dlouhá 33, Prague 1

## Teatro

\*\*\* Czech/English  
interpreter support  
will be provided

(09:30 — 10:45) · **Keynote 2**

Pauline Oliveros

(11:00 — 11:30) · **Performance**

Jeffrey Goldberg

(12:30 — 13:00) · **Lunchtime**

(14:00 — 15:30) · **Paper Session 2A**

Lucie Vítková

Composing Situations: Improvisation in the  
Music of Christian Wolff \*\*\*

Emmanuel Nnamani

Improvisation, Catharsis and Creativity on  
the Beat and In Tune: Perspectives on Struc-  
tures, Images and the Message in Fela's  
Afrobeat Music

Andrew Wilson

Musical Prose. Dada, and Jazz: A Case Study  
of Erwin Schulhoff's Improvisations praxis

Kevin McNeilly

Possibility Abstracts: Taylor Ho Bynum,  
Nathaniel Mackey and Discrepancy

(15:30 — 16:00) · **Performance**

Lisa Cay Miller

(16:00 — 17:30) · **Paper Session 3A**

Simon Rose

The Agency of Improvisation

Lisa Cay Miller

Talking Improv: Removing the Civil Censor  
Stephanie Khoury

Reimagining the Role of Improvisation in  
Music and Education

Don Ritter

From Improvisation to Conceptual  
Interactivity

(18:00 — 18:30) · **Performance**

Lucie Vítková

(18:30 — 19:30) · **Performance**

Petr Kotík, Barbora Sojková, and company

(20:30 — 21:00) · **Performance**

Annie Gosfield (solo)

Annie Gosfield with Roger Kleier

(22:00 — 23:00) · **Performance**

Iva Bittová

## Video NoD

(14:00 — 15:30) · **Paper Session 2B**

Vanessa Tomlinson

Listen to the Sound of Your Imagination:  
An Exploration of Imaginative Listening

Marc Hannaford

Black Saturday, Planning and Improvisation

Ximena Alarcon

Telematic Embodiments: Listening to the  
'In-Between' within Migratory Contexts

Ivan Palacký

Sentences to Tell Over: Interferences  
between Improvisation in Music and Archi-  
tecture\*\*\*

(16:00 — 17:30) · **Paper Session 3B**

Michael Pelz-Sherman

Agile Jazz: Improvisation in the Post-Indus-  
trial Workplace

Rob Wallace

Passages to India

Ricardo Arias

Improvisation in Contemporary Colombian  
Experimental Music and Sound Art

Dimitris Papageorgiou

Searching for a Voice: Free-Improvisation as  
Self-Experimentation

(19:30 — 20:30) · **Performance**

Phill Niblock, Katherine Liberovskaya



# July 19, 2014

Location: NoD, Dlouhá 33, Prague 1

## Teatro

(09:00 — 10:45) · Workshop

Iva Bittová

(10:45 — 12:00) · Workshop

Deep Listening with Pauline Oliveros

(12:30 — 13:00) · Performance

Edward Powell

(13:00 — 14:30) · Paper Session 4A

Lindsay Vickery

Improvising with the Sonic Environment

Ursel Schlicht

SonicExchange: Film and Talk  
about a 100-day Residency

Lukas Ligeti

Between and Beyond Frontiers:

Journeys of Improvised Music in Africa

Michael Duch, Bjørnar Habbestad

Lemur - Methods and Music: Practising  
Improvisation and Rehearsing with an Im-  
provising Ensemble



(15:00 — 17:30) · Paper Session 5

Peter Heltzel

Love Supreme:

Improvising for the Common Good

James Falzone

The Already and the Not Yet:

Improvisation and Theology in Practice  
in Chicago

Salim Washington

Crossing the Black Atlantic

(19:00 — 20:30) · Performance

Dawn of Midi

(21:00 — 22:00) · Performance

Markus Popp

(22:00 — 23:30) · Performance

Stratocuster



## Video NoD

(13:00 — 14:30) · Paper Session 4B

Amandine Pras

Different Approaches to Free Music

Improvisation in New York

Charlie Bramley

Too Important to Be Left to the Musicians:

Building Socio-Musical Activism through

Un-Musical Improvised Practice

Laurel Felt

Improvisation: The Key to 21st Century

Learning

Ritwik Banerji

Bourdieu's Improviser



(22:15 — 23:00) · Workshop

Markus Popp

(17:30 — 18:00) · Performance

Lukas Ligeti

(18:00 — 19:00) · Performance

David Rothenberg

(22:00 — 22:30) · Performance

Sound Pairings

(Please, sign up at the registration desk)

# July 20, 2014

Location: Školská 28 Gallery, Školská 28, Prague 1

## Afternoon jam session in the Školská 28 gallery is dedicated to Vs. Interpretation festival guests.

We start approximately at 2 pm and finish till 9:30 pm.

### Improvised exhibition

New drawings by Morgan O'Hara  
Live Transmissions which were created during selected performances of the vs. Interpretation festival.

### (10:30) · Music Workshop for Children

Collective Opossum, Fox, Butterfly, Whale (Petr Anton, Jenifer Helia deFelice, Tomáš Jenček, Beata Spáčilová)  
Experiencing Sound

### (14:00 — 21:30) · Free improvisation

The Pololáníks + Dimitris Papageorgiou  
The electroacoustic quintet The Pololáníks, at its core with laptop – recorders – clarinet/sax/guitar – trombone – double bass, and various additional percussions, found objects and DIY instruments, make frequent appearance. The interplay of the various individual musical backgrounds and inclinations of the players (contemporary classical, jazz, electronic music etc.), brings about an infinitely developing free-flowing and mostly non-aggressive sound.

### Night Bird: Luboš Fidler and Zdeněk Konopásek

Noční pták- a project of Luboš Fidler and Zdeněk Konopásek, started in 2011. Their music is sometimes wild and raw, sometimes gentle and fragile, partly composed and partly improvised. Songs with reduced, sometimes absurd lyrics mingle with free improvising.

### Lindsay Vickery

Pieces 4 clarinet, bass clarinet, live electronics and objects.

If you would like to join into the jam session please sign up at the festival registration at Experimental space NoD, Dlouhá 33. Slots are limited.

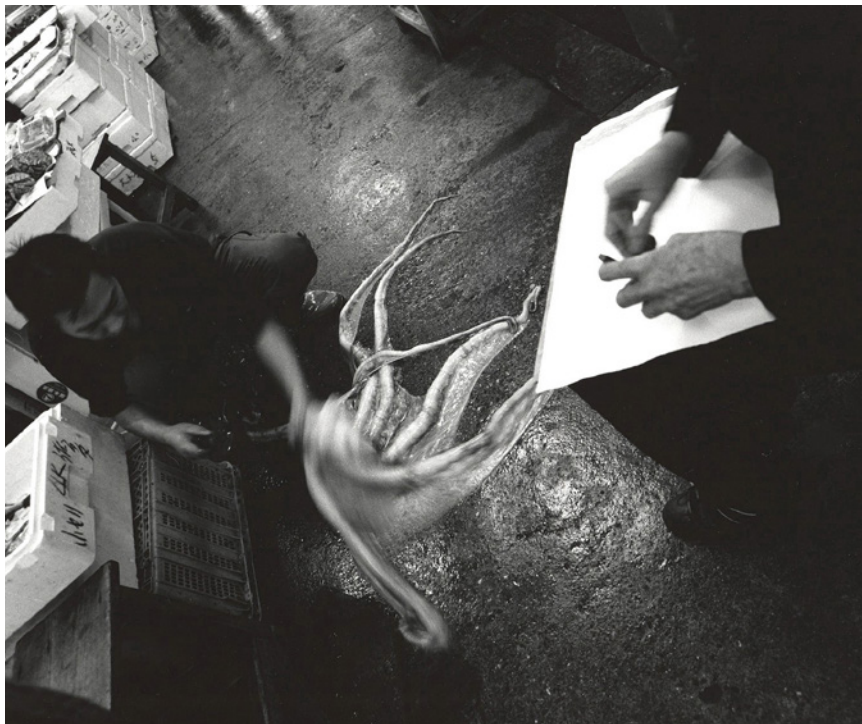
**Dimitris Papageorgiou** is a violinist, improviser and composer. His practice explores musical flows that range from silence, extreme extended techniques and noise sounds to modal improvisation practices, and investigates the interaction between acoustic and electronic sound worlds.

**Luboš Fidler** is an important performer of to the Czech alternative scene. He is a founding member of alternative rock groups of the 1970s and 80s, such as Stehlik or Švehlík, he played with MCH Band, Kilhets and many others. In the past year, he participated in Peter Nikl's projects, with his interactive sound installations. Currently he continues to collaborate with Oldřich Janota as well as with other alternative musicians.

## SCHEDULE

**Zdeněk Konopásek** was one of the key drummers of the early and late 1980s band Dvouletá fáma. Later on he played with amongst others, the Dr. Konopný Quartet (together with Joe Karafiát, Jan Štolba and Radomil Uhlíř) and collaborated with Oldřich Janota. Currently he is involved in the theatrical-musical performances of Divadlo Vizita (Jaroslav Dušek) and plays drums in the Široko-daleko [Near and far] musical ensemble.

**Lindsay Vickery** is an Australian composer and performer. He studied composition with John Exton and Roger Smalley at the University of Western Australia. He has written much ensemble and interactive electronic music, exploring readymades and collage as well as improvisation, nonlinear writing and computer-performer pieces.



## ARTISTS

Allison Johnson

17.07. 14:00 (workshop)



Allison Johnson received degrees in music from Stanford University (BA), CalArts (MFA), and UC San Diego (PhD), studied Javanese gamelan with Djoko Walujo and with Suhardi in Yogyakarta, Java, and improvisation with George Lewis, Anthony Davis, and Wadada Leo Smith. Her compositions and multi-media works have been performed at the New West Electro-Acoustic Music Festival, the New Directions in Asian-American Music Festival, the California Biennial, Feminist Theory & Music, Pasadena ArtNight, World Electro Acoustic Listening Room, Between the Cracks Forum, La Jolla Athenaeum, Parallel 66, and Frau Musica (nova) Festival in Cologne, among others. She has received grants, awards, and residencies from American Composers Forum, the American Music Center, the Luce Foundation, the Durfee Foundation, the Irvine Foundation, Centrum Arts, the City of Pasadena, and the Getty Foundation, and her theater collaborations have been performed at the Berlin Volksbühne, EMPAC at Rensselaer Polytechnic, Colony Theatre in Burbank, and Occidental College's Keck Theatre.

She has published and presented papers on such subjects as Asian American hip hop, Chinese film music, women composers, and sign/gesture technology, and has been a guest lecturer at Freie Universität Berlin, National Taiwan University, Simon Fraser University, University of Southern California, UC San Diego, and UC Irvine, among others. She teaches composition and world music at Soka University in Aliso Viejo, California, and for the Popular Music Studies program at Oregon State University.

radio, and music inspired by baseball and warped 78's. Her music has been performed worldwide at Warsaw Autumn, Bang on a Can, MATA, MaerzMusik, Venice Biennale, and Lincoln Center. Recent work includes compositions inspired by factory environments, jammed WWII radio signals, and her grandparents' immigrant experiences. Annie has released four albums, and she writes on the compositional process for the New York Times' series "The Score." She held the Darius Milhaud chair of composition at Mills College, and has taught at Princeton and California Institute of the Arts.

Annie Gosfield

18.07. 20:30 (performance)



Annie Gosfield, whom the BBC called «A one woman Hadron collider, the queen of the detuned industrial noise» works on the boundaries between notated and improvised music, electronic and acoustic sounds. She was a 2012 fellow at the American Academy in Berlin, and a recent recipient of the Foundation for Contemporary Arts "Grants to Artists" award. Gosfield's newly released "Almost Truths and Open Deceptions" features a piece for piano and broken shortwave

Barbora Sojková

18.07. 18:30 (performance)



Barbora Sojková is one of the most sought-after Czech singers in the field of Early and Contemporary music. She studied music from childhood, piano and voice, and from 1995 was a member of the Prague Philharmonic children's choir. After completing grammar school, she studied choir conducting and church music at the Faculty of Education of the Charles University, and musicology at the same



school's Faculty of Arts where she is now a Ph.D. student specializing in Gregorian chant. From 2009 she has taught Gregorian chant at the Faculty of Education of the Charles University.

She studies singing privately (I. Kusnjer, J. Jonášová, E. Toperczerová) and is intensively involved in the performance of early solo vocal music, having participated in performance courses led by Marius van Altena, Peter Kooij, Julie Hassler, Howard Crook and Joel Frederiksen). She also plays medieval harps and psaltery. Barbora performs with such ensembles as Collegium 1704, Collegium Vocale Gent, Collegium Marianum, Musica Florea, Douce Memoire, Capella Mariana, the Berg Orchestra and Ostravská banda etc., and is a member of Collegium Vocale 1704. She is the artistic director of the female vocal Tiburtina Ensemble. Barbora has sung on major Czech and European festivals such as The Prague Spring Festival, Concentus Moraviae, the Summer festivities of Early music, Resonanzen Wien, Uckermärkische Musikwochen Templin, Festival de Sablé, Festival de la Chaise-Dieu, Festival de Sully et Loiret, Rencontres Musicales de Vézelay, Festival Baroque de Pontoise, Festival de Musique Ancienne de Ribeaupvillé, Festival d'Ambronay, Festival van Vlaanderen Brugge, Oudemuziek Utrecht, and Muziekcentrum De Bijloke Gent.

## Cristina Maldonado

17.07. 11:00 - 18:00 (performance)

18.07. 11:30 - 18:00 (performance)

19.07. 10:30 - 17:30 (performance)

Please sign up at the reception desk.



**C**ristina Maldonado is a Mexican artist whose background in body movement lends a unique approach to her visual and conceptual experiments with video, sound, collage and performance. Her work unifies experimental theater, dance, participatory art, new and old media. Her topics are body, communication and intimacy. She creates experiential frames connecting installation, video and live action.

She works alone or in collaboration with artists from different disciplines and has performed in Mexico, Portugal, Armenia, Cyprus, Germany, Vienna, and the Czech Republic. Since 2003 she has been directing various art and theater projects in Czech Republic such as Experiment in Terror, DOX Centre for Contemporary Art (2011), Theorem of Wanting, Roxy/NoD (2009), Fact, Festival 4+4 days in motion (2004), Study on Fact and Fragility, PQ (2010), Audio-witness, Honestly Old, MeetFactory (2010), Melodrama Mexico, and Transteatral Festival (2010).

She has also presented her work in Museum of Contemporary Art Ex Teresa Arte Actual (MEX), Mail Art Hyperallergic Gallery New York, EstacionArte Mexican Contemporary Art Encounter, International festival of Performance Performagia (MEX), Mediations Contemporary Art

Biennial (POL), Theater Osmeo Dnia (POL) among others.

## Dafne Vicente-Sandoval

16.07. 20:00 (performance)

**D**afne is a bassoon player who explores sound through improvisation, contemporary music performance, and sound installations.

Her instrumental approach is centered on the fragility of sound and its emergence within a given space. In a concert situation she seeks to create a paradoxical presence of vulnerability and strength by testing the limits of control and instability. The deconstructed usage of her instrument is another central aspect of her practice. Dafne amplifies fragments through miniature microphones distributed within the instrument. This exploded version of her sound sometimes meets more conventional bassoon playing to generate aural discontinuities between the exterior and the interior, the whole and the parts, wood and electricity - a reverse-engineered emergence.

Dafne currently lives in Paris and works mainly everywhere else. She favours long term face-to-face collaborations within which her work keeps an integrity while holding a dialogue with that of other musicians (current projects with Klaus Filip, Bonnie Jones, Pascal Battus, Jakob Ullmann, Éliane Radigue and Klaus Lang). Her work has been shown in contemporary music festivals (Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, England; Blurred Edges, Hamburg; Visiones Sonoras, Mexico), as well as in improvised music (Konfrontationen, Austria; No Idea, Texas) and sound art (Tsunami, Chile) festivals.

## David Rothenberg

19.07. 18:00 (performance)



**D**avid Rothenberg has long been interested in the musicality of sounds made by inhabitants of the animal world. He has jammed live with lyrebirds, broadcast his clarinet underwater for humpback whales, and covered himself in thirteen-year cicadas to wail away inside a wash of white noise.

Rothenberg presents a musical trajectory through several of his favorite species, revealing their distinct and evolved aesthetic senses in an attempt to show that music can reach across species lines, from human to animal, and back. Creatures whose musical worlds we will enter include the thrush nightingale, humpback whale, three-humped treehopper, snowy tree cricket, seventeen-year cicada, white-crested laughing thrush, superb lyrebird, European marsh warbler, lesser water boatman and the mountain pine bark beetle.

David Rothenberg has performed and recorded on clarinet with Jan Bang, Scanner, Glen Velez, Karl Berger, Peter Gabriel, Ray Phiri, and the Karnataka College of Percussion. He released a dozen CDs and numerous books. His latest book and CD is *Bug Music*, featuring the sounds of the entomological world. It has been featured on PBS News Hour and in the *New Yorker*. Rothenberg is professor of philosophy and music at the New Jersey Institute of

Technology, and he's currently on sabbatical in Berlin for one year.

[www.davidrothenberg.net](http://www.davidrothenberg.net)

[www.bugmusicbook.com](http://www.bugmusicbook.com)

[www.terrano music.net](http://www.terrano music.net)

## Dawn of Midi

19.07. 19:00 (performance)

**D**awn of Midi. Listenable and insane. That's the sound that results from years of shaping, culminating in their most mesmerizing work yet: *Dysnomia*. In many ways, it's the first record that truly reflects the trio's critically acclaimed live show, a test of endurance and trust that involves bassist Aakaash Israni, pianist Amino Belyamani and percussionist Qasim Naqvi performing their compositions note-for-note without ever appearing the least bit predictable. If anything, *Dawn of Midi's* sets are as red-blooded and rhythmic as a seamlessly mixed DJ set, casting spells on crowds in the same way the group's favorite experimental and electronic acts have for decades. As carefully cultivated as their aesthetic is, *Dawn of Midi's* music has also been known to incorporate, willfully and otherwise, such wildly divergent influences and interests as Aphex Twin, the Police, Can and Ms. Pac-Man. And when they really fall for a record—like they did with Dr. K. Gyasi after hearing his highlife hooks in Berlin—it quickly raises the bar of what they want from their own music. *Dysnomia* came out August 6th, 2013 on Thirsty Ear Recordings.



## Edward Powell

17.07. 12:30 (performance)



**E**dward Powell is a cross-cultural performer, composer, instrument builder, and educator recognised internationally as being an innovative pioneer in his field. His music is profoundly influenced by the Indian, and Middle-eastern modal traditions. He has been a professional musician for more than 30 years, has performed in a wide variety of venues and festivals around the globe, and is today considered one of the world's leading fretless guitarists.

