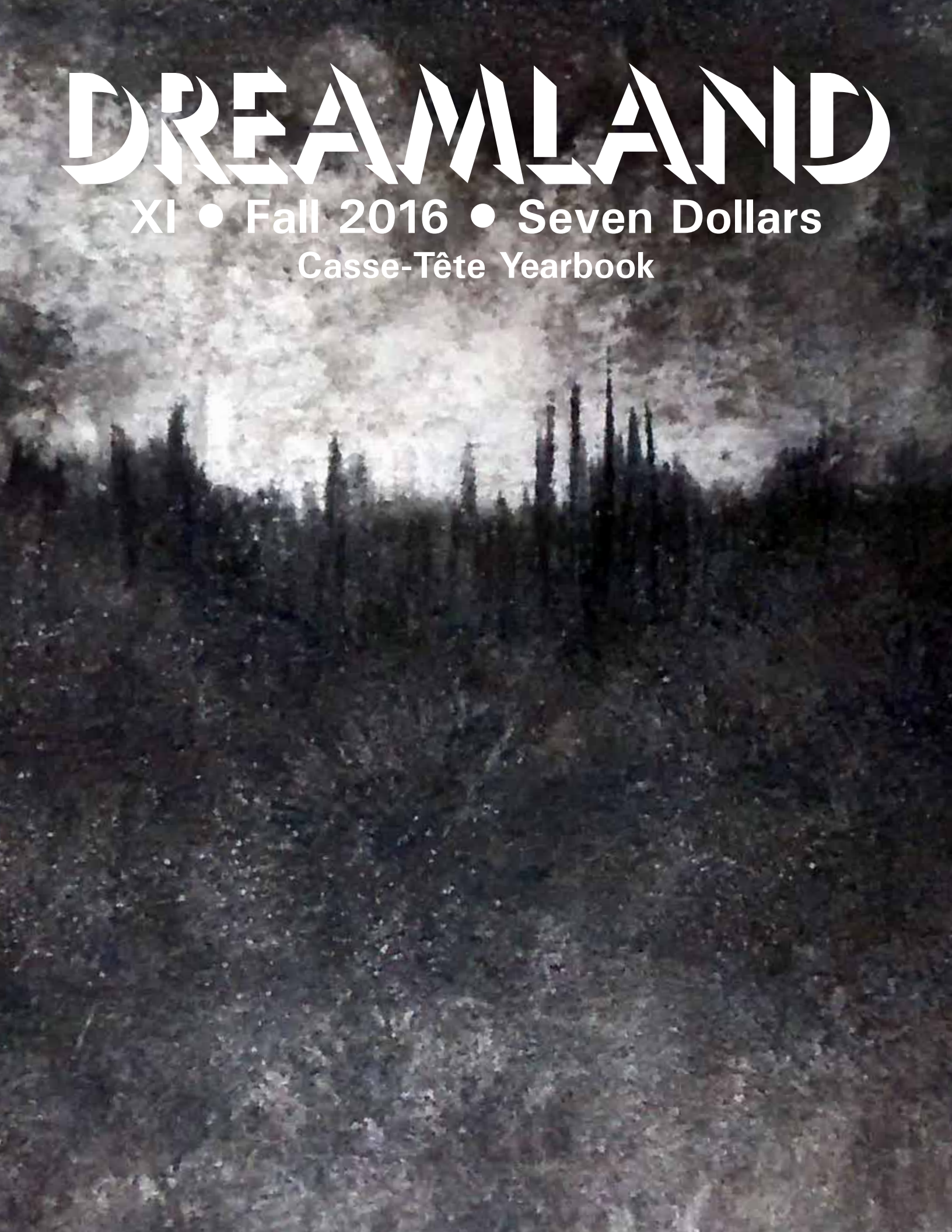


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Casse-Tête Yearbook



Dear reader,

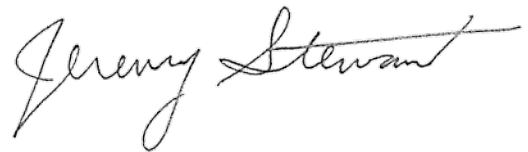
From June 23-26, 2016, the Casse-Tête Arts Society hosted the fourth annual Casse-Tête: A Festival of Experimental Music at The Exploration Place in Prince George, British Columbia. This year was perhaps the best year of the festival yet, with record attendance, and wonderful performances, panel discussions, and workshops by participating artists. The Society thanks everyone who participated in any way with making the event such a great success, including sponsors, donors, volunteers, patrons, and artists.

On the evening of June 25, Sean Bickerton, BC Director of the Canadian Music Centre, presented the festival with a Certificate of Excellence on behalf of the CMC for its distinguished contribution to Canadian music. This is an extraordinary honour for which we are all hugely grateful. It demonstrates a high level of recognition from our provincial and national institutions that we should all take to heart when we consider the function of this event within

the context of the larger music community. In other words, it reminds us that we are having a positive impact.

Let's keep dreaming of what kind of artistic community we can create together, and keep on taking action to make it happen.

Thanks for reading,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy Stewart". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeremy Stewart
Publisher



Christians • photo by Micah Green

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ON THE COVER • *Papermill at Night* by José Delgado-Guevara

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Casse-Tête: A Festival of Experimental Music

Panel Discussion 1

Attracting the Lightning Strike: Collaboration, Chaos, Intuition

Regardless of where a musical performance may be situated on the spectrum of very composed to very improvised, collaboration opens up a space of uncertainty that can produce miraculous or disastrous results—sometimes within the same performance. Defining group improvisation as an emergent system, education theorist Keith Sawyer has written that “interaction among constituent components leads to overall system behavior that could not be predicted from a full and complete analysis of the individual components of the system.” Although the complex musical situations we create are inherently and deeply unpredictable, experience can give rise to working theories of collaboration. What makes a collaboration work for you as a player, as a composer, as a listener? Are there particular successes or failures of collaborative process that have shaped your artistic practice, and if so, how? How do you identify collaborative situations that are likely to give rise to satisfactory outcomes?

Moderator: Jeremy Stewart

Participants: Virginia Genta, François Houle, David Vanzan, Darren Williams, Kathleen Yearwood, Stanley Jason Zappa

Transcribed by Beki Tubbs; edited by Jonathon Wilcke.

This discussion took place June 25, 2016, at The Exploration Place in Prince George, British Columbia.

Jeremy Stewart: Today’s panel discussion is entitled “Attracting the Lightning Strike: Collaboration,

Chaos, Intuition.” We have amazing participants including Virginia Genta, François Houle, David Vanzan, Darren Williams, Kathleen Yearwood and Stanley Jason Zappa. I am your moderator, Jeremy Stewart. We are going to discuss theories of collaboration and practical experiences of collaboration. Let’s begin by hearing from each panellist on the topic as given, and we’ll carry on to questions and discussion from there.

I was reading a paper by an educational theorist that talks about improvisation as an emergent system, meaning that an improvisation can be greater than the sum of its parts. The idea that an improvisation can be greater than the sum of its parts, as an idea, is quite simple, but in the practice of collaborative improvisation, the act of playing together, becomes very complex in how this idea emerges in practice. So the question I would like to address is, why is the process of collaborative improvisation so complex?

Stanley Z.: I think improvisation is probably different for all peoples of all cultures. It could be as simple as having no cream for the coffee in the morning as something that derails the whole day, or it could be as complicated as “I’m going for a sound, I’m not getting the sound, the tool I have is making a sound I don’t want to have happen,” and I will reflect only on that sound that came out of that horn that night with the help of the people who heard those sounds and were horrified by them. It is a complex question, but I think one way to look at music and improvisation is less of a process leading to a commodity, which will then be later judged into perpetuity by experts and

non-experts alike, but to say that improvisation is a way of being. Music making for me has always been a deeply irrational and self-sabotaging manoeuvre, but it's one I can't keep myself from doing, and each year I say, "No more, I am going to throw all the horns to the bottom of the sea and get a managerial job at a giant retailer." But then again, something always comes up and, like with any addiction, there I am again engaged in highly irrational behaviour, not caring about the commodity, but just trying to see what can be relieved of my daily life's pressures through this experience and can we shift the use of time from serving another to nourishing ourselves and not really worrying about what comes after, whether it is good or not.

Virginia Genta: Yeah, but what is rational?

Stanley Z.: I think we all know how rational feels, and there again it is a very subjective and personal thing.