In the early 90's Edward studied the sitar intensively with India's foremost sitarist Pandit Buhaditya Mukherjee and following this enjoyed a short 'career' performing Indian classical music, the highlights of which were a sold out performance at the Academia Filarmonica di Roma in 1999 and in the same year several concert/seminars in prestigious Italian conservatories - in fact Edward is the first musician in history to be granted formal permission to teach Indian music in an Italian conservatory.

Edward's experience as a luthier began with humble experimental practice instruments and progressed to the point where his instruments are sought after by innovative musicians around the globe. Much of Edward's progress was due to having spent every day for 7 months building

his own instrument in the workshop of Faruk Turunz (considered to be the world's foremost oud maker) in 2006. Edward primarily builds for himself for his own use and the main thrust of his research has been an effort to perfect the instrument which he invented: the «ragmakantar» which is a sarod/oud hybrid.

### George E. Lewis

17.07. 09:30 (keynote speech)

17.07. 20:00 (performance)

18.07. 18:30 (performance)



**G**eorge E. Lewis is the Edwin H. Case Professor of American Music at Columbia University. The recipient of a 2002 MacArthur Fellowship, a 1999 Alpert Award in the Arts, a 2011 United States Artists Walker Fellowship, and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Lewis studied composition with Muhal Richard Abrams at the AACM School of Music, and trombone with Dean Hey. A member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) since 1971, Lewis's work in electronic and computer music, computer-based multimedia installations, and notated and improvisative forms is documented on more than 140 recordings. His work has been presented by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Talea Ensemble, Dinosaur Annex, Ensemble Pamplemousse, Wet Ink, Ensemble Erik

Satie, Eco Ensemble, and others, with commissions from American Composers Orchestra, International Contemporary Ensemble, Harvestworks, Ensemble Either/Or, Orkestra Futura, Turning Point Ensemble, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, 2010 Vancouver Cultural Olympiad, IRCAM, Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra, and others. Lewis has served as Ernest Bloch Visiting Professor of Music, University of California, Berkeley; Paul Fromm Composer in Residence, American Academy in Rome; Resident Scholar, Center for Disciplinary Innovation, University of Chicago; and CAC Fitt Artist In Residence, Brown University. Lewis received the 2012 SEAMUS Award from the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States, and his book, *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music* (University of Chicago Press, 2008) received the American Book Award and the American Musicological Society's Music in American Culture Award. Lewis is the co-editor of the forthcoming two-volume Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies, and is composing *Afterword*, an opera commissioned by the Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry at the University of Chicago, to be premiered at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago in Fall 2015.

### Iva Bittová

18.07. 22:00 (performance)

19.07. 09:00 (workshop)



**I**va Bittová was born in 1958 in Bruntál in northern Moravia in what was then Czechoslovakia – now the Czech Republic. Both of her parents were musicians. Her mother Ludmila was a pre-school teacher who spent most of her life with her family; her father Koloman Bitto – Bittová is the surname's female form – was a musician strongly influenced by the land of his birth – southern Slovakia. His main instruments were string bass, cimbalom, guitar, and trumpet. This exceptional ability to play almost any instrument he laid his hands on, whether performing in classical or folk music styles, proved a major influence on his three daughters as they grew up. Both of Iva's sisters – her older sister Ida and her younger sister Regina – are professional drama and music performers. She was also featured as an actress in radio, TV and movie productions. Later on, while working full time in theater, she re-kindled her interest in playing violin, an instrument she had set aside in her younger years. After her father's early death, she decided to follow in his professional footsteps as an instrumentalist and by composing her own music. In 1982, Iva started studying with Professor Rudolf Št'astný, the first violinist of the Moravian String Quartet. In the intervening years the violin has become her life's passion and the most inspiring musical instrument in her professional life.

Iva firmly believes that, as playing the violin places extreme demands on musicians, the composer's work depends utterly on commitment and diligence.

## Ivan Palacký

16.07. 20:00 (performance)



Ivan Palacký is a Brno, Czech republic based musician and architect. In the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s he played with various groups and took part in several music projects. At the end of the 1990s he founded the guitar/double bass/bassoon group Slede, zive slede (Herring, live herring) and since 2003 he has performed in an audiovisual duo called Koberce, zaclony/Carpets, Curtain (with VJ Vera Lukaskova). He "writes" a sound diary of his journeys collecting excerpts of stories, weird sounds and various acoustic mistakes. He likes to take part in one-shot improvisational groups or duos (such as with Cremaster (E), Ruth Barbarán (E) and Margarida Garcia (P), Will Guthrie (AUS), Andrea Neumann (D), Klaus Filip (A), Angharad Davies (GB), Steve Beresford (GB), Toshimaru Nakamura (JAP) and Tetuzi Akiyama (JAP) among others), as well as playing solo performances. Since 2005 his main interest has been to dig out sounds from an amplified 1970s Dopleta knitting machine.

## Jaromír Typlt

17.07. 18:00 (performance)

Jaromír Typlt has published numerous books of poetry and prose (e.g., *Opakem o překot, že ne zas až, Stisk*). Since around 1999, he has consciously focused on experimenting with incorporating the written word in other forms of art such as art books, stage performances, audio recording, and short films. His interests as an art historian include art brut, among other subjects.

[www.typlt.cz](http://www.typlt.cz)

## Jeffrey Goldberg

18.07. 11:00 (performance)



Jeffrey Goldberg's teachers include Luise Vosgerchian, Sarah Benson, Leonard Bernstein, Ivan Tcherepnin and Joe Maneri, and he has served on the faculties of Harvard, Boston Arts Academy, The Banff Centre, The Rivers School Conservatory, and New England Conservatory of Music. His improvisations have been featured in concerts and festivals throughout Europe and North America, including Palau de la Música Catalana, the Darmstadt Festival of Contemporary Music, and the Frankfurt Jazzkeller. His compositions range from music used for sound healing to two commissions by the Hannover Opera: an electronic ballet on the life of Marlene Dietrich; and an opera that set a Wagnerian-satire libretto

to klezmer music, and featured the first use of rap on a German opera stage. Dr. Goldberg collaborated with Yo-Yo Ma and Bobby McFerrin in the film "Yo-Yo Ma at Tanglewood," and has been a piano soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Pops. He has served as a vocal coach/conductor with the State Operas of Hannover, Darmstadt, and Chemnitz and as music-director for several Boston-area theatres.

## Joëlle Léandre

17.07. 15:00 (workshop)

17.07. 20:00 (performance)



Joëlle Léandre is one of the dominant figures of the new European music. French double bass player, improviser and composer. Trained in orchestral as well as contemporary music, she has played with l'itinéraire, 2e2m and Pierre Boulez's Ensemble Intercontemporain. Joëlle Léandre has also worked with Merce Cunningham and with John Cage, who has composed especially for her – as have Scelsi, Fénelon, Hersant, Lacy, Campana, Jolas, Clementi and about 40 composers. As well as working in contemporary music, Léandre has played with some of the great names in jazz and improvisation, such as Derek Bailey, Anthony Braxton, George Lewis, Evan Parker, Irene Schweizer, William Parker, Barre Phillips, Pascal Contet, Steve Lacy, Lauren Newton, Peter Kowald, Urs Leimgruber, Mat Maneri, Roy

Campbell, Fred Frith, John Zorn, Mark Naussef, Marilyn Crispell, India Cooke and so many others...

She has written extensively for dance and theater, and has staged a number of multidisciplinary performances. She got the DAAD at Berlin, is welcomed as artist resident at Villa Kujiyama (Kyoto). In 2002, 2004 and 2006, she is Visiting Professor at Mills college, Oakland, CA, Chaire Darius Milhaud, for improvisation and composition. Her work as a composer and a performer, both in solo recitals and a part of ensembles, has put her under the lights of the most prestigious stages of Europe, the Americas and Asia. From 1981 to 2009, Joëlle Léandre has about 150 recordings to her credit.

## Katherine Liberovskaya

18.07. 19:30 (performance)

**K**atherine Liberovskaya is a video and media artist based in Montreal, Canada, and New York City. Involved in experimental video since the 80s, she has produced many single-channel videos, video installation works and video performances which have been presented at a wide variety of artistic venues and events around the world. Since 2001 her work predominantly focuses on collaborations with composers and sound artists notably in live video+sound performance where her live visuals seek to create improvisatory «music» for the eyes. Frequent collaborators include Phill Niblock, Al Margolis/If,Bwana, Leslie Ross, Zanana, Kristin Norderval, Hitoshi Kojo, David Watson, David First and o.blaat (Keiko Uenishi). Since 2003 she has explored improvised video with numerous artists including: Monique Buzzarte, Anne Wellmer, Tom Hamilton, Margarida Garcia, Manuel Mota, Anthony Coleman, Barry Weisblat, Mazen Kerbaj, murmer, André Gonçalves, Giuseppe Ielasi, Alessandro Bossetti, Andre Eric Letourneau, Jason Khan, Jim Bell, Doug Van Nort, among many others. Recent projects have involved: Leslie

Ross, Shelley Hirsch, Chantal Dumas, Richard Garet, Dorit Chrysler, Emilie Mouchous, Erin Sexton, Corinne Rene and Philippe Lauzier, and Guy De Bievre. Recent solo projects include the audiovisual installations «Air-Play» (2013), «Amplifontana» (2012) and «Shines» (2008-09). Concurrently she curates and organizes the Screen Compositions evenings at Experimental Intermedia, NYC, since 2005 and, since 2006, the OptoSonic Tea salons at Diapason, NYC, and in various locations in Europe and elsewhere with OptoSonic Tea On the Road. In 2014 she completed a PhD in art practice entitled «Improvisatory Live Visuals: Playing Images Like a Musical Instrument» at the Université du Québec in Montreal (UQAM).

## Lisa Cay Miller

18.07. 15:30 (performance)



**L**isa Miller is equally comfortable with contemporary classical composition, improvisation and the avant-garde. She is interested in sound and creativity, regardless of genre.

Lisa Miller's compositions have been premiered by the Flat Earth Society, de Bijloke ensemble, 22 strings and a piece of wood (Belgium) the Tetzepi Bigtet (Amsterdam), mmm... (Tokyo), NME, Pianorquesta (Brazil), Quatuor Bozzini (Montreal), Vancouver New Music, Standing Wave, Jesse Zubot, Turning Point Ensemble, Rachel Kiyo Iwaasa and Fran-

çois Houle and Jane Hayes (Vancouver). Miller is the Managing Artistic Director of the NOW Society who proudly presents Vancouver best improvisors. She has produced concerts and multi-media installations (Vancouver New Music, Coastal Jazz and Blues Society, Circus Maximus, and the Western Front Society). Miller has performed with Nicole Mitchell, Butch Morris, John Zorn, Jessika Kenney, Eyvind Kang, Audrey Chen, (USA), Ig Henneman, Wilbert de Joode, Anne La Berge, Michael Moore, Jean Yves Evrard and Joachim Badenhorst, (Europe) Tiago de Mello, Lucas Rodrigues Ferreira, Roldolfo Valente, Marcio Gibson, Mario Del Nunzio and Pianorquesta (Brazil), and in Vancouver with Dylan van der Schyff, Peggy Lee, Jesse Zubot, François Houle, Ron Samworth, and the NOW Society ensembles: orkestra futura and the NOW Orchestra. Her CDs, The lisa miller octet; Sleep Furiously, the music of lisa miller, Q, Q; waterwall and The lisa miller trio; open are available on the greenideas record label and have received rave international reviews.

## Lucie Vítková

18.07.18:00 (performance)



**L**ucie Vítková is a composer, performer and improviser of accordion, harmonica, voice and dance from the Czech Republic. She graduated in accordion performance at Brno Conservatory in 2010 and composition at Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno (CZ) in 2013. During her Master Degree, she studied at Royal Conservatory in The Hague (NL) and at California Institute of the Arts in Valencia (USA). She has studied with Martin Smolka, Jaroslav Št'astný, Martijn Padding, Gillius van Bergijk and Michael Pisaro. Along with her study of music she used to teach tap dance at the Faculty of Theatre of JAMU. She is member of the Ensemble Marijan, Dunami, Brno Improvising Unit, Dust in the Groove and Prague Improvisation Orchestra.

Vítková's work pursues two lines of enquiry: in the compositions she focuses on sonification (compositions based on abstract models derived from physical objects), while her improvisation practice explores characteristics of discrete spaces through the interaction between sound and movement.

Recently, she has become particularly interested in the question of social relationships in music and their implications for the structural organization of musical pieces. This has also become the subject of her doctoral research, in which she explores the work of Christian Wolff.

## Lukas Ligeti

19.07.17:30 (performance)



**L**ukas Ligeti is transcending the boundaries of genre. The Austrian, New-York-City-based composer-percussionist has developed a musical style of his own that draws upon downtown New York experimentalism, contemporary classical music, jazz, electronica, as well as world music, particularly from Africa. Known for his non-conformity and diverse interests, Lukas creates music ranging from the through-composed to the free-improvised, often exploring polyrhythmic/polytempo structures, non-tempered tunings, and non-western elements. Other major sources of inspiration include experimental mathematics, computer technology, architecture and visual art, sociology and politics, and travel. He has also been participating in cultural exchange projects in Africa for the past 15 years.

## Marco Eneidi

17.07.22:15 (performance)

**M**arco Eneidi's career in music began at the age of 20 in Northern California, after having played clarinet for 10 years, playing standards, Tin Pan Alley, Dixieland and Swing music.

After moving to NYC in August 1981 he became quickly involved with the Lower East Side scene of Black Musicians including Jemeel Moondoc, Roy Campbell,

Denis Charles and William Parker. He also at this time began close relationships with Jim Pepper, Butch Morris, Dewey Redman and Don Cherry who he worked with in NYC and regularly rehearsed with. After meeting Bill Dixon in 1984 Marco began a close working relationship with Mr. Dixon for two years. 1992 saw his first working relationship with Cecil Taylor performing in groups ranging from duo to orchestra, a relationship which exists to this day.

Living in Vienna, Austria since 2004, he is Artistic Director of the Neu New York/Vienna Institute of Improvised Music. Current projects include Cosmic Brujo Mutafuka, a Mexican trio and the Mexican/American Jungle Orchestra. Recent concerts around Europe have included Hamid Drake, Paul Lovens, Han Bennik and Black Dot.

## Markus Popp

19.07.15:00 (workshop)

19.07.21:00 (performance)



**M**arkus Popp's early album releases sent shockwaves through the "electronica" landscape in the late 1990's—introducing a unique, new sound and digital production aesthetic. With an undeniable instinct for the pleasantly irritating, the

drastic and the dreamy, Popp pioneered “glitch” and “clicks & cuts”, inspiring and provoking an entire generation of musicians to this day. Popp has continuously refined his signature style in numerous musical collaborations, most notably with the long-running projects MICROSTORIA (duo with Mouse On Mars’ Jan St. Werner) and SO (with Japanese songwriter Eriko Toyoda). Popp has also worked for/with: Björk, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Apparat, Toroise, Mouse on Mars, Warren Suicide, and Squarepusher. He designed his own music software (Ovalprocess, his interactive audio platform, won Prix Ars Electronica), contributed a bonus stage to Tetsuya Mitsuguchi’s visionary video game REZ (Sega/Sony) as well as original sound tracks for contemporary dance pieces, art house movies and TV commercials (Armani, Comme Des Garçons, Prada, Harmony Korine, Amberley Productions and Masako Tanaka).

## Mary Oliver

17.07. 16:30 (performance)

**M**ary Oliver was born in La Jolla, California, and studied at San Francisco State University (Bachelor of Music), Mills College (Master of Fine Arts) and the University of California, San Diego where she received her PhD in 1993 for her research in the theory and practice of improvised music.

She has premiered works by among others, Richard Barrett, John Cage, Chaya Czernowin, Brian Ferneyhough, Joëlle Léandre, Liza Lim, George E. Lewis, Richard Teitelbaum and Iannis Xenakis. Oliver has worked alongside improvising musicians such as Han Bennink, Mark Dresser, Cor Fuhler, Jean-Charles François, Tristan Honsinger, Joëlle Léandre, George E. Lewis, Nicole Mitchell, Andy Moor, Misha Mengelberg, Evan Parker, and Anthony Pateras.

In 1994, she was an artist in residence at Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart where she added, through their generosity, the hardanger fiddle to her instru-

mentarium. For the past twelve years, she has been based in Amsterdam where she has worked locally and internationally with various ensembles such as Instant Composer’s Pool (ICP) Orchestra, Magpie Music and Dance Company, AACM Black Earth Ensemble, Scapino Ballet, Elision Ensemble, MAE, Het National Ballet and Xenakis Ensemble. Currently she teaches at the Hogeschool voor Kunst, Media en Technology and a member of ICP Orchestra, Ammü (with Han Bennink on drums, Johanna Varner on cello and Christofer Varner on trombone) and Magpie Music Dance Company. Recent projects include the 6th Room with light designer Ellen Knops and dancer Michael Schumacher, Trio! with clarinetist François Houle and contrabassist Torsten Muller and a duo Jomo with cellist Johanna Varner.

## Michal Rataj

17.07. 18:00 (performance)



**M**ichal Rataj (1975) is a composer, who works primarily with electroacoustic and instrumental music in the area of live electronics. He has composed music for film (Long Live the Family, The Czech Century), and has created dozens of music and audio compositions for radio plays. Since 2003, he has been the producer of the Radioatéliér premier broadcast series on Czech Radio’s Vltava station. He teaches at NYU Prague and HAMU’s department of composition, and leads international

workshops.

[www.michalrataj.com](http://www.michalrataj.com)

## Morgan O’Hara

16.07. 20:00 (performance)



**M**organ O’Hara (b. Los Angeles 1941) was raised in an international community in post-war Japan. Her practice researches the vital movement of living beings through LIVE TRANSMISSION, a performative drawing process she invented in 1982. O’Hara met John Cage as a twenty year old art student in Los Angeles and his thinking, writings and music have had significant influence on her practice. Her drawings are performed in international performance art festivals; commissioned as site-specific wall drawings; and are in the permanent collections of museums and art institutions in Europe, Asia and the US.

Important residencies include MacDowell Colony, New Hampshire; Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Macau Museum of Art, China; Djerassi Foundation, Woodside, California; Nha San Studio Hanoi; New Space Arts Foundation Hue; Zero Space Saigon, Vietnam; Aomori Contemporary Art Center, Japan; Guapamacataro, Michoacan, Mexico; Operation Table, Japan.