François Houle: What you're talking about is expectation.

Stanley Z.: That could be. And expectation certainly has been a theme since the dawn of time, and there have been all kinds of schools of thought created to dissuade us from having expectations, but expectations are still always present in music making.

Jeremy S.: Last night during the Stanley Jason Zappa Quintet set, you asked me what more I wanted from a piece of music than a beginning, middle, and end. What makes a collaboration work? What are you searching for in a collaborative improvisation besides that beginning, middle, and end?

Stanley Z.: Nothing.

Jeremy S.: Nothing?

Stanley Z.: Nothing. Maybe I'm searching for a couple of laughs, but I don't know if asking for laughter is something I can ask of a collaboration. A collaboration is going happen; it's not for me to ask for anything. I am serving the collaboration and I am serving music, and if I get thrown under a bus and ground down by the wheels, then live by the sword, die by the sword. So I'm not asking anything. It's my own damn fault for standing on the railroad tracks and it's my own damn fault if I get run down by the train, but I can control whether I do so with my boots on or not.

Jeremy S.: Something that I would identify as a theme in what I know about your music and writing and what I'm hearing from you today is what might be characterized as a conflation of musical and spiritual criteria.

Stanley Z.: That could very well be true.

Jeremy S.: What I'm intending is an explicitly musical question, and you're giving me a spiritual answer, which I think is perfectly valid.

Stanley Z.: Music for me has been reduced to feelings. I don't know anything about tonality anymore—I don't know—I don't care about quality of sound, I have dirt on my pants, I have dirt in my sound, but if at the end of the thing it feels good and if it was recorded and if on reflection I can get some tiny scintilla of joy, then it's a success. And I hope it is the same for others because—and I know this isn't necessarily a musical answer—I know what awaits me afterwards. After the music is done, there is a polyester blue vest with my name on it. So while I'm here, I'm just gonna give myself to music. And if it's a D minor chord or a C sharp out of tune by $\frac{2}{3}$ of a cent, that's none of my goddamn business, because we only have so much time and life can be horrible.

Jeremy S.: That's very good.

Stanley Z.: Life can be very long and very horrible.

Jeremy S.: If I may be permitted one last follow up before we move on. So why collaboration rather than solo improvisation?

Stanley Z.: Because fellowship has died to me, and I think ultimately you have to mix the chocolate and the peanut butter to really get the taste sensation you're looking for. And it's just not always gonna be available, and so when the chocolate and the peanut butter are available, you should collaborate.

François H.: I shouldn't.

Stanley Z.: When it is available to me, I will attempt to collaborate as long as I can because, again, it is fellowship—music is spiritual. To me, there is a value in worshipping the music with others. I don't know if the commodity that results is worth anything or that anyone is going to care, but it was an hour, or two hours, or four hours that I wasn't turning cat food into the right direction.

Jeremy S.: Do they call it vamping it? Is it vamping the cat food?

Stanley Z.: They call it "zoning."

Jeremy S.: Zoning. Thank you very much.

Stanley Z.: Let's kick it to François.

Jeremy S.: If you would be so kind.

François Houle: Okay. It's interesting listening to Stanley and reflecting upon my own take on the idea of collaboration. I have a lot of conflicting thoughts about it. I would say I love collaborating, but then I also don't like it. I like things organized

in other ways rather than just collaborating, but also there are many forms of collaboration. There are playing collaborations, there are mapped out collaborations, there are collaborations with no set expectations, with no economic outcome whatsoever. So it gets very complex very quickly, and you can't just say "I like collaborations" or "I don't like collaborations"; there is a proviso behind it. In my experience, in playing improvised music for the last 25-30 years, there have been many great situations and a lot of very unfortunate ones, but I've learned from all of them. Stanley and I are saying the same thing: you can learn from collaborations and you leave them. I grew up in an environment where the word "no" was the first thing that would come out whenever I tried anything, and as a six-year-old, when you're told "no," you say "Aw that's not fair" and try to figure out a way to do it anyway. And I fought with that for a long time as a classically trained musician having gone to university only to realize at the end of that whole cycle of completing a master's degree and whatnot, that I had lost myself, my identity, and my primal instincts for wanting to make a sound. From that point on I had to figure out a way to regain that feeling, that satisfaction of scratching a chair or banging pots and try to find what it is about the fabric of my being that needed to do make these sounds and all the social, economic, political manifestations of my identity and my persona. It took about two years of playing, traveling and checking out musical and non-musical things, to finally come back to this idea that my main motivation for calling myself a musician was to always have that thought inside, in mind, as my primary motivation to tap into, the feeling of making a sound when you're a young kid for the first time and realizing "Oh, I just made a sound, that was awesome." The first time I blew through a clarinet, it was a massive squeak and I had a big smile on my face and it was great! And my teacher said, "Oh no, no, no, that's not how it's gonna go. You have to practice your