Recipient of fellowships from Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Gottleib Foundation, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, among others. Her work is repre-

sented in public collections (selected): National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, California; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Cranbrook Art Museum, Detroit, Michigan; Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock, Arkansas; Weatherspoon Gallery, Greensboro, North Carolina; Hood Museum of Art, New Hampshire; Czech National Gallery, Prague; Moravska Galerie, Brno, Czech Republic; Macau Art Museum, Macau, China. Her permanent site specific wall drawings can be found in Macau, China (2); Kobe, Japan (9), and Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Publications include five volumes of LIVE TRANSMISSION drawings. O'Hara lives in New York and works internationally.

### Pasi Mäkelä

17.07. 19:30 (performance)



**P**asi Mäkelä is a Finnish conceptual artist, performer, choreographer and musician, partially based in Prague. His performances are largely based on Butoh, the Japanese avant-garde dance which arose in the early sixties. Butoh is distinctive for its extremely physical approach to the experience of dance. Pasi has developed a Finnish version of Butoh dance. Over recent years, he has actively participated in many varied performances and musical projects in Finland, the Czech Republic, Germany, and Austria.

### Pauline Oliveros

17.07. 20:00 (performance)

18.07. 09:30 (keynote speech)

19.07. 10:45 (workshop)



**P**auline Oliveros is a senior figure in contemporary American music. Her career spans fifty years of boundary dissolving music making. In the '50s she was part of a circle of iconoclastic composers, artists, poets gathered together in San Francisco. Recently awarded the John Cage award for 2012 from the Foundation of Contemporary Arts, Oliveros is Distinguished Research Professor of Music at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY, and Darius Milhaud Artist-in-Residence at Mills College. Pauline Oliveros' life as a composer, performer and humanitarian is about opening her own and others' sensibilities to the universe and facets of sounds. Since the 1960's she has influenced American music profoundly through her work with improvisation, meditation, electronic music, myth and ritual. Pauline Oliveros is the founder of «Deep Listening,» which she describes as a way of listening in every possible way to everything possible to hear no matter what you are doing.

### Petr Kotík

18.07. 18:30 (performance)



**P**etr Kotík, composer, flutist and conductor, was born in 1942 in Prague and educated at the Prague Conservatory, the Prague Music Academy, and the Vienna Music Academy. He has been living in the United States since 1969 where he founded the S.E.M. Ensemble in 1970, devoted to the performance of new music. As a composer, Kotík's aesthetic derives from the Cageian tradition. In the 1960s he began using chance operation and graphic notation. By the 1970s a new and distinctive musical style began to emerge. Crystallized in his magnum opus and best known work, *Many, Many Women*, a mammoth six-hour composition with a text by Gertrude Stein, this style is characterized by parallel motion, stark counterpoint, and post-minimalist repetitive structures. Kotík has proven to be an ardent and tireless champion of experimental music. He has researched, lectured on, realized and was the first to record the little known musical compositions of Marcel Duchamp.



## Phill Niblock

18.07. 19:30 (performance)

**P**hill Niblock is an intermedia artist using music, film, photography, video and computers. He makes thick, loud drones of music, filled with microtones of instrumental timbres which generate many other tones in the performance space. Simultaneously, he presents films / videos which look at the movement of people working, or computer driven black and white abstract images floating through time. He was born in Indiana in 1933. Since the mid-60's he has been making music and intermedia performances which have been shown at numerous venues around the world among which: The Museum of Modern Art; The Wadsworth Atheneum; the Kitchen; the Paris Autumn Festival; Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels; Institute of Contemporary Art, London; Akademie der Kunst, Berlin; ZKM; Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard; World Music Institute at Merkin Hall NYC. Since 1985, he has been the director of the Experimental Intermedia Foundation in New York where he has been an artist/member since 1968. He is the producer of Music and Intermedia presentations at EI since 1973 (about 1000 performances) and the curator of EI's XI Records label. In 1993 he was part of the formation of an Experimental Intermedia organization in Gent, Belgium - EI v.z.w. Gent - which supports an artist-in-residence house and installations there. Phill Niblock's music is available on the XI, Moikai, Mode and Touch labels. A previous DVD of films and music is available on the Extreme label.

## Prague Improvisation Orchestra

16.07. 21:00 (performance)



**P**rague Improvisation Orchestra was founded in the summer of 2012 by Petr Vrba and George Cremaschi, PIO is focused on contemporary improvisation practice – working with both free and conducted improvisation, open scores, and graphic notation and inspired by people like Sun Ra, Mauricio Kagel, Scratch Orchestra, Butch Morris, Splitter Orchestra and others using large groups of musicians in unconventional ways.

## Roger Kleier

18.07. 20:30 (performance)

**R**oger Kleier is a composer, guitarist, and improviser who began playing electric guitar at age thirteen after discovering Captain Beefheart and Jimi Hendrix on the radio airwaves of Los Angeles. He studied composition at North Texas State University and the University of Southern California, and has developed a unique style that draws equally from improvisation, contemporary classical music, and the American guitar traditions of blues, jazz, and rock. Much of his compositional work involves the development of a broader vocabulary for the electric guitar through the use of extended techniques and digital sound manipulation. Roger describes his approach to composing:

“Having grown up in Los Angeles, I’ve always had an attraction to noir ambience. My music has often been inspired by the dark and hidden experiences of life, such as urban chaos, cold and icy winters, empty alleyways, deserted subway tunnels, dank Los Angeles River aqueducts, and even an occasional quiet pool of sinister beauty”.

Roger has collaborated with Annie Gosfield, Carl Stone, Marc Ribot, Elliott Sharp, Fred Frith, Chris Cutler, Joan Jeanrenaud, David Moss, Laurie Anderson, Phill Niblock, John Zorn, Ikue Mori, David Krakauer, Brian Chase, Billy Martin, Stan Ridgway, and many others. With various ensembles Roger has toured extensively throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia. His discography includes CDs on the Tzadik, CRI, Intakt, Atavistic, Wergo, ReR Megacorp, EMF, and Geffen labels. His three solo CDs are “KlangenBang”, released on the Rift label, “Deep Night, Deep Autumn” released by the Starkland label, and «The Night Has Many Hours» on the Innova label.

## Stratocluster

19.07. 22:00 (performance)



**S**tratocluster is a group that started its career in the summer of 2013. In 2013, they released an album on Czech alternative label Signals from Arkaim and played several concerts which projected them onto the forefront of the Czech improvisation scene.

sing scene. Apart from the vs. Interpretation festival, they have performed at the Wakushoppu concert series at Café v Lese and the Ruins of Intolerance festival, among others, and will perform at the Festival Alternativa in the Autumn; that is also when they begin work on their new album, conceived as a radio play, planned for release in the spring on the poli5 label. Thanks to the many different individualities present in the group, Stratocluster presents a mix of approaches to improvisation: members have backgrounds from noise and electronica to jazz and classical music, they use electronic and live instruments, idiomatic and non-idiomatic improvisation, samples, and lately, multi-media approaches not just restricted to the audiovisual, but also including textual and verbal improvisation and movement-based or theatrical elements.

## Tomáš Procházka

17.07. 19:30 (performance)

**T**omáš Procházka, aka Federsel, is a musician, improviser, sound artist and performer. He is a member of theaters Cakes and Puppets and HANDA GOTE research & development and bands B4, Gurun Gurun, Radio Royal, Federsel&Mäkelä, Uranus, Wabi Experience and also performs solo under name Federsel. He works with field recordings, media archeology, all kinds of electric and acoustic instruments as well as purely electronic systems, mostly based on analog electronics. In his solo work uses feedbacks, electromagnetic interference and parasitic sounds. He performs his version of no input mixing board, prepared guitar and amplified objects or works with various found media as well as instruments,

not necessarily used the proper way. In theater, he has been doing research work in the field of post spectacular, antimimetic theater and the integration of science and technology in performing arts. He writes for magazines World and Theatre, A2, HIS Voice.

He is co-founder of Wakushoppu concert series.

On his own blog Endemit Archives he tries to collect pieces from local deep underground, freak-out, outsider music, plain-weird music, all kinds of antimusic activities and strictly-home-recording audio. In 2014, together with his colleague Pasi Mäkelä he launched microlabel METEORISMO.

## Vanessa Tomlinson

17.07. 14:00 (performance)

**V**anessa Tomlinson is an Australian percussionist active in the fields of solo percussion, contemporary chamber music, improvisation, installation and composition.

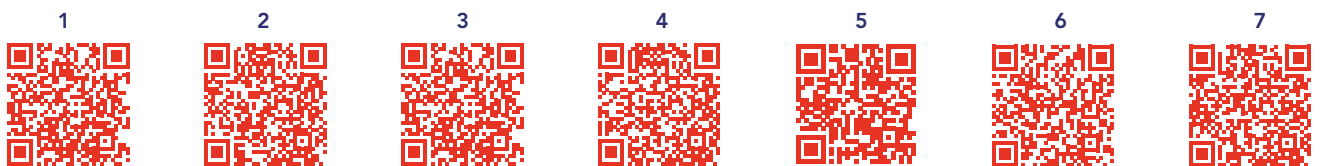
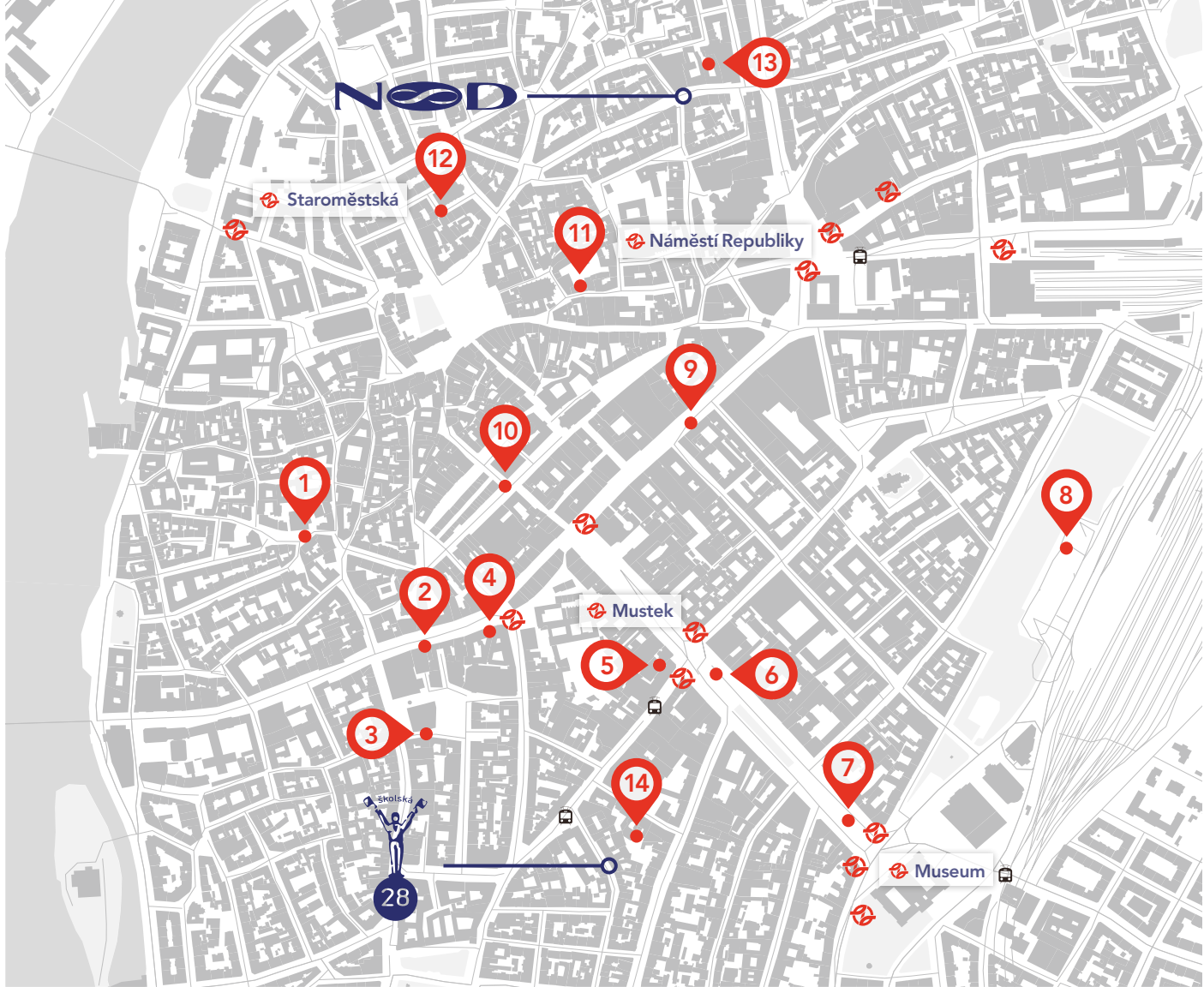
She has performed at festivals around the world such as Wien Modern, London Jazz Festival, Green Umbrella Series LA, Bang-on-a-Can Marathon NY, The Adelaide Festival of Arts, and Shanghai Festival. She is the recipient of 2 Green Room Awards, the 2011 APRA/AMC Award for Excellence by an organization or individual, and has been awarded artist residencies through Asialink (University of Melbourne), Civitella Ranieri (NY/Italy), Banff (Canada) and Bundanon (NSW).

She has recorded on numerous labels including Mode Records, Tzadik, ABC Classics, Etcetera, Clocked Out and Innova.

Vanessa is co-founder and artistic director of Clocked Out, one of Australia's most important and eclectic musical organisations, artistic director of percussion quartet Early Warning System and the percussionist for The Australian Art Orchestra.

She was a founding member of percussion group red fish blue fish, and is also founder and director of Ba Da Boom, the in-residence percussion ensemble at Queensland Conservatorium, and the training ground for a wide cross-section of the percussion community in Australia.

Vanessa studied at the University of Adelaide, Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg and received her Masters and Doctorate from the University of California, San Diego where she worked closely with Steven Schick and George Lewis. In addition Vanessa has studied Sichuan Opera with Master Zhong Kaichi in Chengdu, China. She is currently Associate Professor in Music at Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University.



The open portal **sonicity** contains hundreds of sound probes and «postcards» beginning with the centre and ending with the ring of Prague peripheries.  
[www.sonicity.cz](http://www.sonicity.cz)

Our recordings can't always be necessarily «positive»; the aim is to build an open project and the archive reveals a spectrum of personal «listening». It is possible to place recorded sounds also directly into a virtual cartography of Prague and make the map audible by various recordings and interpretations. Project Sonicity registers Prague soundscapes and their continuous transfiguration.





**George Lewis**

# A mode of being in the world

**The Agosto Foundation interviewed composer, musicologist and improviser George Lewis in his Columbia University office in New York in December 2013.**

**You have been in New York City at Columbia for a while and we're curious about what you've been doing. Could you tell us about what you've been working on?**

**GL:** One project is the two-volume Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies, co-edited with Benjamin Piekut, who's at Cornell University. I'm calling it "massively interdisciplinary." That is to say, it's not primarily musical. A number of our authors are writing from political science or anthropology, literary studies. There are philosophers, theater people, others working outside of musical domains – new media theorists, neuroscientists, economists. Many of them do take music as an important way of thinking about improvisation, but then they add value to the way that musicians can think about other fields. We had to think hard about what the field is like today, and if we wanted to see a field of critical improvisation studies and what it would be about. Improvisation becomes for us a mode of being in the world, something that is constitutive of what it means to be a human being.

**How do you suppose that this collection will change perceptions about what the nature of improvisation is?**

**GL:** Well the first thing that it does – and this is from the standpoint of creating a field – it allows scholars and artists who want to be associated with the field of improvisation a source of legitimation-- a lever and a place to stand, so to speak, in the Archimedean sense. So I used to joke that some young assistant professor who was interviewing for a job can just carry these volumes with them. And they'd say, "Well, what are you doing, you want to study improvisation, what's that?" And they'd plop these huge volumes, twelve hundred pages, sixty authors, on the desk and say, "Well, this is what it is."

**How do you suppose that this knowledge will shift other disciplines and ways of thinking?**

**GL:** I think that it becomes inevitable. We've seen quite a bit of it already. We've been able to question a lot of the eternal verities surrounding the way people think about improvisation; for example, that it's always in the moment – it isn't. It can take place over really long time scales. For example we were looking at Paul Richards's work on farming by indigenous people in Sierra Leone and the processes that take place over very long time scales – at least a year to work with seeds, to work with technologies of what they call shifting cultivation. So these things are improvisations that do happen in the moment, at the moment they're working. But then there's this long-term sense of working with the environment. There are real consequences to what happens in the improvisation that can result in starvation for you and your family and your community if you don't get something done. And then you're dealing with circumstances that can't be controlled, it's not the environment of a club or a concert hall, or a loft, or a performance space, or a gallery, any of those spaces – the ubiquity of spaces in which music takes place. It's the world of weather, the world of soil, the world of war. This is something that even someone like John Cage didn't really take into account.

**"There is an implicit fear of improvisation — of it being out of control, unwieldy, unstructured."**

But what does "unstructured" really mean? Is there really an "unstructured" event or "unstructured" situation or "unstructured" entity or property? For us there really isn't. What we want to think about are the temporal modalities of structuring: When does it arise? Who does it? When people use the word "structured" in this context, what they really mean is "planned in advance," but now there are people in artificial

intelligence studies working on improvisation who basically say that for most events, planning too far in advance is kind of a waste of time. People don't work in that way. They might plan, but then you get to the moment and the plan has to be the backdrop for the creative action that's performed at that moment. And finally, I just said "creative action." By "creative action" I don't necessarily mean art making. What this kind of work shows us is that pretty much everybody is creative. If you can't create, you can't survive.

**"So we have to look at more quotidian models of what creativity is, and not these sort of majoritarian models of, it's creative if fifty people can use it or if "nobody has seen it before," these kinds of heroic originality models that lots of people are questioning now. "**

We're looking at more of an everyday, much more prosaic model of creativity. I think I remember Evan Parker, the saxophonist, saying something like, "Well what I'm doing now in playing for you, is everything that I want to be seen doing in public." What that means to me is basically that this is what I do all the time. We don't have to look at it as some heightened set of consciousnesses that we need to draw on." I like that kind of prosaic approach to improvisation, not least because it plays against standard art world or artist strategies of legitimation that go back to, I don't know, Paganini. You exceptionalize yourself by claiming that you are a person with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal people. A lot of those strategies have been impediments to understanding how improvisation works in terms of creating and enacting communities. In philosophy we've had one of the other signal contributions of the book, from Lydia Goehr, who wasn't really writing about improvisation at all, she was writing about musical works. Then she suddenly developed a lot of new ideas about improvisation which, the essay hasn't even been published yet, and already people are citing it and quoting. Since then she's been giving talks on improvisation around the world. So I think that ends up being a success for us, when we start to migrate outside of the world of music into the rest of the world. And that has implications for how music can affect the public discussion.