scales, it's gonna take you a long time to do that," and I was like "Fuck! I wanna squeak, man!" And fortunately I was a good student in the sense that I took the lessons and I worked on my shit and everything, but that first impulse got lost in the process and I had to regain it, and I got to regain it through collaboration and improvisation and meeting people and realizing that there are a lot of broken souls, a lot of people who have lost touch with their prime directive, if you want to call it that. And when I'm teaching—I teach at university, I teach at college, I do a lot of teaching to make a living—most of my teaching is geared towards pointing people in the direction of finding themselves, finding the primal instincts of making sound and building from there rather than learning theory and solfege and harmony and all that stuff and building the artifices so that the student can become a so-called professional musician. Trying to become a "professional musician" just takes you further and further away from the truth. But at the same time, learning the professional skills is also very necessary because instinctively, when you're a musician, you have an understanding of the laws of sound, the laws of music, not the theory, you understand how air moves, and how you can make it move, and how you can impact somebody's feeling. I can make you fall in love with my sound, I can make you cringe, I can make you sick by playing sound, and so when I became aware of these aspects of sound production through the collaborative process, I started to seek out people who could bring a shamanistic model or ideal into the music. So for me, music is, the collaborative process of music is, a very visceral thing; if I don't feel the empathy and connection with somebody at the very deepest level, it's fine, but I'll try again with somebody else or maybe I'll try again with the same person a year later to see if we've figured some shit out. And the beautiful thing is that people change all the time, constantly, so I never give up, I never give up on people, I never give up on people who want to try.

I give up on people who don't want try, but again I don't really give up because sometimes they'll figure something out or find the right combination of people to collaborate with that allows them to express where they're at in this time cycle, and that's a beautiful thing.

Openness of spirit in collaboration is also very problematic because it imposes constraints on the individuals that you're collaborating with: I'm here, I do what I do, I play the clarinet, I'm going to collaborate with a guy who plays 120 decibel metal guitar, and it's not going to work so well unless I do something about it, like amplify myself or otherwise adjust to the needs of the situation, but maybe I don't want to adjust. And if I go in to a collaboration without compromising, I impose serious limitations on the other person to be able to express themselves, so I won't do that collaboration. I will say, "You know what, it would be fun, but I think I'll pass." So fortunately with experience and age you learn to say "no" to a lot of things, but there are filters in place that allow you to position yourself in favourable situations where you're able to express yourself.

I have a little anecdote: there was a point in time I was in Cologne and I was playing at a loft in with Joëlle Léandre, Carlos Zingaro, and Paul Lovens, and I was playing a bass clarinet solo. I had a bass clarinet which is strange because I never played bass clarinet, but I was playing bass clarinet... Carlos Zingaro had a pile of coins in his pocket and he was shifting them around and I could hear his coins. I walked up to him with my bass clarinet while playing sounds while looking at him, and he grabbed some coins and put them in the bell of the clarinet and I started moving the coins around. It became a beautiful collaboration and we were having a great time. And we got totally sucked into this idea of playing the bass clarinet with these coins rolling around and rattling and everything. And then, just in the middle of nowhere, Paul

Lovens dropped this bass drum bomb that totally startled me, and the coins went flying all over the place, and Lovens starts this drum thing and I was very taken aback. I was like, “fuckin asshole, that was a beautiful solo! I was totally digging into what I was doing.” In the fragility of the moment I got into a narcissistic exercise, and I completely forgot about how what I was doing could connect with Lovens at a collaborative level. What I was doing was totally isolated, and I felt like, “Ooh I don’t think I’ll try to do that again, maybe I should always keep a 360 degree perspective on things.” So that’s one case where a collaborative thing didn’t work so well. I’ve never played with Paul Lovens again. We run into each other at airports and stuff and it’s all good, but I don’t even think that he thought twice about the situation; he just said, “Fuck! I’m going to play now.” And I don’t even know if he was pissed off or not at what I was doing, but what came out of it was that that event really forced me to think about not being so caught up in my own little sound ever and to always be appreciative of what I’m doing with the perspective of what everybody else is getting out of it and how can I make what I’m doing inclusive. But that’s just one case in point of so many cases where I drew something out of it and it helped me grow as a musician, so failures are good.

Jeremy S.: Thank you François. Let’s kick it over to the other side of the room . . . Virginia, if you want tell us about collaboration in your practice.

Virginia G.: What do you mean by “collaboration?”

Jeremy S.: For example, you just played your first solo performance at the Untempered Festival of Dissonant Arts in Penticton at the Shatford Centre, which tells me that, since you’ve been playing for many years, collaboration must be hugely important to your experience of performing.

Virginia G.: Yes, of course. I haven’t done a solo for

20 years. And then I thought, “Why not, I think I’m ready now,” because I think that to learn you have to be in touch with others. Of course, you can learn from yourself, but if you learn from what is around you, which is basically just an expression of what you are, then you can grow faster, but that’s just my point of view.

Jeremy S.: Your long term ongoing project Jooklo Duo is very collaboratively focused, not only within the duo, but also you work with a lot of outside collaborators, and what makes you want to do that?

Virginia G.: Working with someone is good for my ears. If it’s just the two of us, of course I can still develop my own thing, but I can also usually follow the same patterns over and over. When you collaborate, it’s supposed to be an exchange, and you learn something from working with someone else. But maybe you’re not going to notice you’re learning in the moment, you’re going to realize there’s something more. And you can’t really just play with whomever, you have to find the people with whom you can express yourself without talking even. I think I’m always seeking these kinds of people because I don’t want to collaborate with everybody. You have to find who you are and who you are more connected with otherwise it’s just going to be a waste of time sometimes.

Jeremy S.: And where do you suppose that connection comes from? Is there a way of telling in advance if you’ll connect with another musician? Do you ever get surprised by a failure to connect with somebody that you initially have a good feeling about?

Virginia G.: Yeah, oh yeah, I’ve been surprised a few times. Sometimes when I first approach a collaboration it’s really hard to get it going. And then sometimes if you’re working with someone that you maybe feel uncomfortable at first you

can still figure out that something could happen and then you can just try to keep going—not try—you just keep going and see what happens. But sometimes you play once and then you feel that the collaboration is not going to be valuable. But things change during the years. As François, said people change.

François H.: I have had really long term collaborations, like 20-year plus collaborations, with Joëlle Léandre and Benoit Delbecq, who happen to be French musicians, but every time we get together and play it's become an accumulation of our individual experiences we add those experiences to the mix every time. We don't work together all the time, but when we get together it's always a new chapter and it's very interesting.

Virginia G.: Yeah. You pick up from where you left it.

François H.: Yeah and it's beautiful. But I'm curious to find out, and I've talked to Mats Gustafsson about that too because he tends to collaborate with the same people year in and year out, and you perform a lot as your duo. Do you ever come to crisis points where you find you do the same thing and you ask, "Why don't we try something different?" Do you discuss materials or do you just work it out?

Virginia G.: Oh yeah. We are not sure about anything. And we do plenty of different things. When we are at home we may work on playing different things and taking different approaches, but in the end the new things we try are not so different from what we usually do.

François H.: What if you get to a point of crisis where you just can't find any solutions anymore?

Virginia G.: Well, you always find solutions, yes.

Jeremy S.: And it's experience that is the basis

of that trust. But would you say the experience is specifically around working with your usual collaborator? Do you believe you will continue to find solutions because you've worked with someone in particular?

Virginia G.: Yes. I think you just keep going and things take care of themselves most of the time. You have to believe in doing something with one person. If you don't care then it's not going happen.

François H.: But there's such a strong implicit trust in each other that you can always get over the bumps.

Virginia G.: Of course. Yeah, it's fine. It's good to get bumps sometimes.