**I think what you're proposing is that the improvisatory moment is not extraneous to how we exist as people – making things or just being in our daily life. Is that correct?**

**GL:** Well it's not extraneous at all, no; it's totally embedded in how we live.

**And so it's kind of a radical way of thinking about how we live our lives?**

**GL:** Well, it depends on your standpoint. I have my seminar here on theorizing improvisation as a musicologist, and I brought in the Reverend Peter Heltzel [who's here at vs. Interpretation] who has written a book called *Resurrection City – A Theology of Improvisation*. There turns out to be a whole group of theologians working on the idea of God as improviser. And that turns out to be quite a radical discussion. I mean, I don't go to theological conferences or anything, but apparently from what Peter says, when this whole God-as-improviser thing turns up, people say, "Well, that's just not Christian." So you can see that this can be very radical. And so one of the chapters of his book is called "Jesus, the Jewish Improviser." You know what I mean! And of course, his work, like a lot of improvisation studies, is very influenced by music. One of the touchstones of the last part of the book is the fourth movement of John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*, where Coltrane actually performs a poem that he wrote himself, a devotional poem.

In the '90s for example, the business school community began studying improvisation. They developed something – believe it or not, it was called the "jazz paradigm." They started taking ideas about jazz and folding them into the emerging organizational sciences. If you want to think about how organizations operate, how change occurs, how even fields like economics – we have an economist writing for our volume, for example, Clyde Reed, the bassist, who's actually retired now from the Economics Department at Simon Fraser, whose work has been combining economics and improvised music. I'd never seen anything like that before. So we were looking specifically for ways to challenge fields along the lines of contingency, dialoguing with the moment, and thinking over extended time-scales all at once – our new model of what improvisation is, as distinct from the old model, where we're going to make everyone into artists, making art is good, [and] if we can't fix your healthcare system we can send you an artist...that sort of thing. You know, that sort of noblesse oblige-type approach. So instead of that, it's a means, I think, toward radical transformation of societies, or new ways to think about societies.

**So how do you help people who have been invested improvisers, musically speaking, rethink how they see themselves? What is their place in society? Is it just to practice all day long and come out and then show the world what they do all day? Or is it for them to move into new domains themselves?**

**GL:** Improvisers are probably the most invested of artists in developing new models of themselves. The reason they have to do it is because of the generally marginalized position of much experimental music more broadly. I like to say that if a subaltern can't speak he or she has to listen. And so the opening-up

of the listening facility, the necessity for paying attention and making sense of the environment and for dialogue with the environment, that's what improvisers are best at. You know, when we're improvising right now in this conversation or any kind of moment in which we're conducting our lives, we have to pay attention to our surroundings and to very subtle cues about environments. And improvisers, improvising musicians, once they realize that this is something that they know how to do probably better than anybody else, then the next step is to hold up a mirror to society and say, "This is what, you know, you're actually doing." And this is what I tried to do in my scholarship for musicians themselves. With my book about the AACM and all that, basically, it held up a mirror to the AACM and the people around the organization. Some people cried when they read it. They said things like, "We never thought anybody would talk about us.

They talked about the old jazzers and they talked about a bunch of people we'd never heard of, but nobody talked about us. And what we did was pretty darn good, wasn't it?" And I said, "Yep, it was." And so that right away gives us a sense of potential transformation, the possibilities of transformation, so I'm looking for that.

**How would you chart your own process of how you've come from this trombonist/ computer-musician/improviser/scholar world and shifting and morphing into that composerly world? I'm curious about how you think about yourself as composer/scholar. Can you give us some light on that?**

**GL:** You know, building computers that improvise has been kind of fundamental to my emerging views on improvisation. What does it mean for a computer or other machine to improvise? And can you really call what they do improvisation? Or is it just a really fast composition that is created in the moment? And what does "in the moment" mean to a machine that can do zillions of operations per second, versus us, who operate in 1/15th of a second time-slices? It gets you into fundamentally different notions of what time means in our lives and the role of time in improvisation. And then it challenges presumptions of western music-very vernacular ones such as, "improvisation means it's not written down." Well, the computer can play all the music and write it all down in the same time! So that preconception and a bunch of others just fall away. What's left are just a few fundamentals. Machine intelligence is basically an improvising intelligence, just like ours. If it's intelligence – if it's not just a garage door that can do, you know, whatever. But if it's making choices and responding to conditions and dealing with uncertain situations, like the Mars Rover, that's my model of an improvising machine. First of all, the machines don't know they're making music. You know, they're manipulating data and we hear it as musical or we choose to, or we choose to frame it as music. In some sense, calling a machine an improviser is a political decision.

It's not some big essence that's sitting there. So that draws you to think about questioning other kinds of essences that we're pleased, or we've heretofore been pleased to believe, animate what it means to be a composer or an improviser, or these kind of socially constituted fields of practice.

For me, music history is imprinted on the musical body--that is, your body or mine or whoever is doing the performing. They're performing history, they're performing their own history, they're performing what they know, learn, experiences felt. They're performing their culture, they're performing their backgrounds, all that is imprinted on the body when you go to play a piece of some kind. And so in writing music for people, I realized that I'm writing music for historically and culturally constituted bodies. So I don't feel compelled to tell them in the middle of that, "Well, at this point, you can just improvise." I just don't do it. I say, "I'm going to write everything in as much detail as I possibly can." In other words, a dialogue between the score and the body. That's the medium of the kind of composition I'm interested in right now. And it's not to say that I wouldn't be interested in something else. Or that I don't regard other things as being compositions. But within the full range of what constitutes a composition – maybe it can be Robert Ashley drinking a fifth of scotch and going on stage and screaming into a microphone and calling that a composition, The Wolfman, you know--it's a famous piece, right, with a score. That's one model of composition.

And at the other end there's this sort of, you know, it's like bookkeeping. OK, it's an orchestra piece and everyone has the same dot, and you're all going dot-dot-dot-dot-dot. And then the second violinist says, "Well, I don't have my dot, you know, Maestro, where's my dot?" So that 4 sort of thing where you have to keep up with where the dots are and where the dashes are, and make sure that's all done. And so that's the kind of detail. I'm amazed at how medieval it is in some ways. But I'm also astonished at the results – particularly with the people we have playing today. It's amazing what these people can do, like Vanessa Tomlinson [also here at vs. Interpretation] playing Bone Alphabet by Brian Ferneyhough. Brian Ferneyhough starts it out – Steve Schick spends 1,200 hours memorizing the piece! Vanessa, she's a graduate student, she plays it, and it's probably an undergraduate test piece now, like "Giant Steps" or something. One day it will be a high school test piece, "Oh, you know, Bone Alphabet, you gotta play that." So the goalposts constantly move in terms of the virtuosity of the performers. So what I'm trying to do basically as a composer – and this is where I get into the moment – I'm interested in creating musically memorable, evocative moments. I'm really not interested in global form. I'm definitely interested in non-teleological spaces. I want people listening to my music to catch the bus and go along for the ride and get off whenever they want. Like those tour buses in New York, you know, hop on, hop off.

[Interview conducted by Dana Reason, December 12, 2013, New York City.]

## A B S T R A C T S

**Thursday 17.7.**

**Paper session 1A (11:00 – 12:30)**

Chaired by Miloš Vojtěchovský

Teatro

**Jason Robinson**

**Improvisation and Telematics: Toward an Understanding of Latency and Interactivity in Networked Performance.**

In recent years, an increasing number of performances take place that involve musicians distributed across two or more sites linked in real time using specialized audio and video networking technologies on the Internet. Such performances go by several names—telematics, networked music, distributed performance, net music—and strike a revealing balance between remarkable new aesthetic and technological possibilities and the “believable,” that is, the boundaries at which certain technical limitations push against deeply held assumptions about musical performance (and, by extension, improvisation). One such limitation is latency, a kind of time delay intrinsic to all networked communication. Research suggests that the presence of more than fifty milliseconds of latency between two or more performers limits their ability to play in synchronous time together, a threshold often crossed in telematic performance.

The use of improvisation in telematics, however, further complicates the impact of latency on performance and accentuates the complicated distinctions and similarities between co-located, traditional performance and networked performance. Drawing examples from Virtual Tour 2013 (a multi-site networked performance involving musicians in California, Massachusetts, and New York, in the United States, and Zurich, Switzerland), I illustrate the impact of latency on two distinct forms of improvisation used in networked performance: “open” improvisation (in a rubato tempo without a predetermined synchronous “beat” or time structure) and “groove-oriented” improvisation (with a synchronous “beat” or time structure). I bring together two different temporal frameworks from traditional co-located performance—microtiming (via Vijay Iyer) and participatory discrepancies (via Charles Keil and Steven Feld)—to examine the

impact of latency on telematic improvisation. My conclusion is rather surprising: both the aesthetic strategies and the “believable” in telematic improvisation recast perspectives derived from traditional co-located performance, thus reflecting larger, more deeply held assumptions about embodiment, communication, and interactivity in improvisation.

A saxophonist, composer, and scholar, **Jason Robinson** (PhD, UC San Diego) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Music at Amherst College (with affiliations in Black Studies and Film & Media Studies). His teaching and research focuses on jazz, improvised music, African diasporic music, and interactive music technologies. His current book project, “(Re)Sounding the African Diaspora,” investigates the role of improvisation in collaborations involving African American and continental African musicians.

**Ian Mikyska**

**Lines and Sounds: Hermeneutics of Multimedia Improvisation**

In this presentation, I propose an immediate interpretive approach to multimedia improvisation, specifically involving sonic and visual media, based on Nicholas Cook’s work on theory of multimedia and Lawrence Kramer’s approach to interpretation. The presentation takes the form of a lecture-performance of approximately 45 minutes, with approximately half the time being occupied by improvised performances by Stratocuster, a Prague-based improvising sextet.

I take as a basic starting point Cook’s use of metaphorical mapping as a basic process in multimedia. He describes the relationships in which different media can exist, and I extend his thinking to the relationship between the subjectivities of the individual improvisers.



Jean Jacques Nattiez describes analysis of music as pertaining to either the poietic, neutral or esthetic level, and I propose a model of multimedia improvisation which treats every improviser as a poietic force, the end result therefore being a combination of more than two continua which can – but don't have to – enter into the relationships described by Cook. I also expand on how this model might prove useful for forms of interpretation and analysis that don't prioritise the composer above all else, as it engenders a way of thinking about interpretation of multi-poietic productions that could be extended to traditionally notated music.

**Ian Mikyska** is a composer, improviser and writer with Czech roots, currently living and working between London and Prague. His main interests, both artistic and academic, lie in the connection between music and meaning, other media, and relational aspects of artistic and non-artistic practice. As might be expected, he has worked in a variety of media, from pure music (commissions from the Ostrava Days festival, CoMA Summer Music and Strings of Autumn Festival among others), through theatrical performances (productions with Blood, Love & Rhetoric Theatre, Akanda Theatre and others, as both composer, author and director) to purely text or graphic based work (graphical and musical poems set to be published in *Psí vino* and *VLAK*). In 2014, he co-founded the inter-arts collective *hra94* (*game94*), which takes as the basis of its program intermedia and collective improvisation, as well as serving a platform that endorses smaller and more specifically oriented projects or collectives such as *Stratocluster*. *Hra94* is currently working on editing its first feature-length film, shot at an all-night participative performance evening that took place in Prague in June 2014. He studies with James Weeks at the Guildhall School of Music, and is currently spending a year in Prague working on theatrical projects and several commissions. He is generously supported by the Guildhall Trust and the Strings of Autumn Music Festival.

### Christopher Williams

**Long-Term Improvisation, Groundwave Rondo, and The Barcelona Chronicles**

Musical improvisation, according to conventional wisdom, is about the moment: the spontaneous, realtime, and unforeseen in the course of performance. However as research by Benson (2003), Lash (2011), and Peters (forthcoming) has shown, improvisation can also occur throughout processes of “preparation” in instrumental practice, group rehearsal, and even organization and presentation. In my experience as a composer-performer, the connection between these “out-of-time” constraints and “in-time” creation can be more radical still. Offstage and onstage improvisation may not only be analogous but continuous – woven together in a long-term improvisation that comprises many performances, pieces, and/ or life itself. The presentation will explore this notion by way of two examples:

My solo *Groundwave Rondo* is a series of pieces for contrabass and “tape,” each version of which is made (as often as possible) on the way to the gig. While in the train, I improvise for 15 minutes

with an AM radio and record it. The radio signal is obliterated by interferences from the train motor, overhead cable, and onboard electronics, turning my receiver into a sort of synthesizer which can be modulated by turning the frequency dial. The recording is played back unedited in the concert — without my having heard it — and we perform a duet together.

Derek Bailey's *The Barcelona Chronicles*, a series of recordings made in 2005, documents the legendary guitarist's “new approach to his instrument, whilst dealing with the complex and progressive limitations caused by Motor Neurone disease.” As muscular degeneration reduced his left-hand mobility and made holding a plectrum impossible, Bailey developed a new, sparser way of playing using his thumb. “Here was someone for whom obstacles were occasions for necessary creativity.”

**Christopher Williams** is a wayfarer on the body-mind continuum. His medium is music. As a contrabassist, Williams has collaborated with Derek Bailey, Justin Bennett, Compagnie Ouïe/Dire, Charles Curtis, LaMonte Young's Theatre of Eternal Music, Robin Hayward (*Reidemeister Move*), Hans W. Koch, and dancer Martin Sonderkamp; and with composers such as Chris Adler, Benjamin Carson, Charlie Morrow, Ana-Maria Rodriguez, Marc Sabat, and Erik Ulman. As a curator, he organized over 70 concerts of contemporary and experimental music in Barcelona between 2003-2009 with *Associació Musical l'Embut*. He currently co-curates *Certain Sundays*, a monthly salon in Berlin, and participates in the Berlin Improvisation Research Group.

### Reinhard Gagel

**OHO! - Offhandopera - a model for creating musical forms in the course of performance.**

OHO! Offhandopera is the name of a format for singers and instrumentalists to invent and perform an opera offhand without preparation and rehearsals. It took place during the last two years in university of music and performing arts, vienna and especially in exploratorium berlin, center for improvised music and creative music pedagogics in berlin. The most interesting thing is that it is a way to create improvised music in the sense of an artistic production, not only as a jam session. The participants, professional artists and laymen are not chosen or casted, they decide to come to the performance and join the production. It works under special conditions, these are:

- » there is a libretto or text given, selected and arranged by myself in order to organize the musical course. The texts are short plays, poems, extracts from theatre pieces and short stories. Especially dadaistic, surrealist and soundart poetry is used;
- » no musical notes and styles are prescribed, all will be invented during the session;
- » I function as conductor or rather as animator, to create the atmosphere and concentration of the performance;

- » I do this by hand signals, by body gesture, by words, spoken during the performance, and operate the formal things: i.e. who and how long s.o. will sing or play or in which mood and dynamics. I do this to support the singers and instrumentalists not to work out my own expectations;
- » the main thing is the creation of music by the participants of the opera and the emerging of ideas during the about 1.5 hours lasting performance.

In my opinion OHO! Offhandopera is a model for collective creation and an artistical production of an actual music theatre between the styles and a functioning collaboration between professional and non-professional musicians. In each performance there are 10 to 15 participants, but the final performance of an OHO! opera in Vienna is joined by more than 30 students.

I will speak about the organization, the arrangement and the technique to support people in creating their own improvised music and will show some recordings and videos. I take the OHO! as a model of cultural participation across the borders between musicians

and so called nonprofessional-musicians, and laymen. The latter are authentic and obsessed by music and often their way of singing/playing is unusual and fresh. In exploratorium berlin, an artistic lab for improvisation, we offer a lot of open stages and other forms of improvised music production to foster creative music production.

**Reinhard Gagel**, Ph.D., can look back on long engagement with free improvisation, an engagement which reached a high point in his dissertation «The Complex Creative Moment: Improvisation as a social art». Gagel is a professional improvisation musician active in artistic improvisation, leading several own ensembles, working with well-known international improvisation musicians (among others Malcolm Goldstein (Canada), Burkhard Stangl (Austria), Mirio Cosottini (Italy)) and publishing broadcast and cd-recordings with his own production company (Ensemble Foliafolie Cologne). He is also an artistic educationalist with broad experience in leadership of improvisation ensembles and as a lecturer for musical communication at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. He is working in art-based research at the exploratorium berlin, an institute for performing, educating and researching improvised music and art.

## Thursday 17.7.

Paper session 1B (11:00 — 12:30)

Chaired by David Rothenberg

### Video NoD

#### **Michael Gardiner**

**Spectral Fizz and the Image of extended Perceptions:  
Theory qua Improvisation.**

The haze of a thousand dying cicadas; coiling summer winds; half-tints of a Miles solo from Kind of Blue looped and played backwards atop the stoic opening of Bartok's first string quartet; pulse-trains of scattered crickets, each attempting to pinpoint a quadrant of the landscape, but all locations become masked by the cloud of virtually endless information in the atmospheric swarm of accumulating noise; a 60 hertz electrical buzz; the effervescent spectral fizz of ginger ale and the perceiving/unperceiving mind discerning the event—sound itself is transversal, omnidirectional, overlapped. It bleeds and blends locations and distances.

When information loses its body, the "autonomous subject is up for grabs" (Hayles, 1999). When musical analysis loses its body

(the autonomous musical object), it assumes a multisensible, improvisational gesture. At this point, a suborganizational, interconnected, participative pattern or "tic-system" wins out over any specific material expression. [In *Fanged Noumena* (2011), Nick Land describes tic-systems, or assemblies of functionally interconnected microstimulus as, "systems entirely intractable to subject/object segregation, or to rigid disciplinary typologies."] The sound of the dying cicada loses its epistemological shell.

Theory qua improvisation counteracts the temptation toward reduction—suppressing the spectrum of ideas too quickly when approaching a topic—and replaces it with a desire for heterogeneous considerations. In this paper I use the phrase, "the field of music theory" quite literally to mean an ambient surface or screen (of the kind that might organize a Rauschenberg "combine", for example); the simultaneous preparation and perception of an abstract assemblage and its role in the sketching of a theoretical territory. A screen

become the image of thought, and a field its horizon.