Darren W.: Often improvisers will just perform. They haven't met each other. They're aware of each other through recordings and the Internet, but often they play in situations where they've just met, and that's also very interesting, because then you have go in with some kind of modicum of faith that you're going to be able to pull the performance off with whomever you're sharing the show with. It's an interesting process.

Jeremy S.: Thank you Virginia. Kathleen, maybe you would like to take a turn and tell us about your experience with the collaborative process. In the last few years you've done some work with a project called "Ordeal," is that right?

Kathleen Yearwood: My background is structured improvisation and I have functioned as a band leader since I've been very young. And the way I function as a band leader is to leave open space for soloists where they can just go nuts. And I try to look for what they really love, what they can't not do, and let them do that thing. I've worked with some difficult people and some very gifted people, one of whom was a bass player who I worked

with for many years in Ordeal. He would come to rehearsals and what he would play never made sense, it would just be a distraction. It was very frustrating, and I would be very patient and wait and wait and wait, and finally I'd say, "Rich pull it together, fuck!" And the next time he'd come back he would transform the piece, he would transform it into something completely different, through magic, through timing, through counterpoint, through genius, and I'd just be like "This is why I play with this guy." It was always improvised and we'd play off of each other; it was a matter of timing really, and I always relate improvisation with comedy. I do a lot of comedy in my set. Obviously it's utterly hilarious as you know, right, because it's all about timing and being able to read body language in the other person. I've had lots of failed collaborations and I'm looking forward to failing many more. I ride horses too and they have a sense of timing and if you're out of time you're on the ground. It's exactly the same in improvising, it's exactly the same. So if I'm looking for someone to collaborate with, I look at body language first. I went to the CBC once and the producers had hired the musicians themselves, but I requested one particular soloist that they did not initially hire. I looked around at the body language and both CBC producers were sitting very spread out and openly, like they couldn't take up enough space, and they had put my amplifier in another studio and were separating the sound. If I wanted to turn up my volume, I had to get up, put my guitar aside, and walk to the other studio to turn up the volume. No one helped me carry gear; it was like a combination of attitudes, like they were afraid to be chivalrous but they weren't afraid to take up space. I couldn't collaborate with them. So my soloist came in and he's a genius on the oboe. I describe him as that because he worked on a recording we did, he came in and did like five songs in two hours, and just blew it away. So he came in and did his thing and then afterwards in the elevator one of the producers said, "Well you

described this guy as a genius, frankly I'm not seeing it." And that was the end. And the way you guys are describing collaboration is that it's like a relationship, like we're in relationship therapy, and we have to communicate and sometimes it doesn't work.

François H.: Yeah, and if collaborating is too much work you ask yourself whether you want invest anymore energy into it, and if not, you move on.

Darren W.: But how is it too much work?

Kathleen Y.: It's too much work because there's no communication.

François H.: It's because of personalities. Sometimes people invite me out and I feel that I really can't play with this person and I just feel totally vibed out by it. Sometimes these first meeting thing—it's like love at first sight, and even if you don't know the person or you've heard the person for many years and you go into this situation and you play, it's like "Wow we really like playing with each other!" You don't really question it. Usually that's a pretty nice starting point; it's a pretty good feeling. And there are other situations where playing together is not easy but still there's something there, and it's worth investing some energy to try to figure it out and then the collaboration blossoms very quickly. Or maybe nothing happens, and that's just the way it is and you don't really want to invest too much time. Stanley was saying, life is very short; I don't want to really develop a relationship that's toxic from the get-go. I don't need that in my life.

But one time I was chatting with Evan Parker and I was telling him that I got a recording of him playing with the pianist Borah Bergman from New York, and I told Parker that I found it to be an amazing recording. It's a great recording, I