Such a position holds onto a detailed hearing of sonic environments without succumbing to reductionist tendencies, thereby directing our counter-materialist qualia toward a space of design, a space that explores the exploded, orthographic view of the gap (the interference pattern, the noise) that exists between a sound wave and the mind's perception of a sound. For there is a crucial distinction to be made between "raw" acoustic data (which already includes a psychophysical layer of remove, insofar as an individual brain always filters data) and "what we are aware of" in the perception of that data. Or, more simply, what we are aware of in perception, which A.N. Whitehead defined as nature. Isabelle Stengers, in her discussion of Whitehead's Concept of Nature, elaborates; "A contrast insinuates itself [blocking the pedagogical series of explanations], between the words immediately available for saying 'what' we perceive, and the question, open for its part, of what we are aware of 'in perception'" In my theoretical model, perception becomes largely a matter of open attention and discernment within an indefinite, transfinite constellation; an "arbitrary distribution in the midst of what we are aware of".

**Michael Gardiner** is Assistant Professor of Music Theory at the University of Mississippi. His research interests include timbral morphology, the intersections of theological and musical space, Japanese noh drama, and challenges to the musical work. His articles have been published in *Current Musicology*, *Asian Music*, and *Sonus*. He is currently writing an analytic monograph on the *Ordo Virtutum* of Hildegard von Bingen.

### Cat Hope

**Scoring for Music Improvisation - The potential of digital graphic notations for improvising ensembles.**

This paper examines the range of improvisation possibilities in animated, graphic and text scores that are made, presented and interpreted on a computer. Computing offers new ways to communicate different types of musical ideas, facilitating a new variety of starting points and guides for improvisation. Moving away from paper pages to a computer screen or projected image enables scores that can easily feature wide range of colour, movement, aleatoric components, the co-ordination of multiple parts and control of electronics. The idea of 'improvising from a score' has been developed - and challenged - considerably by the potential of computers, and is examined through different approaches.

It is well known that improvisatory techniques for musicians can span from completely free and spontaneous performances to guided structures. This paper focuses on the different ways notation as a way to guide improvisation, including the way it can be made or adapted on a computer, examining trends in animated and graphic notation, as well as the impact and ongoing development of text for the communication of musical ideas. Further, a range of techniques

for the presentation and interpretation of scores for works with a large component of improvisation will be discussed. This includes the potential for networking multiple computers and techniques that enable improvising electronic artists to share score interpretation with acoustic instruments.

The paper examines works and processes that range from the authors town to a wide variety of other composers across different musical styles that include jazz, concrete poetry, pop and noise. Exemplar works that have been developed in conjunction with ensembles such as The London Improvisers Orchestra (UK), Slátur (Iceland) the Chicago Modern Orchestra (USA) and the authors own Decibel New Music group (Australia) demonstrate a range of techniques as applied to different ensemble scale and improvisatory expertise.

**Cat Hope** is a composer, sound artist and musician based in Western Australia. Cat's composition and performance practices engage elements of low frequency sound, drone, noise, graphic notation and improvisation. She has been a songwriter with some 6 albums to her credit, playing in pop bands in Germany, Italy and Australia in the 1990s. In 2013 she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to study digital graphic music notations internationally as well undertake residencies at the Visby International Composers Centre, Sweden, Civitella, Italy and the Peggy Glanville Hicks House in Sydney in 2014. She is the director of the award winning new music ensemble Decibel who have toured internationally and released her compositions, and is an academic at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts.

### Marcel Cobussen

**Technology as an Actant in the Field of Musical Improvisation**

- I. Central in my thinking on improvisation are two concepts: complexity and singularity.
- II. Improvisation is, in my opinion, a complex event in which many actants (the term is coined by Bruno Latour), many actors, factors, and vectors, both human and non-human, converge and interact. It is this interaction which will take center stage in this presentation. Examining improvisation as a complex system shifts the focus from an overriding concern with isolated actants to changing relationships between these actants. Besides human-human interactions improvisation also implies interactions with or between audience, instruments, the performance space, technology, acoustics, aesthetic and cultural backgrounds, etc. Taking into account all these levels of musical, social, historical, acoustical, and technological engagement gives a more complete picture of the practice of improvisation.
- III. Although it is my point of departure that improvisation takes place in all musicking, not all of the actants mentioned above determine every improvisation to the same extent; in certain situations (periods, styles, cultures as well as more singular circumstances), some are more prominent and active than others. Therefore, I don't want to deal with improvisation "in general". Instead I emphasize singularity: each improvisation will yield a different network of actants and inte-

reactions. In other words, I would like to present a radical empiricism, a focus on particular and individual cases.

**IV.** One of these specific cases is a piece by the young Belgium composer Paul Craenen, called *tubes*. It is by analyzing this piece that I will reflect on the question whether technology is improvising. Somehow it seems obvious and often taken for granted that only humans (or, perhaps, living beings) are able to improvise. However, by analyzing *tubes* I will defend the claim that it is specifically the technology used here that creates a situation of experimentation and creativity. Performers and audience are invited, even forced, to share a space of surprises, discoveries, and unexpected sonic results; in short, they encounter the un-fore-seen (im-pro-vised).

**Marcel Cobussen** studied jazz piano at the Conservatory of Rotterdam and Art and Cultural Studies at Erasmus University, Rotterdam (the Netherlands). He currently teaches Music Philosophy and Auditory Culture at Leiden University (the Netherlands) and the Orpheus Institute in Ghent (Belgium). Cobussen is author of the book *Thresholds. Rethinking Spirituality Through Music* (Ashgate, 2008), editor of *Resonanties. Verkenningen tussen kunsten en wetenschappen* (LUP, 2011) and co-author of *Music and Ethics* (Ashgate, 2012) and *Dionysos danst weer. Essays over hedendaagse muziekbeleving* (Kok Agora, 1996). He is editor-in-chief of the open access online *Journal of Sonic Studies* ([www.sonicstudies.org](http://www.sonicstudies.org)). His Ph.D. dissertation *Deconstruction in Music* (2002) was presented as an online website located at [www.deconstruction-in-music.com](http://www.deconstruction-in-music.com).

### **Alessandra Bochio, Felipe Merker Castellani & Rogério Costa**

#### **Mirrors I, Hybrid Environments of Collective Creation: Composition, Improvisation, and Live Electronics**

This proposal contains a reflection on the process of creating the performance *Espelho* (Mirror) which incorporates ideas of composition, improvisation and live electronic interaction. In this performance, act and interact two musicians (one playing the saxophone and another operating the electronics devices). From a "roadmap" previously prepared at a stage of collective composition, are pre-established the electronic processing environments to be used successively during the performance and the types of sound materials most suitable for each of these environments, as well as the transitions between them.

Our intention is to discuss what are the issues involved in the use of hybrid systems and to what extent this type of environment favors or hinders the sound immersion, the syntactic consistency of sound flow and the performance of the musicians (especially from the point of view of physicality).

Improvisation is the basic behavior for the saxophonist who, from the pre-established sound materials creates, in real-time, his intervention. The general aspect of the flow of the performance results from the sum of the sounds created by the saxophonist and the changes that are processed in real time by the other musician in an intense interactive process of mutual influences.

Apparently, the performance depends entirely on the sound of the saxophone, as the musician who operates the electronic devices performs processing the sounds that are produced by the acoustic instrument. However, the preparation of the environment also includes sound samples pre-recorded and prepared prior to the performance, which gives the other musician, to some extent, the possibility of acting «physically», manipulating and emitting sounds, as if they came from his «digital instrument.»

The use of a single sound source, the saxophone, aims to ensure a morphological 'familiarity' to the various environmental settings. But beyond the pre-recorded sound materials, analyzed, categorized and processed, there are other elements present in the complex environment of collective creation that guarantee the consistency of the proposal. As most of environments prepared for live electronic interaction, the one used here brings implicit compositional ideas, for example, the idea of 'immediate extension' (delay and granulation) and distortion (pitch-shifters) of sonic material produced by the acoustic instrument. Finally, emerges the idea of an artistic collective creation, shaped as a pathway, full of irreversibilities. Although this pathway can not be set globally, it sets up occasionally erratically, in the manner of a processual mobile, where traditional musical parameters give rise to others such as energy, gesture and direction.

**Felipe Merker Castellani** is a Ph.D. student in the Music Graduate Program of University of Campinas in the research area 'Music, language, Sonology', under the supervision of Pr. Dr. Silvio Ferraz and with financial support of the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP). He also has a degree in Musical Composition from Santa Marcelina College (2009) and a Master degree in Musical Creative Processes from University of Campinas (2010). Between 2013-2014, he conducted a research internship at the Centre for Research in Computer Science and Music Creation of the University Paris 8 in the commune of Saint-Denis, north of Paris, under the supervision of Pr. Dr. Anne Sèdes.

As a composer **Rogério Costa** has written compositions for various formations including octets, quartets, trios, duos, solo pieces for saxophone and piano. His compositions have been played by leading artists in Brazil and Europe such as Abstrai of Rio de Janeiro, Camerata Alberta of São Paulo and Pierrot Luneire Ensemble of Vienna. As a researcher Prof. Costa currently develops a research project on improvisation and its connections with other areas of study. He has extensive bibliographic production on improvisation published in journals, conference proceedings and books. Two of the most important current projects under his supervision, related to his research are the groups of free improvisation *Musicafacta* and *Orquestra Errante* where he also acts as a saxophonist. He is currently doing his pos-doc research in Paris, France at the Université Paris 8, under supervision of Professor Makis Solomos.

**Alessandra Bochio** is Ph.D. student in the Visual Arts Graduate Program of the University of São Paulo in the research area 'Visual Poetics: multimedia', under the supervision of the Prof. Dr. Monica Tavares and with financial support of the Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES). She also has a degree in Plastic Arts from University of the State of São Paulo (2006) and a Master degree in Visual Creative Processes from the same institution (2010). Nowadays her artistic and theoretical researches are related to the concept of *Intermedia*

## Friday 18.7.

Paper session 2A (14:00 — 15:30)

Chaired by Miloš Vojtěchovský

### Teatro

#### Lucie Vítková

**Composing Situations: Improvisation in the Music of Christian Wolff**

Non-idiomatic improvisation has become strong musical expression to simulate the sounds of the environment. Every improviser develops own musical language based on his or her instrument (acoustic or electronic), which they use certain way to interact musically to each other or to the audience. This musical interaction has often been compared to the social communication in everyday life through our spoken language.

Music, I propose, is always a social action. Society, for example, creates a collective sound, which can be perceived or ignored as a chaotic structure. When we start to train our perception to pay attention to the surrounding sounds, we can actually distinguish the actions according to our ears and start to understand them. There is lots of improvisation and composition on the streets. The person asking about the right direction is improvising with a stranger; the tram is making music in the groove of its track. We can gradually discover the meanings of the music and sound around while re-examining these situations.

In the musical world, composition or improvisation, we have established various social situations (solo, duo, ensemble, orchestra), which we tend to not perceive as distinct from music.

My research is on the music of Christian Wolff, a composer exemplary in realising social aspects as important compositional parameters, constructing musical works in which the decisions of and interactions between the players are balanced delicately with preconceived frameworks. His compositions are at once restrictive and liberating: the rules of composition never absent, the idioms of improvisation always close at hand. In this paper, I wish to introduce preliminary findings of my doctoral research, which explores Wolff's handling of diverse strategies for musical and social interaction. Understanding Wolff's 'composed situations' I suggest may help us understand the nature of the relationship between 'fixed' and 'free' as we encounter them in today's music.

**Lucie Vítková** is a composer, performer and improviser of accordion, harmonica, voice and dance from the Czech Republic. She graduated in accordion performance at Brno Conservatory in 2010 and composition at Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno (CZ) in 2013. During her Master Degree, she studied at Royal Conservatory in The Hague (NL) and at California Institute of the Arts in Valencia (USA). She has studied with Martin Smolka, Jaroslav Št'astný, Martijn Padding, Gillius van Bergijk and Michael Pisaro. Along with her study of music she used to teach tap dance at the Faculty of Theatre of JAMU. She is member of the Ensemble Marijan, Dunami, Brno Improvising Unit, Dust in the Groove and Prague Improvisation Orchestra. Vítková's work pursues two lines of enquiry: in the compositions she focuses on sonification (compositions based on abstract models derived from physical objects), while her improvisation practice explores characteristics of discrete spaces through the interaction between sound and movement.

#### Emmanuel Nnamani

**Improvisation, Catharsis and Creativity On the Beat and In Tune: Perspectives on Structures, Images, and the Message in Fela's Afrobeat Music**

What does improvisation mean in a typical Afrobeat music composition and performance? What effect does it have on the performers and members of the audience alike? What is its place in the creative-cathartic fabric and musical structuring in the Afrobeat brand? What aesthetic creative interpretation informs the improvisation structures in Fela's Afrobeat? Many works have been done on the Afrobeat genre, created by Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, the famous Nigerian musician and activist. Regarded as a rebel by his detractors but recognized as an icon by his fans, Fela lived and died as a great multi-instrumentalist and musical giant in his Afrobeat music. His fame stands out strongly in his dexterity and craftsmanship showcased profoundly in his improvisatory skills. The artistic-aesthetic discussion of these essential aspects of Fela's art has not been given the needed scholarly attention. This paper attempts to fill this gap.

The paper presents some detailed examination of Fela's works (using multi-sited data) with a view to showing the germinal nature of the improvisation structures in the artist's composition style. In his Afrobeat music, Fela evokes some of the most thrilling moments of his art and creative brilliance in his improvisations. Such performative scenarios showcase his mastery, transcendence of the bounds of sonic-aesthetic and cathartic spaces and colorful ways of getting from chorus to chorus, transforming the cadences and passages and evading and/or uniting the harmonic structure of the theme to create a musical space that bonds his aesthetic philosophy with the echo of aesthetic-thirst of his audience and enthusiast alike. It is in such an artistic groove that Afrobeat's message and Fela's art resonate with the Afro-centric aesthetics of creative freedom which is fundamental in African traditional, contemporary art and popular music practice – symbiotically projected and professed in the improvisations in Fela's works.

### Andrew Wilson

**Musical Prose, Dada, and Jazz: A Case Study of Erwin Schulhoff's Improvisationspraxis**

Since Ernest T. Ferand's pioneering study *Die Improvisation in der Musik* (1938), our understanding of the role and importance of improvisation in music has increased exponentially. Yet despite numerous and thorough studies on improvisation in late nineteenth-century and post-World War II art music, little research has been done on improvisation in classical music of the first decades of the early twentieth century. Our knowledge of improvisation in this area remains surprisingly scant and essentially reflects Ferand's views, which suggest that *Improvisationspraxis* in early twentieth-century art music ceased to exist.

In my paper I will shed light on the role and importance of improvisation in the work of composer and pianist Erwin Schulhoff (1894–1942). I will argue that his attraction to improvisation and improvisational practices was shaped by his musical training and artistic interests as well as by his contact with contemporary avant-garde artists. I will first trace concepts of improvisation and improvisational characteristics found in Schulhoff's artistic environment and show how they affected his early creative activities. I will then analyse three of his works, *Fünf Pittoresken* (1919), *Bassnachtigall* (1922), and the piano duo *Mitternachtsgespenster* (1933) and discuss different concepts of improvisation found in these pieces. Finally, I will also briefly address the reception of this music as well as other works with improvisatory qualities in this period.

My paper is based on unpublished materials housed in such archives as the Archiv des Museums der tschechischen Musik (Prague) and the Paul-Sacher Stiftung (Basel) and scholarship by Bek, Berghaus, Feisst, Ferand, Gilliam, John, Nettl, Lewis, and Solis. This research paper will contribute to a better understanding of some of the concepts

and modes of improvisation found in the early twentieth century and in Schulhoff's work.

After initial studies in computer sciences at the University of Neuchâtel and training as a classical and jazz pianist, **Andrew Wilson** worked as an English teacher and translator (2001–2014). He was also active until 2009 as a pianist: concerts, solo performances and as a member of various jazz and pop-rock groups. In 2004, he had returned to university studies and in 2010 obtained a Bachelor of Arts in English and Musicology at the universities of Neuchâtel and Geneva. In October 2012, he received a Master of Arts in Musicology at the University of Basel, with honours (*insigni cum laude*). Since then, Andrew Wilson has been researching his PhD topic 'Concepts of improvisation and their impact on early twentieth century art music'. In April 2014, this project was officially accepted as a research program at the Musikwissenschaft Seminar der Universität Basel and is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF).

### Kevin McNeilly

**Possibility Abstracts: Taylor Ho Bynum, Nathaniel Mackey and Discrepancy**

Released in November 2013, the multi-format set of recordings of Taylor Ho Bynum's innovative composition for improvising sextet, *Navigation*, both culminates and continues his fascination with the interfaces between the extemporaneous and the written, the scripted and the performative. Separate LP and compact disc versions of the work are paired with different fragments of text from African-American poet Nathaniel Mackey's experimental epistolary novel *Bass Cathedral*, a book that Ho Bynum has recently said, for him, is probably the best writing about music he has encountered. Earlier compositions by Bynum, such as his suite *Madeleine Dreams*, have not only used prose fiction as libretto, but more tellingly have striven to address sonically and structurally the complex and often fraught relationships between the musical and the diegetic, between sound and sense.

*Navigation* takes up Mackey's own address to this interface, sounding what Mackey understands as creative discrepancy, an expressive troubling of formal and cultural boundaries. Name-checking both Sun Ra and Louis Armstrong, Mackey has noted what he calls a "play of parallel estrangements" in improvised music and in poetry, arguing that music "is prod and precedent for a recognition that the linguistic realm is also the realm of the orphan," that is, of the limits of sense, a liminal zone of both orchestration and letting go. Ho Bynum's recordings pick up not only on Mackey's thorough enmeshment in jazz history, but also on his intention to pursue the expressive potential of language and of music at their textural boundaries, at moments of troubling contact between divergent worldviews, or between dissimilar social and cultural genetics. Composing using what Mackey calls *m'apping* – a portmanteau splice of mapping

and mishap, pursuing what Mackey calls the “demiurgic rumble” of discrepancy, improvising across the gaps between careful craft and unruly noise – Ho Bynum conjures a hybrid and collaborative music that blends the complex Afrological heritages of jazz performance style (audible in Navigation’s network of gestures to Charles Mingus and Duke Ellington, to name only two key forebears) with graphic scoring techniques derived from Sylvano Bussotti or Wadada Leo Smith, among others.

If improvised music, for Mackey, represents – and represents precisely – what defies descriptive capture in language, what eludes ekphrasis, then the music of Taylor Ho Bynum’s sextet aspires to invert that representational effort, to take up the discrepant aesthetic tactics of Mackey’s writing and to assess how the written (as graph , as graphic score) can approach and test the expressive limits of making music happen. Taylor Ho Bynum’s compositions for improvisers

offer exemplary instances of how to negotiate creatively the boundaries between text and sounding, and suggest a means of addressing, too, the graphic work of other composer-improvisers, including the work of Nicole Mitchell, Anthony Braxton and Barry Guy.

**Kevin McNeilly** is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. He is the UBC site coordinator for Improvisation, Community and Social Practice (ICASP – [www.improvcommunity.com](http://www.improvcommunity.com)) and for the International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation (IICSI). He has published criticism and scholarship on the improvised music of Steve Lacy, Charles Mingus, John Zorn, Miles Davis and others, as well as on contemporary poetry and poetics and on media. His poetry has appeared in a number of journals, and his book of poems – a genealogy of early jazz trumpet players – is *Embouchure* (Nightwood Editions, 2011).

## Friday 18.7.

Paper session 2B (14:00 – 15:30)

Chaired by Sara Pinheiro

### Video NoD

#### Vanessa Tomlinson

**Listen to the sound of your imagination – An exploration of imaginative listening**

This presentation examines the notion and experience of ‘imaginative listening’ on the basis of one work by Vanessa Tomlinson – *Nostalgia*(2013) - and the notion of sensorial imagination of Kathleen Coessens (2012). Included in the presentation will be an embedded series of participatory listening activities and realtime improvisational outcomes by the authors. *Nostalgia* was composed to explore sound as it happens in the imagination. The work intentionally moves the scene of sound construction from the composer’s imagination, to the performer and/or the audience. This work demands a different level of engagement and trust – requiring that the performer and/or audience to enter into an inner relationship with memory, experience and imagination that privileges the personal journey of each individual as a platform for sonic imagination.

The presentation will incorporate concepts of auditory imagination, explored through the examination of perceptual or sensorial imagination (Koessens 2012) and conceptual or propositional ima-

gination (Williams 1973). We will explore these different sensorial modalities through analysing *Nostalgia* as a rubric of different types of imaginative listening; Material listening, Conceptual listening, Experiential listening and Internal Listening. Each listening attitude, helps provide a lexicon of listening approaches, hypothetically transferable to other musical settings. The compositional prompts provide multi-sensorial gateways into our imagination and into our memory, placing the act of sound production in the imagination of each individual performer and audience member. The sonic residue discovered, and the transitional or liminal space between located sounds forms a private listening experience for each active audience participant mapped onto the geo-cultural specificity of the individual.

Australian percussionist **Vanessa Tomlinson** is active in the fields of solo percussion, contemporary chamber music, improvisation, installation and composition. She has performed at festivals around the world such as Wien Modern, London Jazz Festival, Green Umbrella Series LA, Bang-on-a-Can Marathon NY, The Adelaide Festival of Arts, and Shanghai Festival. She is the recipient of 2 Green Room Awards, the 2011 APRA/AMC Award for Excellence by an organization or individual, and has been awarded

artist residencies through Asialink (University of Melbourne), Civitella Ranieri (NY/Italy), Banff (Canada) and Bundanon (NSW). She has recorded on numerous labels including Mode Records, Tzadik, ABC Classics, Etcetera, Clocked Out and Innova. Vanessa is co-founder and artistic director of Clocked Out, one of Australia's most important and eclectic musical organisations, artistic director of percussion quartet Early Warning System and the percussionist for The Australian Art Orchestra. She is currently Associate Professor in Music at Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University.

### Marc Hannaford

#### Improvisation as Bricolage

How does one plan to improvise? Traditional conceptions of planning as a set of fixed and all encompassing set of procedures fail to provide each level of the emergency management hierarchy the flexibility to quickly respond to novel and unprecedented situations using its specialised tools. Employing improvisation in disaster response emphasises a particular approach to the deployment of previously learnt knowledge and a particular attitude to the nature of the situation. If improvisation is to be employed certain approaches to organisational management should also be adopted.

In this paper I will draw upon theorisations of improvisation in terms of "bricolage" and "wisdom," as well as organisational principles of "decentralised power" and "emergence," in order to theorise improvisation firstly in relation to the 2009 Victoria bushfires in Australia, and finally to some Australian improvised music. My discussion will critique the Australian royal commission's response to the 2009 Victoria Bushfires. I plan to show how many of the commission's findings allude to improvisation without explicitly addressing it; leading me to conclude that the royal commission would benefit from foregrounding the concept of improvisation in order to be better prepared for future extreme emergencies. I will then turn to examples of Australian improvised music and use the same concepts to theorise aspects of ensemble improvisation that I posit provides a more nuanced account of planning for musical improvisation than Aaron Berkowitz in his paper "Improvised Performance: Performers Perspectives" (2010) and aligned with John Whiteoak's theorisation of Australian improvised music and jazz (1999). My aim for this discussion is to show that, in both the case of emergency management and music, planning for improvisation can be theorised to good effect in terms of bricolage, wisdom, decentralised power and emergence.

Marc Hannaford is a PhD student in music theory at Columbia University, New York. He is also part of the Institute for Comparative Literature. His primary interests are music, improvisation, sociological difference, group identity and agency, and power. He has presented and taught in Australia, New Zealand, Berlin, Sweden, Canada and Brazil. Marc received his undergraduate degree in music performance at the Australian National University, and a Masters of Music Performance (by Research) at the Victoria College of the Arts.

He is also an accomplished pianist. He won the 2013 Music Council of Australia's Freedman Fellowship, the 2013 Jazz "Bell" award for most original 2012 album (Sarcophile), and the 2013 Australian Performing Rights Association's Art Award for best work (Anda Two).

### Ximena Alarcón

#### Telematic embodiments: listening to the 'in-between' within migratory contexts

When we migrate between geographies our body moves, experiencing a new climate, different food and territories; our mind wonders trying to understand the trace left, our body feels it. In the migratory process sometimes we feel we are not present in our new land or, on the contrary, we fully deny our homeland. We eventually start to imagine an 'in-between' space (Ortega, 2008), where we could place ourselves, our physical and mental territories.

Networked Migrations is a practice-based research project that explores the 'in-between' sonic space that exists within the context of migration, through Deep Listening practice (Oliveros, 2005) and improvisatory performances on the Internet, in order to expand the perceived sonic spaces that inform the migratory experience. This paper analyses the experiences of embodiments by participants in the telematic sonic performances 'Letters and Bridges' (Leicester and Mexico City), and 'Migratory Dreams', (London and Bogotá), from the perspectives of somatics and dream-work (Stewart, 2012; Lewis, 2005; Bosnak, 2007). The embodiments take place in the process of 'unselfing' (Schroeder, 2013), characteristic of networked performances, as participants collaborate and improvise telematically using only sound. Focusing on voice, which in a telematic performance is a disembodied being, and the sound environment, which permeates our sense of being in a specific location, the paper highlights this mediated improvisatory performance as an experience that helps migrants to reunite with their multiple selves, and that offers an extension of their perception of their body in new physical and virtual territories.

Ximena Alarcón is an artist who engages in listening to migratory spaces and connecting this to individual and collective memories. She creates sound art works, using networked technologies, derived from listening experiences in interstitial spaces where borders become diffused, such as underground transport systems, dreams, and the 'in-between' space in the context of migration. In 2010 she engaged in Deep Listening practice listening to her own migratory experience and creating scores for The Migratory Band. Currently she is a performing member of the recently formed multi-arts improv ensemble 4 4 Flow. Ximena has a PhD in Music, Technology and Innovation, from De Montfort University, and was awarded with The Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship 2007-2009 to initiate her postdoctoral research in the Institute of Creative Technologies (IOCT). In May 2012 she obtained a Deep Listening certificate. Since 2011 she has worked as a Research Fellow at Creative Research into Sound Arts Practice (CRISAP).



**Ivan Palacký**

**Sentences to tell over – interferences between improvisation in music and architecture.**

A short reflection on the strategies of improvisation in the interdisciplinary approach. The presentation reflects the essay « Sentences to tell over », published in the journal *His Voice* and from the experience and micro-narration related to the architectural project for the Chapel of Franciscus of Assisi in Brno.

A musician and architect, **Ivan Palacký** performed in various bands and participated in a diverse range of musical projects. He performed at many concerts with the

band «Sledě, živě sledě». He is currently a member of the ambi(val)ent duo «Tilko» (with Jennifer Helia DeFelice) and the audiovisual improvisational duo «Koberce, záclony» (with Filip Cenek). He also keeps audio diaries of his travels, recording story fragments, strange sounds and a diverse array of «acoustic errors». Since 2002, he has been involved in free improvisation, and enjoys participating in short-term projects (collaborations with Cremaster, Ruth Barberán and Margarida Garcia, Willem Guthrie, and Andrea Neumann, among others). He equally enjoys playing solo. His main passion since 2005 has been the «mining» of sounds from an amplified Dopleta 160 single bed knitting machine. As an architect, he is interested in architecture without «structures», sociological methods in project planning and morphogenetic maps in digital architecture.

## Friday 18.7.

Paper session 3A (16:00 – 17:30)

Chaired by Allison Johnson

### A Teatro

**Simon Rose**

**The Agency of Improvisation**

The presentation describes how improvisation is a widespread activity, in all spheres of human activity, and at the same time relatively absent from education; signalling a deficit between our being-in-the-world and practice in education. The background and findings of the research project: 'Improvisation, music and learning: An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis' (Rose PhD thesis, 2013) are presented.

The particular experience of working successfully with students who have been permanently excluded from mainstream education (8 years) led to research with the aim to better understanding processes of improvisation. Together with experience of working with young people with special educational needs; experience as a professional musician; and an early career in drama, this paper describes improvisation's broad potential for education.

A body of knowledge has developed within the international community of musicians whose practice is centred on improvisation. Ten highly experienced improvisers from Europe and North America took part in semi-structured interviews, the overarching question was: What is the place of improvisation in your practice? The study employed Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

IPA (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) is an idiographic approach through which lived-experience is examined in analysis. Through analysis the following super-ordinate themes of improvisation were identified: Learning, Process, Body and Strategies. These themes, and their 'unity,' will be explained through reference to interview extracts from the ten interviews. The socially inclusive and autonomous character of free improvisation was highlighted for its broad potential in education. Interpreting the phenomenon of free improvisation acknowledges the multiplicity of experience of improvisation in music. The co-presence, or 'unity' of the super-ordinate themes, Learning, Process, Body and Strategies is also significant in developing understanding of the nature of improvisation.

**Simon Rose** plays baritone and alto saxophones. Born in London, England, he has performed in Europe, Canada and USA. As well as collaborating with those who play traditional instruments, Rose performs with musicians who employ self-designed instruments and electronics. He is also interested in collaborations beyond music, for example with dance and fine art contexts. Performing solo is an ongoing project: 'Procession,' solo alto and 'Schmetterling,' solo baritone. Music recordings can be found on the labels: Emanem, Leo, PSI, Bruce's Fingers, Not Two, Rayon and PFMentum. His research interest is in the creative process of improvisation, in which he has completed three studies. Following an MA at Middlesex University, 2008, he gained his doctorate in 2013 at Glasgow Caledonian University. He is currently

completing a book for Intellectbooks, UK concerning the agency of improvisation. Other publications include book chapters: 'Free improvisation in education,' in *Investigating Musical Performance* (Ashgate, 2012); 'Improvisation as real-time composition' in *The act of musical composition* (Ashgate, 2014), and 'The Process of Improvisation' in *Organising and Music* (Cambridge, 2014).

### Lisa Cay Miller

#### Talking Improv—Removing the Civil Censor

Accessing instantaneous creativity is elemental to experienced improvisers, as natural as breathing, walking and talking. Improvisers master their instruments, obtain vocabulary and technique and develop sophisticated deep-level communication skills and strategies for taking part in complex musical dialogue and interaction. As experienced players, it is possible to underestimate the capacity for being fully present, for committing mindfully to expression, and for establishing and accepting trust of others and of ourselves, methodologies that might not easily be understood by those not dedicated to the living practice.

Children have direct access to improvisatory attitudes. They create without judgment, without fear, with delight and abandon. With social and cultural conditioning, adults learn to fear risk taking as they make their place in society. As they become 'civilized,' an inner dialogue begins which negates artistry, which cautions against individual expression and the unconventional. This negation affects artists and their role in society, and society's relationship towards artistic expression.

This discussion will investigate these questions: Whether as witnesses or participants, what is this mysterious portal that champions of improvisation develop to counter this inner voice, to embrace intuition, accept the push-pull and intricately interweaved roles of commenter, leader, supporter, negator, instigator, present in collaborative improvisation? How does one remove the public and private filters that inhibit the acceptance of the unknown? With are these conditioned rules that stand in the way of expression, and what is it in us that allows us to accept abstraction and enter joyfully into the world of improvisation?

**Lisa Cay Miller** is the Managing Artistic Director of the NOW Society who proudly presents Vancouver best improvisors. She has produced concerts and multi-media installations (Vancouver New Music, Coastal Jazz and Blues Society, Circus Maximus, and the Western Front Society). Miller has performed with Nicole Mitchell, Butch Morris, John Zorn, Eyvind Kang, Audrey Chen, Ig Henneman, Wilbert de Joode, Anne La Berge, Michael Moore, and Joachim Badenhorst, Tiago de Mello, Lucas Rodrigues Ferreira, Roldolfo Valente, Marcio Gibson, Mario Del Nunzio and Pianorquesta Her CDs, The lisa miller octet; *Sleep Furiously*, the music of lisa miller, Q, Q; *waterwall* and The lisa miller trio; open are available on the greenideas record label and have received rave international reviews.

### Stephanie Khoury

#### Re-imagining the role of improvisation in music education

The creative practice of improvisation should be at the core of all music education. By prioritizing the attainment of musical fluency over the study and memorization of pre-existing compositions, we provide music students with the musical agency so often lacking in today's musical training. In this way, music education becomes a true arts education based upon an organic process of action, discovery and expansion. Through improvisation, students attain a deeper integration of the fundamentals of music and are challenged to be active listeners, capable of making complex decisions in the moment. When improvising collectively, students are learning to communicate with the language of music, giving them with the ability to interact with other musical genres and cultures. Students widen their musical possibilities while developing their own creative voices.

This discussion considers the necessity, implications and potential considerations of a transformation to music education. The author's own ethnographic research examines the music teaching of improvisation in three distinct contexts: a community music school in inner city Houston (USA), an improvised modal counterpoint class at McGill University in Montreal (Canada), and an institute of improvised music in Salamanca (Spain). Examining pedagogy and practice in these locations in contrast to non-improvised musical contexts reveals a number of benefits and important considerations for the field of music education.

Among these considerations is the problematic nature of formalized improvisation pedagogy, such as those in jazz or Early Music. Strict adherence to extreme complexity of form and linguistic syntax is often impractical or disadvantageous. Finding an improvisatory practice which embraces differences and encourages creative expression is crucial for re-imagining music education. Freer forms of improvisation diminish reliance on particular stylistic know-how and open the practice to all, creating a space in which diverse backgrounds and musical influences enrich the musical process rather than restrict it.

A successful pedagogy of exploratory improvisation must necessarily disrupt traditional teacher-student models and invite the unknown into the teaching environment. In the spirit of critical pedagogy, the teacher becomes learner along with the students, opening themselves to the unexpected in order to help each individual and the collective grow into its potential. Ultimately, the most successful teachers of improvisation are those able to improvise in their teaching, using the tools at hand to connect with students and decipher what is necessary in order to enable them to find confidence and their own voice.

**Stephanie Khoury** is a guitarist, educator, and PhD Candidate in music education at McGill University. Her research interests focus on different aspects of creative music education, ranging from improvisation pedagogy to community music. Currently she is conducting ethnographic research of experimental community music programs and working towards a complete overturn of music education as we know it.

**Don Ritter****From Improvisation to Conceptual Interactivity**

Ritter provides an overview of his work on interactive performances and installations that are directed by improvised music or by the extemporaneous actions of audiences. The presentation includes a description of an interactive performance system that Ritter began developing in 1988, and how it became the technical basis for his interactive video-sound installations that are controlled by body motion, position, or voice. The term conceptual interactivity is proposed to designate when the content of an artwork is conveyed to audiences experientially, through their physical interactions with a work. The presentation will include documentary videos of performances and installations that demonstrate the notion of conceptual interactivity and its relationship to improvisation.

**Don Ritter** is an artist and writer who has been active in the field of digital media art since the late-1980s. His work consists primarily of large interactive video and sound installations that audiences control through their body position, body movement, or voice. During his interactive performances, video projections are controlled by live music. Ritter's performances and installations have been presented at festivals, museums, and galleries throughout North America, Europe and Asia, including Ars Electronica, SITE Santa Fe, Winter Olympics 2010 Cultural Olympiad, Metrònom (Barcelona), Sonambiente Sound Festival (Berlin), Exit Festival (Paris), and New Music America (New York City and Montreal). He has collaborated on performances primarily with trombonist George Lewis, and also with musicians Nick Didkovsky, Amy Denio, Thomas Dimuzio, Ikue Mori, Geneviève Letarte, Ben Neill, Trevor Tureski, and Tom Walsh. Ritter has held full-time professorships in art and design at Concordia University in Montreal, Pratt Institute in New York City, Hanyang University in Seoul, and currently at City University of Hong Kong in the School of Creative Media.

**Friday 18.7.****Paper session 3B (16:00 – 17:30)**

Chaired by Miloš Vojtěchovský

**Video NoD****Michael Pelz-Sherman****Parallels Between Improvisation and the Software Industry**

Drawing upon my 20+ years of experience in software engineering, jazz improvisation, and music scholarship (PhD UCSD 1998), my presentation will explore the many parallels between recent trends in software development practices and musical improvisation. In the talk, I will demonstrate that changes in corporate software development management practices (an activity which employs a greater percentage of the world's population each year) is emblematic of a paradigm shift brought about by forces of technological and social change which increasingly demand self-organization and team collaboration - aspects of improvised musical culture that have been well-documented e.g. by Macarthur "genius" grant recipient George E. Lewis (who was also my PhD advisor and who will be a keynote speaker at the conference).

The presentation format will be similar to that of a «TED talk». I plan to delve into the socio-political implications of the influence of improvisational practices into the culture of work. In particular I

would like the audience to consider the implications of these issues on education policies and standards. I intend to argue that to prepare students to enter the post-industrial workplace, our schools should be teaching improvisation as part of the standard core curriculum.

Freelance scholar and musician **Michael Pelz-Sherman** has been composing and performing professionally on piano, keyboards, and percussion since the age of 16. A graduate of Indiana University and UC San Diego Music programs, Michael has studied composition with Earl Browne, Donald Erb, Harvey Sollberger, Rand Steiger, Roger Reynolds, and Brian Ferneyhough. His compositions and recordings have received numerous awards. An accomplished software engineer and computer-musician, Michael served as a Musical Assistant at IRCAM (Paris) in the early 1990s, where he created an original real-time computer-assisted performance system and designed sounds for Netherlands composer Klass Torstensson's Urban Songs. Michael's Ph.D. dissertation, «A Framework for the Analysis of Performer Interactions in Improvised Music», created under the guidance of trombonist/improviser/author George E. Lewis, demonstrates his deep love for and understanding of the history, development, and structure of creative improvised music that has risen out of the fertile soil of American Jazz.