think it's on Black Saint. And Parker said, with a little smile on his face, "Next time you're in New York you should go check him out." And I thought seeing Bergman could be interesting, but Parker he had a little smile on his face when he told me to check out Bergman that made me wonder if there was something going on with Bergman. I went to New York and phoned Bergman and told him that I liked his recording with Parker, and I introduced myself and asked if Bergman would like to get together. Bergman invited me to his place on the Upper West Side. The clutter in his apartment was unbelievable; there were five or six grand pianos in a tiny little room that's half the size of the room we're in right now, and each piano was in various states of decomposition, big nests of wires and everything. And he's got a wall mounted with a stereo system and a million cassette tapes—no CDs, nothing—just cassette tapes. We started chatting and I realized that Bergman is a bit of an eccentric, really interesting you know, and we talk about music and stuff. And he invited me to do some playing, so I pulled out my clarinet and he grabbed a tape and puts it in the stereo. It's a tape of him playing the piano. He pressed play and sits back and waited for me to start playing with the tape. And I'm like, "Dude, I, like I want to play with you, I don't want to play with the tape." And he responded, "But that's me on the tape." So from that very moment I felt like, "Okay this is going south... this guy is out there." So I decided to humor him and I played for about five minutes with the tape and stopped. He looked at me and asked, "Why did you stop?" And I told him, "Well to be honest with you, Borah, it's a bit weird... I came here to play with you and you're getting me to play with the tape." And his response was, "Well but that's the same playing on the tape that I would do here." We got into this long conversation and it was fascinating. Since I left his place, I've never seen him again, I've never played with him again. But I learned tons from this situation. Anyway,

it was one of those situations where you just go "What!?"

Kathleen Y.: But with regards to timing, in the studio, for example, the producer tends to separate the musicians. We record as a band in the same room as much as we can because we can see when someone's going to make a change or when someone has finished with an idea. People operate on three second timing; this is how you start a sentence at the same time with someone, you're kind of following your heart, and this works in music too. So it's not even so much listening as the feel of being in the presence of that person. So if you're playing with a tape this makes interaction difficult.

Jeremy S: The body language approach to getting to know your collaborators or get a feeling from them would be very undermined by that. Thank you very much Kathleen. Darren, if you would speak a bit about collaboration.

Darren W.: I've been doing freely improvised music for almost 20 years. I've only started playing in a solo situation recently, and most of my music has been collaborative. When I started getting into improvised music I was interested in the idea of improvisation before I discovered Evan Parker or Han Bennink, I was still coming off jazz and just getting into the Ornette stuff and Albert Ayler. But it seemed to me that even in the free jazz recordings you can still experience the speed of intuition that was happening, particularly on live recordings, and I found that fascinating. When I was at school doing my music degree, I took a course in contemporary improvisation, which, and I think it still, is taught by Casey Sokol. It was a class made up of people playing a range of different instruments. There would always be a couple of guitarists, a couple of piano players, percussionists, and it was always led. The first month of the class was a lot of conducted improvisation so

there was the element of structure and it was based on Butch Morris, but that's how I learned about collaboration and becoming familiar with collaboration. And of course after a performance, either with an ensemble within the class or all the class playing, the class would engage in discourse about the performance, like how did people feel about it? And maybe there was a difference of opinion between the musicians, and this difference of opinion set the mode for how I subsequently approached music in kind of an open situation by making no predetermined assumptions and trying not to have predetermined assumptions, about how things were going to go. I definitely have noticed that there is a certain level of predictability and a certain kind of unpredictability, and there are some tropes that creep in. So I performed in the First Annual Untempered Festival of Dissonant Arts and at the end of the festival there was a large group improvisation with Stanley and I and Virginia and Dave, and a number of others. As soon as improvisation is open to numbers greater than a duo or trio, you can slide into the danger zone and the risk is greater. There were about eight of us in that thing and it was interesting participating in group performances where the dynamic is careful or polite, at least in places, in the beginning, and so it's a trickle when people are trying to feel each other out. I thought well I could just muscle in there and say [imitates the sound of noise] for ten seconds and then just be done. But I had a sense that if I did that it would affect the others around me, particularly those who don't really know me. And so it's kind of a weird thing when you're playing with eight people whom you don't know that well, playing-wise, because then you don't know it's like, so you have to have faith. But if I'm playing with someone I know, then there's a level of "Yeah, well, this is happening now, it's probably going to change." I'm always fascinated by the one person who stays on something that is not immediately perceptible by everyone else, and then for whatever reason everyone else drops out

and then that person or couple of people who have been maintaining this one thing are, that's when it's heard. So you get a diminuendo down to the people who have been persisting.