## Rob Wallace

### Passages to India

This presentation is a brief sketch of the historical connections, contradictions, and continuing dialogue between the music of South Asia (primarily in the form of Hindustani classical music) and improvised music stemming from the jazz tradition. Encounters between jazz and Indian music, occurring in myriad ways since the early 20th century, continue to produce important collaborations and cross-cultural conversations. Particularly in the period after World War Two, both jazz and Indian classical music became, in a sense, “post-colonial”—even as musicians from both traditions continued to face aesthetic-, ethnic-, racial-, gender-, and class-based discrimination at home and abroad, Indian music gained respect just as jazz gained a more explicitly global mindset.

One result of these developments was the increased dialogue, both metaphorical and literal, between American and Indian cultures. Within these conversations, however, remain some important misunderstandings on the part of both jazz musicians and Indian musicians. I meditate on the potential meanings of the cultural contact exhibited and sounded through Indian music and jazz fusions, specifically as they pertain to the dissemination of the philosophical ideas of Hazrat Inayat Khan—the early-20th century Sufi musician and writer whose work has influenced multiple generations of Westerners in their approach to both Indian music in particular and music in general. I also address the complexities of Ravi Shankar’s attitude towards jazz, and the uneasy linkage (from the perspective of some Indian classical musicians) that many jazz musicians make between jazz improvisation and Hindustani improvisation. Ultimately I argue that, as in much improvised music, the risk of misunderstanding and failure, however we might define those terms, is often outweighed by the improvisers’ ability to learn from such failures and risks and grow musically (and possibly even politically and spiritually).

Writer, musician, and teacher **Rob Wallace** holds a Ph.D. in English Literature from the University of California, Santa Barbara. His recordings can be found on the pfMentum and Ambiances Magnétiques record labels. He is the author of *Improvisation and the Making of American Literary Modernism* (Bloomsbury) and co-editor (with Ajay Heble) of *People Get Ready: The Future of Jazz is Now!* (Duke).

## Ricardo Arias

### Improvisation in Contemporary Colombian Experimental Music and Sound Art

In this paper I will take a brief look at the history of improvised music in Colombia as well as to the current surge of its practice in recent exploratory music and sound art in the country. I will show how improvisation has served as a bridge between different musical practices (electroacoustic, folk, jazz, rock) and how this might begin

to configure a particular type of improvisation that addresses local musical preoccupations and social dynamics.

**Ricardo Arias** is a Colombian experimental improvising musician, sound artist, teacher and researcher. For many years his work has focused on improvisation using unconventional sound sources both acoustic and electronic. More recently he has begun producing sound installations and sound sculptures. He has presented his work in the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Roulette Intermedium (New York), Experimental Intermedia Foundation (New York), Museum Kunst Palast (Düsseldorf), Galerie Rahel-Haferkamp (Cologne), Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin), Ohrenhoch Gallery (Berlin), La Casa Encendida (Madrid), the Miró Foundation (Barcelona), The Electric Eclectics Festival (Meaford, Canada), FIMAV (Victoriaville, Canada), Experimenta Festival (Buenos Aires), Espace SD (Beirut) and the Colón Theater (Bogotá) among many other venues and festivals in North and South America, Europe and the Middle East. His writings have been published in *Experimental Musical Instruments* and the *Leonardo Music Journal*. He is active as a curator of sound art and experimental music exhibitions and festivals. Arias is Associate Professor in the Art Department at Universidad de Los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia.

## Dimitris Papageorgiou

### Searching for a voice: Free-Improvisation as self-experimentation

Starting with the assumption that improvisation is a spontaneous composition, I will follow the line of thought that enframes my aesthetic viewpoint and my practice as an improviser/composer. As Harry Lehmann suggests it is only now – after the legacy of classical modernism, the avant-garde and postmodernism – that the medium, the concept and the work of art can be understood as separate entities; which reintroduced in the aesthetic apparatus with their particular degrees of freedom, enable us to see artworks as “the presentation of an experiential pattern inscribed upon the work of art that is taken up by the individual on a trial basis, and in some cases provokes a new self-understanding in society”. Therefore, an artwork can be understood as a Gestalt (Martin Heidegger) or a Morphe, that emerges from what Michel Serres has called Noise: the phenomenological strife experienced by facing the sonorous multitude. And within the word multitude we can perhaps trace the different perspectives carried by the networks one has been exposed to. In this sense, improvisation/composition practice can be seen as an explorative dynamic process, where the exercise turns into a self-experiment investigating the synthesis between the different realities inside oneself.

This self-explorative process, along with the different musical landscapes one has experienced and exercised, is perhaps one of the agents that gradually crystallizes the development of a personal sound library. Hence, the analysis of the medium (free-improvisation) could involve a negation of the material logic allowing space for more abstract categorizations, i.e. gestalt streaming, or cohabitation

in-time. In my presentation, I will try to bridge the Arab “Saltanah state” in maqam improvisation, with Evan Parker’s suggestion for “repetition, practice, memorization” and his seemingly contradictory call for an “unforeseeable state” while improvising, as the influences that merge into the concept of my practice. Where the work – a spontaneous composition – becomes the praxis of the experiment, governed by the “flow of music” (Malcolm Goldstein).

**Dimitris Papageorgiou** is a violinist, improviser and composer. He holds a Diploma in Classical Violin performance and Diplomas in Advanced Music Theory (Harmony, Counterpoint, Fugue) from Greek conservatories. He also holds a BSc degree in

Physics from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, with a Bachelors thesis on the mathematical processes that Iannis Xenakis applied in his music. As a violinist, he has performed with various ensembles in Athens and in Edinburgh ranging from classical music (i.e. Greek National Opera), Greek folk/Middle-Eastern music, world/jazz music, and free-improvisation collectives. As a composer, his output so far includes solo, chamber, orchestral, electroacoustic, and acoustic music integrated with electronic sound structures. As a solo performer/improviser on the violin, he is trying to amalgamate a musical flow that ranges from extreme extended techniques and noise sounds, to folk music styles from the Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern maqam improvisation practices.

## Saturday 19.7.

Paper session 4A (13:00 – 14:30)

Chaired by David Rothenberg

### A Teatro

#### Lindsay Vickery

##### Improvising with the Sonic Environment

Emulation of the sounds of the natural environment may be one of the earliest manifestations of musical improvisation. Alvin Lucier’s (Hartford) Memory Space (1970) and Carbon Copies (1989) both explore this impulse, instructing performers to imitate the sounds of any indoor or outdoor environment (albeit pre-recorded), “as exactly as possible, without embellishment” (Lucier, A. 1989. Carbon Copies. Material Press: Frankfurt am Main). This paper describes a score-player, implemented in MaxMSP, which analyses and visualises significant features of a sonic environment as a graphic score, allowing an improviser to interact with a field recording. The visualised score is scrolled from right to left across the computer screen. Playback of the source recording is delayed so that it is heard as the corresponding visual event arrives at the “playhead”: a black line on the left of the screen. The frequencies of principal features of the recorded environment are represented by the placement of rectangles in vertical space, amplitude by the size of the rectangle, and the brightness, noisiness and bark scale value of each event as the luminance, hue and saturation of each rectangle. The final three parameters provide an indication of timbral changes in the source recording. An analysis panel provides controls for the performer to view and scale data from the field recording, allowing the performer(s) to “zoom” in or out on

a particular range of data.

Multiple scoreplayers may be networked together, allowing multiple performers to interact with varied frequency, amplitude and amplitude parameters of the same recording. The “Environment Player” builds upon Vickery’s earlier work EVP, in which “electronic voice phenomenon” recordings were visualised as a scrolling score in realtime. In the current work the performer may also choose to analyse the field recording to detect recorded speech or speech-like artifacts that may be present. These are represented in the score as standard text that is visualized using the frequency, amplitude, brightness, noisiness and bark scale values that are applied to non-speech sounds.

**Lindsay Vickery** is a founder member of Decibel, SQUINT, HEDKIKR and Magnetic Pig. As a performer he has played at numerous festivals including the Shanghai, Sydney, Adelaide and Perth International Arts Festivals, SWR Tage für Neue Musik, Audio Art Festival (PL), NWEAMO (US), ICMC, ISEA, MATA, NWEAMO, Scintilla Divina, NowNow and WHATISMUSIC?. He has collaborated with artists including: Alvin Curran (US), David Toop (UK), Marina Rosenberg (US), Werner Dafeldecker (DE), Agostino Di Scipio (IT), Lionel Marchetti (FR), Amy Knoles (US), Annie Gosfield (US), Roger Kleier (US), Graham Collier (UK), Marek Choloniewski (PL), Jon Rose, Stelarc, Clocked Out, Ensemble Offspring and The Tissue Culture and Art group. He writes on a range of topics, most recently on the emergence and development of the “screenscore”, nonlinear music and the realisation of Cage’s music. He is coordinator

of Composition and Music Technology at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts at Edith Cowan University.

### Ursel Schlicht

#### **SonicExchange: Film and Talk about a 100-day Residency**

SonicExchange took place in the summer of 2012 in the Kassel, Germany, and became a vibrant creative multidisciplinary project. My intent was to counteract the motto-driven cultural climate with open space and time, exchanging ideas through sound, dance, film and related art. Over fifty guests participated, from nine countries. Among them were free improvisers, composers, an Afghan poet and rubab player, dancers, electronic musicians.

I purposely sought a location not connected with a particular aesthetic and found the Foto-Motel, an artistic guest house with studios for visual artists and a low-key and intimate setting. The first and only musician there, the hosts provided me a small studio and gave me carte blanche to use the adjacent lounge as a performance space, a large yard for performances outside, film screenings, also allowing communication between inside and outside. The flexibility and simplicity was perfect for spontaneous programming of performances, sessions, talks.

Dancers performed in the yard, artists showed films with live music in the lounge or projected outside on the wall. Five pianists created an evening of pianism around one piano. Composers spoke about their music and then improvised with other musicians. Five musicians arranged Icelandic songs as a quintet with voice, piano, accordion, violin and electronics. Others interpreted Afghan poetry and tales. As the ongoing avant-art exhibition Documenta(13) in Kassel transformed the entire city with literally hundreds of exhibitions, many of us were also very inspired by the visual arts.

The name SonicExchange reflects the concept of meeting on equal grounds rather than a hierarchically structured or curated situation. Each participant had to make a conscious choice to be there, I did not invite or select. This led to a mix of local and international encounters. Interestingly, the gender balance was almost equal – unheard of in most festival lineups. Many events were filmed and we produced a two-hour long DVD. The DVD contains an 15-min introductory film about the idea and the process, followed by chapters showing thirteen concert events, and a chapter crediting all participants and supporters. I would like to discuss how improvisation has the power to connect artists from many disciplines across aesthetics, cultural differences, or language barriers, show excerpts of the film, and focus on a few events where borders were crossed in particularly successful ways.

Pianist **Ursel Schlicht** plays improvised music, jazz, new music, and is a scholar and educator currently teaching Improvisation at the University of Kassel. Fostering intercultural collaboration has been an important focus of her work. She has brought

together musicians from Europe, India, Eritrea, Mali, Japan, Afghanistan, Russia, and the USA, notably in her project Ex Tempore. Her compositions interweave notated and improvised material, and she interprets silent film classics *Nosferatu*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Faust*, and *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* with an avant-improv approach. Her work as leader or co-leader appears on Nemu, Cadence, CIMP, Hybrid, Konnex, Muse-Eek and Leo Records, with Robert Dick, Hans Tammen, Steve Swell, Lou Grassi, Ken Filiano, Bruce Arnold, Reuben Radding, et al. she is part of Hans Tammen's Third Eye Orchestra on innova records; forthcoming is a CD *The Galilean Moons* with Robert Dick. Ursel Schlicht holds a doctorate in musicology from the University of Hamburg, Germany, and has published a book about the working conditions of women jazz musicians, including Marian McPartland, Carline Ray, Joanne Brackeen, Connie Crothers, Jane Ira Bloom and Myra Melford. She has designed and taught seminars on Music & Gender and Improvisation at Ramapo College of New Jersey, and has taught Masterpieces of Western Music at Columbia University in New York.

### Lukas Ligeti

#### **Between and Beyond Frontiers: Journeys of Improvised Music in Africa**

Many West African music traditions and forms (my initial experiences were in Côte d'Ivoire) have contributed to the fundamental concepts of jazz, and in working with musicians from these traditions, it is possible to see some of the basic ingredients of American improvised music at work. The rules governing improvisation in these traditions are often quite complex, but, as in jazz, they build upon and further permit, to a degree, spontaneous interaction between musicians, allowing for conversational interplay. However, there also exist music traditions - I have come across these mainly in other parts of Africa such as Uganda - where improvisation is rather limited and does not strongly impact the overall form of the music.

I have attempted many approaches to improvisation in my African collaborations, ranging from collective free improvisation (an activity otherwise nonexistent in this part of the world) to collectively developing frameworks and rules for interplay. In some instances, I encouraged musicians to appropriate concepts from other music traditions or cultures as part of our nascent improvisational vocabulary. Some approaches employed computer technology as an additional challenge or as an aid in performance, acting as a conductor of sorts. In a band I co-founded in Burkina Faso, Ableton Live is used extensively, but a complex cueing system is simultaneously in place to help make our performances more flexible and spontaneous. But I have also done more «straightforward» improvising in contexts such as the ever popular «jam sessions» and played jazz standards with African musicians: many musicians I have worked with consider themselves jazz musicians, but the way they handle rhythm and form tends to be somewhat different from their American colleagues, informed by the traditions of the region and by local patterns of jazz reception (which are often strongly dependent on the selection of imported

recordings, a dependency now in decline due to the internet, but still relevant).

Transcending the boundaries of genre, the Austrian, New-York-City-based composer-percussionist **Lukas Ligeti** has developed a musical style of his own that draws upon downtown New York experimentalism, contemporary classical music, jazz, electronica, as well as world music, particularly from Africa. Known for his non-conformity and diverse interests, Lukas creates music ranging from the through-composed to the free-improvised, often exploring polyrhythmic/polytempo structures, non-tempered tunings, and non-western elements. Other major sources of inspiration include experimental mathematics, computer technology, architecture and visual art, sociology and politics, and travel. He has also been participating in cultural exchange projects in Africa for the past 15 years. His commissions include *Bang on a Can*, the Vienna Festwochen, Ensemble Modern, Kronos Quartet, Colin Currie and Håkan Hardenberger, the American Composers Forum, New York University, ORF Austrian Broadcasting Company, Radio France, and more; he also regularly collaborates with choreographer Karole Armitage. As a drummer, he co-leads several bands and has performed and/or recorded with John Zorn, Henry Kaiser, Raoul Björkenheim, Gary Lucas, Michael Manring, Marilyn Crispell, Benoit Delbecq, Jim O'Rourke, Daniel Carter, John Tchicai, Eugene Chadbourne, and many others. He performs frequently on electronic percussion often using the marimba lumina, a rare instrument invented by California engineer Don Buchla.

### **Michael Francis Duch and Bjørnar Habbestad** **Lemur – Methods and Music**

What constitutes the core of our collaboration, what comes across as important in the development of our musical and improvisational practice? We present three potentially important aspects: first, a sonic approach to developing musical material. Secondly, an interest in practising and finally, the different improvisational approach of the ensembles members.

At our very first rehearsal, before we had played our first concert together, we found a shared interest in the actual sound of the ensemble. This sonic approach has influenced our way of discussing, rehearsing, performing and creating together. During these last eight years we have also met regularly for practice and rehearsals in between tours and recordings. This, we believe, is something that is less common in Free Improvisation than in other musics. Our concerts are always free improvised, but listeners comment that the ensemble sounds rehearsed or even composed. We believe that this is related to our rehearsals and methods of practice, creating our own exercises to shape textures, material and interplay.

The background and aesthetic preferences and playing styles of each member of Lemur varies. While Grenager and Habbestad both have their background and formal training from classical music, Tafjord and Duch both have backgrounds and formal training in Jazz and improvisation. This often results in several "styles" operating individually and melting together at the same time, rather than a

specific area that all four are striving for together. More importantly we share a broad spectrum of different practice methods and techniques that we employ in making our own methods and exercises.

When improvising in ad hoc-situations certain techniques or musical clichés may not sound as clichés at all. Whereas in an ensemble playing with some regularity, like Lemur, using the same type of material gets musically challenged and confronted in a way that does not happen in ad hoc-situations. An ensemble that plays together often, playing the same material could eventually lead to playing the equivalent of "songs" or "tunes", rather than Free Improvisation. One of the important issues this paper questions is whether this form of music-making is less "free" or less improvised than that of other free improvising ensembles? We strongly believe that the very opposite can be true, largely based on our own experiences from being members of Lemur.

**Michael Francis Duch** is a double bass-player and Associate Professor at the Department of Music, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim. He completed his project "Free Improvisation – Method and Genre: Artistic Research in Free Improvisation and Improvisation in Experimental Music" through the Norwegian Artistic Research Fellowship Programme at NTNU late October 2010. He has been involved in more than 40 recordings including the critically acclaimed Cornelius Cardew: Works 1960-70 with the trio Tilbury/Duch/Davies. Duch regularly performs improvised and composed music both solo and with various ensembles.

**Bjørnar Habbestad** is a flutist and research fellow at the Norwegian Academy of Music, educated in musica, art history and philosophy from Bergen, London and Amsterdam. Habbestad works as a soloist, chamber- and ensemble musician in Scandinavia, Europe, Asia and the US, covering musical grounds from classical contemporary to noise, electro-acoustic and free improvised music. He is a founding member of the N-Collective, Artistic Director of +3DB records and a co-curator at Lydgalleriet, a Bergen based gallery for sound art.

## Saturday 19.7.

Paper session 4B (13:00 – 14:30)

Chaired by Allison Johnson

### Video NoD

#### Amandine Pras

*Different approaches to free music improvisation in New York*

New York played a crucial role in the history of music improvisation with the rise of free jazz in the 1960s and the emergence of noise in the 1980s. At present, the city encompasses a dynamic live scene attracting musicians from a great variety of origins. The boundaries between the two American post-war traditions of non-idiomatic improvisation distinguished by George Lewis, namely the Afrological and Eurological perspectives are not clear anymore: the notions of Afro-centricity and Euro-centricity have expanded to other cultures and improvisers from diverse musical backgrounds share the stage, thus their approaches blend musically to create a unique art form.

In this paper we investigate the different creative concepts and artistic intentions of improvisers who perform on the same scene in New York. Our ethnographic study involves twelve New-York-based professional improvisers having more than fifteen years of international career. Between 30 and 70 years old, these musicians grew up in different countries such as France, Germany, Japan, and USA, with African-American, European, Moroccan, Israeli and Mexican origins. They were formally trained in straight-the-head jazz or classical music, and/or informally learned on the job by playing pop-rock covers or Latin music.

Our qualitative methods combine individual interviews and group listening sessions of concert recordings with the musicians. We will present the improvisers' verbal descriptions of their own definition of free improvisation; their experience when they are improvising; and the possible connections between their practice of free improvisation and their personal life, political convictions and spiritual practices. We will illustrate our presentation with excerpts of concert recordings.

Artistic freedom has been defined in the individual interviews with contrary opinions. We have observed strong differences among

the improvisers' creative processes, ranging from the avoidance of thinking to intense thought activity. While all mention the interdependence between their improvisation practice and their personal life, political and/or spiritual connections remain strictly individual and vary in their degree of significance. Although these diverse approaches to free improvisation are influenced by different cultural traditions, they do not prevent musicians from performing together.

These findings allow us to grasp the complexities of personal expression as opposed to artistic traditions. A discussion between these findings and a literature review on the different approaches to free improvisation will contribute to our understanding of how musicians with diverse cultural backgrounds improvise with each other.

**Amandine Pras** is conducting research with the free improvisation scene of New York City. Her study focuses on the musicians' experience when they are improvising and the relationship between this experience and the musical result. She is currently a Visiting Scholar at The New School of Social Research in New York with a postdoctoral grant from the Fonds de Recherche Société et Culture of Québec (FQRSC). She holds a PhD in Information Sciences from McGill University in Montréal about the best practices to produce musical recordings in the digital era and she graduated from the Music and Sound Recording program of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris (CNSMDP) in 2006. Amandine teaches musical recording techniques at the Steinhardt School of New York University since 2012. In parallel to her academic activities, she works as a record producer and a sound engineer in different countries and for a great variety of artistic projects.



## Charles Bramley

**Too important to be left to the Musicians: building socio-musical activism through un-Musical improvised practice.**

Communities of musical improvisation have long utilised the rhetoric of revolution and rebellion, yet haven't typically addressed internal flaws in their social organisation that diminish the social relevance and activist potential of their practice. This paper will argue that because the vast majority of improvised practice is the domain of highly trained musicians, it preserves notions of professionalism and specialism that betray what is a key activist potential of this approach to music: its anarchic breakdown of the binary boundaries: 'professional'/'amateur'; 'musician'/'non musician'; 'musical'/'unmusical'. While these communities often provide valuable resistance to various oppressive ideologies, they can at the same time further perpetuate existing ones. A learn the rules before you break them maxim perpetuates the existing order of a music for musicians culture, and is a key contributing factor to the continuing preservation of a stubborn and inert musical environment.

What is sometimes forgotten is that it's not just the so-called formal institutions of universities, schools and conservatoire's that regurgitate these stale ideologies - it's also apparent in those so-called informal, 'experimental' organisations who inscribe their surface output with labels of rebellion, revolution and experimentation, yet beneath the surface of their own myths, expose the inert odour of a politician's internet search history. They replace the funk odour with the odour of bleach. For a completely untrained performer like myself, someone who has been labelled 'unmusical' many times, it becomes extremely tiresome reading promotional literature on how revolutionary various improvised practices are, when the fundamental modes of operation remain utterly fixed in orthodox tradition, privilege and exclusion (sometimes wittingly, sometimes not). Whatever experimentation or deviation from the orthodox has occurred, you better believe in the virtuosic quality inherent in these musicians. That way, it keeps the deviation sterile, safe, and removes the deviant danger from it. You are safe in these people's hands. It's not 'just noise', or total chaotic nonsense, they really know what they are doing because they are professional musicians playing professional music. Nauseating and repulsively stale.

I will present various case studies of a particular model of improvised practice that explicitly works to undo the dominant conception of musicality that is allowed to stratify the musical environment into those who 'can' and those who 'cannot'. un-Musical activism encourages so-called 'non-musicians' to hear beyond specialist binary boundaries and actively participate in the creation of their own musical knowledge(s). It does this by firstly, creating opportunities in which to overcome the ideologies that constrain music-making (usually in the form of regular informal workshops) and secondly, by building long-term social engagement through regular recording sessions and performance events. For improvised music to be socially relevant, it cannot continue to ignore such activist potential by cultivating yet more specialist musical communities, precisely because for those on

the outside of specialist musical knowledge, music typically instills a deeply rooted fear of playing - and it's this absurd reality that demands an un-Musical activism.

**Charles Bramley** is a 3rd year PhD student based within the School of Arts and Cultures, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, under supervision by Dr. William Edmondson and Dr. Elaine Campbell. As a completely un-trained musician and someone who has been labelled 'unmusical' before, he utilises auto-ethnographic methods and case studies to demonstrate the need for un-Musical activism. He is a regular participant in various improvised music activity in Newcastle, including the monthly performance event 'Blue Rinse', the record label 'Felt Beak' and my own weekly improvised music sessions which are open-access.

## Laurel Felt

**Improvisation: The Key to 21st Century Learning**

Public health scholars, marriage and family therapists, and organizational communication consultants are just some of the experts who have contributed to our extensive documentation of how culture — practices, values, and norms — impacts psychosocial development and learning outcomes. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the culture of a learning space (e.g., a classroom, a laboratory, an after-school workshop, etc) also will influence students' functioning. Research by Yeager & Walton (2011) supports this conclusion. Their meta-analysis of «non-academic» interventions found that students' participation in social-psychological programs that addressed cultural issues (e.g., students' implicit theories of intelligence, subjective norms, appreciation of course material's relevance, communities of practice, and support networks) led to large gains in student achievement and sharply reduced achievement gaps even months and years later (p. 267).

Rich academic literature and my own personal experiences as an educator, student and improvisational actor inform my conceptualization of an ideal 21st century learning culture. I submit that, in order to optimize students' likelihood of developing skills across cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains, their learning cultures should facilitate student engagement, empowerment, and connection. Moreover, improvisation, particularly improvisational theater, is a growth-medium for this culture. Improvisation's norms cultivate the ideal culture of engagement, empowerment, and connection, and its practices cultivate 21st century skills. By applying improvisation as a pedagogical model, and also by physically improvising, members of learning communities can facilitate 21st century learning, which implies more innovative academic work and healthier social functioning.

This paper reviews three workshops offered by Laughter for a Change (L4C), a Los Angeles-based non-profit that brings improvisational theater workshops to at-risk and underserved populations (e.g., veterans, urban youth) to facilitate healing and community-building. The workshops under review all operated on a weekly basis for at

least eight works, offering a group of approximately 10 youths the opportunity to develop improvisational acting skills by playing theater games. By analyzing these cases, I hope to gain insight into the following questions: RQ1: To what extent, if any, did each workshop's learning culture seek to facilitate learners' engagement, empowerment, and connection? RQ2: How does the presence or absence of 21st century learning culture (e.g., engagement, empowerment, and connection) relate to 21st century learning outcomes (e.g., cognitive/head, intrapersonal/heart, interpersonal/hands)?

**Laurel Felt** is a PhD candidate at USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism and a veteran improvisational theater actor. Over the years, Laurel has co-designed and assessed various after-school, arts-based workshops for youths in such cities as Los Angeles, Dakar, and Mumbai; collectively, these experiences suggest that improvisation is key to 21st century learning. Laurel applies this educational insight as an Instructional Design Specialist with the USC Joint Educational Project (one of the largest service-learning organizations in the United States) and as a columnist for KCET Departures, covering youth civic media-making.

### **Ritwik Banerji** **Bourdieu's Improviser**

Pierre Bourdieu's treatment of improvisation in his theories of practice and the habitus stand among the earliest discussions of improvisation as a critical dimension of human social practice, and not merely an element of aesthetic action. His work places improvisation within the fundamental sociological question of how structure and agency mediate one another in the reproduction of social orders. Though they themselves may not be fully conscious of the social formations they exist within, Bourdieu's improvisers are those whose performances contribute to the perpetuation, rather than challenge, of ongoing social orders. Crucially, this conception of improvisation

invites a critique of notions of freedom and non-idiomaticity in improvisation, calling attention to the paradoxical manner by which a putatively free improvisation comes to elaborate structure in performance.

In this paper, I will examine Bourdieu's engagement of improvisation in his conceptualization of self-reproducing social orders in order to sketch an analytic framework for the emergent elaboration of structure through collective action in indeterminate conditions, or in a word (perhaps), improvisation. Beyond Kabylia, Algeria, where is Bourdieu's improviser? What is the purchase of his particular conception of improvisation in the understanding of improvised practice across art and sociality? Principally, I will consider several discussions of improvisation in theater, music, and systems theory which purport the emergence of recognizable structure from the distributed action of individual agents, each unaware of and unable to predict the overall aggregated structure beforehand. Moreover, as Keith Sawyer suggests, certain desirable structures of improvisation are perhaps unattainable in conditions in which actors are intending and aware of the target structure. This paper considers Bourdieu's improviser as a means of outlining the productive and sustaining consequences of collective improvisations in art and social practice. How might a Bourdieuan improvisation function integrally in the optimal production of a particular structure, whether aesthetic, social, or technical?

**Ritwik Banerji** is a graduate student ethnomusicology at the University of California, Berkeley. His research revolves around the development of an interactive musical agent, known as "Maxine", who functions as a co-ethnographer in the study of the interplay of ethics and aesthetics in the real-time interactions of free improvisation. With Maxine he has performed in India, Spain, Germany, Austria, Brazil and the US, with a recording of this duo project soon to be released on pfMentum Records. As a Fulbright Journalism and Berlin Program fellow at the Freie Universität-Berlin, Banerji will conduct an ethnographic project on Echtzeitmusik, a scene and discourse of improvisation steadily more active since the fall of the Communism.

## Saturday 19.7.

Paper session 5 (15:00 — 17:30)

### A Teatro

#### Peter Heltzel

**Love Supreme: Improvising for the Common Good**

Improvisation is the heart of jazz and religion. In contrast to static concepts of religion in the shadow of modernity, jazz music offers an alternative approach to theology that is subversive and transformative. A jazz approach to religion, improvises on tradition(s). Jazz never simply argues or critiques; it riffs on themes, transforms or transposes them, and subverts especially popular forms of culture by making them better. John Coltrane's *Love Supreme* offers a model of improvisation on the love motif, deepening its musical and meditative dimensions. Coltrane's improvisation on love opens up the possibility of improvising for love in a broader, public and political way. The principle of improvisation in jazz offers a good model for academically-informed theology for the people. As a method, it also resembles Jesus' loving but subversive riffing on Second Temple Judaism. In the spirit of Jesus' whose teaching of the Kingdom inspires us to work for the common good, faith leaders today need to improvise for love and justice.

**Peter Heltzel**, an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), is the Director of the Micah Institute and Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at New York Theological Seminary. Rev. Heltzel holds a B.A. from Wheaton College, a M.Div. from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and earned his Ph.D. from Boston University. A gifted writer, Rev. Heltzel has contributed to seven books as author or editor. He has published numerous articles in journals, such as *Books & Culture*, *Science & Theology News*, *Sojourners*, *Political Theology*, *Princeton Theological Review* and the *Scottish Journal of Theology*. He serves on the Metro Commission on the Ministry and the Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Team of the Northeastern Region, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and is Associate Professor of Theology at the New York Theological Seminary.

#### James Falzone

**The Already and the Not Yet: Improvisation and Theology in Dialogue in Chicago**

Contemporary theologians, ever looking for metaphors for understanding "the nature of God and religious experience," are turning to the arts in general and improvisation in specific, as means to convey the complexity of theological discourse to everyday people. What had once been an antagonistic relationship between theology and the arts is now a rich, open, and far-reaching dialogue with improvisation as a significant theme. Leading Christian theologian N.T. Wright, as one example, has posited that the central mission of a person of faith is to "discover, through the spirit and prayer, the appropriate ways of improvising the script with constant attention." If we understand "script" in this sense to be the sacred scriptures, the traditions of Christian practice, and the life of the local church, than Wright is suggesting an improvised life of faith based on study, fidelity, and community. As a further example of this ongoing conversation, consider a survey of recent titles in theology: *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics* (Samuel Wells, 2004), *Theology as Improvisation: A Study in the Musical Nature in Theological Thinking* (Nathan Crawford, 2012), *Resurrection City: A Theology of Improvisation* (Peter Heltzel, 2013).

For the past 12 years I have developed a unique perspective on this dialogue as I have gone about my work as a musical artist (clarinetist and composer), teacher, and scholar, focusing on improvised music, while simultaneously serving as Director of Music and Resident Composer at Grace Chicago Church, a small congregation on the north side of Chicago. This collective work, reaching across the border of the secular and the sacred, has led me to observe a number of connections between practices important in improvised music and how I see the parishioners I serve "improvising the script with constant attention," to borrow N.T. Wright's phrase above. When theology is being performed, like great improvisation, there is no grand system at work but rather a series of in-the-moment decisions that rest upon years of experience and study, all funneled through

the mystery of intuition.

My presentation will examine the conference question of how non-artists improvise. I will look at this phenomenon both individually (the parishioners I serve) and collectively (the parish as a whole). Drawing on my dual experience as a working, improvising musician and as a church musician, I will show how the work of the improviser is a mirror for how a person lives out theological concepts in their everyday experience as they seek to reconcile issues of faith and social justice. I will frame my discussion around three main themes I see at work in improvisation and practical theology: the need to disappear (so that something far greater can appear), the recognition of one's place in the "story" (what I refer to as The Already and the Not Yet, borrowing a phrase from early 19th century Dutch theologian Geerhardis Vos), and the importance of risk.

Multi-faceted clarinetist/composer **James Falzone** is an acclaimed member of Chicago's jazz and creative improvised music scene, a veteran contemporary music lecturer and clinician, the longtime Director of Music for Grace Chicago Church and an award-winning composer who has been commissioned by chamber ensembles, choirs and symphony orchestras around the globe. He leads his own ensembles KLANG, The Renga Ensemble, and Allos Musica and has released eight highly regarded recordings on Allos Documents, a label he founded in 2000. James has performed in recital halls, festivals and jazz venues throughout North America and Europe, appears regularly on Downbeat magazine's Critics' and Readers' Polls, and was nominated as the 2011 Clarinetist of the Year by the Jazz Journalist Association. His work has been featured in the New York Times, The Chicago Tribune, New Music Box, Point of Departure, and many other publications.

## Salim Washington

### Crossing the Black Atlantic

My experiences with Paul Gilroy's adroit description of the Black Atlantic deepened considerably upon moving to and teaching in Durban, South Africa. As a musician and also as a band director I have been privileged to experience some of the ways in which music, and particularly jazz, has grown in such a way as to transcend national borders. The South African treatment of jazz music includes many of the tropes of African American, but also repositions the very same tropes to signify upon their experience within South Africa. Furthermore, the sensibility of South African musos often include what musician/ethnomusicologist, Sazi Dlamini, has theorized as triple consciousness. This notion of triple consciousness of course is a signification and complication of DuBois' famous articulation of African American double consciousness. In South Africa this has affected jazz practice historically and continues to evolve to this day. Added to the racialized basis of double consciousness are the living traditions of various ethnicities in the South African cultural landscape that brings an additional fluidity and also a more complex world view. I have learned that in addition to being one of the great modernisms, South African jazz is simultaneously a stellar example of post-modernity and deeply involved in improvising across national boundaries.

The narrative of **Salim Washington's** exposure to music is a remarkable one. Living in the notorious, "Black Bottom" during the 1960-70's, coupled with the explosion of the Black Power movement, unfortunately did not exclude him from being drafted into the neighborhood gang. But Salim's life took a different direction once he picks up the trumpet, which happen to be the instrument of his gang leader. Seeing his potential the gang leader goaded him into learning to play and excused him from the gang. Even entering into Harvard in 1976 could not quell his pursuit to become a jazz musician, thus dropping out of school in order to play with several bands in many towns and cities. At this very same time in his life, expanding into political activism, working and focusing on support for the anti-Bakke decision and the Disinvestment movement against South Africa. 1993 found Salim returning to Harvard and completing his PhD in 2000, while still remaining active as a performer, writer, activist and family man. After teaching African-American History and Culture at Brooklyn College for nearly a decade, Dr. Salim Washington has immigrated to Durban, South Africa. Arriving as a Fulbright Senior Scholar/Artist in 2009, he experienced the great potential of this country, invoking the thought for him to make this his home.



## DIRECTOR VS. INTERPRETATION

Cynthia Plachá

(executive director, agosto foundation, cz)

## CONFERENCE CHAIRS

Allison Johnson

(SOKA University, USA)

David Rothenberg

(NJIT, USA)

Miloš Vojtěchovský

(FAMU CAS, CZ)

## PRODUCTION TEAM

### Project Manager

Anna Friedländer

### Logistics Manager

Ivana Hrušková

### Technical Director

Jan Tranta

### Stage Assistance & Technical Coordination

Dominik Žižka

Michal Kindernay

Marko Bogdanovič

Sara Pinheiro

Susanne Kass

Stanislav Abrahám

### PR Manager

Lucie Šplíchalová

### Graphic Design

Evan Dorlot

### Photography Credits

Bladsurb

Charles lindsay

David Depman

Dominik Žižka

Ds-ArtisD

ExperimetalClub

Ian Mikyska

Joe Snape

Josh Gosfield

Kava Gorna

Laura Krutz

Matěj Bartecký

Michael Hoefne

Nana Asase

Noid

Susan Wilson

Svenseven

Vinciane Verguethen

Vladimir Sabo

## PARTNERS

### MEDIA PARTNERS



### GENERAL PARTNERS



### SPECIAL THANKS

The Agosto Foundation would like to thank all members of our production team, especially our Production Manager Anna Friedländer and Technical Director Jan Tranta. We are grateful for the support of our festival partners, including the staff at Experimental Space NoD for helping co-create vs. Interpretation 2014.

We also would like to express our special gratitude to Dana Recmanová and Michal Kindernay of Školská 28 Gallery and to Maria Cavina of Jedefrau.org for the selfless generosity they have expressed from the very beginning of this project. Your sincere warmth and dedication to the work you do is inspiring and you have our deepest respect.

We are honored to come to know each individual who comprises the local and international community of improvisers, along with each and every organizer, writer, artistic director, teacher, producer, artist, academic, noise-maker and listener who has expressed personal support and enthusiasm throughout the development of this unique project.

We would like to extend a very special thanks to George Lewis, Pauline Oliveros, Miloš Vojtěchovský and David Rothenberg for the example they provide as individuals living «vs. Interpretation».



**AGOSTO**  
FOUNDATION