I've had some bad collaborations where I felt that there wasn't that many successes and I've had ones that were really successful and I've had collaborations where, ideally for me, at least speaking from my own perspective, where when we're engaged and things are just moving at the speed of thought between myself and the people I'm playing with or they're moving at the speed of intuition, which seems to be a bit faster than the speed of thought. And there's nothing quite like it when you're right on with something and sometimes it's almost like you enter a space where you're not even aware of what you're playing or what the pitch set is or anything; it just becomes an autonomic way of playing. For me it's very visceral and I like playing with the idea that the breath that I'm putting in this horn could be my last and I definitely like a nice push-pull. I never played team sports as a kid, like soccer, hockey, fuck that nasty crap, but music, engaging with others in music, whether it's one other person or seven other people, I love that, and I strive to be a team player even if that means fucking people over within the ensemble. You have to be comfortable with being, at times, a musical asshole.

Virginia G.: Sometimes someone has to wash the dishes.

François H.: Raymond Strid calls it "killing your babies."

Stanley Z.: Kill the pig to save its life.

Jeremy S.: Vijay Iyer has an article that talks about an experience playing in a large ensemble and about all the work that they did rehearsing and how dynamic the rehearsals were. But he says

that in the performance he was very sad because it devolved into the “predictable ecstatic wailing,” is what I believe his exact words were in that article, so I think I know what you’re talking about. I’m going to ask David to share some remarks.

David Vanzan: I have nothing to say.

Jeremy S.: What about washing the dishes? Tell me about washing the dishes.

David V.: I think some people have hands that are made for water, they don’t ruin their hands while working with water.

Jeremy S.: So is this a division of labour thing, like some people can do this kind of thing, some people can do that kind of thing?

David V.: Yes, it must be. Some people must follow that path and not do some other stuff otherwise it’s a mess. That’s what I think.

Jeremy S.: So what are the kinds of things that some people should do and some other people should not do?

David V.: That’s the game of music to find out what you are to do. If you find it, you do it, you don’t have to try. If you try, it’s going to be you lost. Or you have to be determined and follow the things you have inside, which are difficult to find, but you have to follow that small stuff and not be confused by what other people do. Sometimes people look at other people and they say “Okay, if he can do it, I can do it.” But that’s not the way to do improvised music. You have to follow yourself and then when you are aware about your power you don’t care anymore about the others. But it’s a difficult long process, it’s not [snaps fingers], it’s not that easy. So in my opinion everybody can do whatever they want, and I do my stuff, they do their stuff. And I like to criticize others to help them to go on the right path, not to destroy

everybody, just maybe push that point of view and not just because it’s good to play music or whatever, just do this because I’m looking for my personality, which is important when I go to a show because if you do a show you have to express something, you don’t have to do stuff.

Virginia G.: Show your tricks.

David V.: Yes, it’s not about tricks or whatever you know it’s more about energies. And for me it’s more about energies because we are energies as humans, souls, bodies, elements, and all the stuff you can’t really describe, that’s what we are. And with music, I really think that life is the most important thing and life is uncatchable, so the alchemic ring of the show is the most important thing. It’s based on sound. So I don’t know about collaboration, I don’t know about anything, I just know about my point of view and nothing else, so I can’t help anybody. I can’t say “Yeah that sounds good or whatever,” just basic stuff. I hope sometimes I can help some people to get out of trouble sometimes with a stupid comment maybe, but not an expert comment, because I’m not an expert.

Jeremy S.: Yeah, I think that many people would resist risking hurting someone’s feelings even to share a comment, not an expert’s comment coming from above, but a fellow artist’s comment; they wouldn’t share because they would be afraid of being perceived as impolite, but sharing a comment is a service.

David V.: But Kathleen said she played a long time with the difficult bass player and at some point she said “fuck” to him. That was a comment and the guy changed, and that’s . . .

Kathleen Y.: I obviously have no filters so if I really hate something, but I’ll just go up and say “that was interesting.”

François H.: Oh, I hate that word (interesting).

Kathleen Y.: But if I don't say that you know then I had something to say, but I didn't say it, and that's the worst insult of all. Or years ago I saw someone approach a musician after a show and say, "Yeah, keep practicing"; it was evil. But this is so valuable, feedback, not from an expert but from someone who is committed to music. And David used the word alchemy, and François used the word shamanism, and I like to use the word "duende," which is stolen from Spanish but it means "the dark power." When you slide into the duende you feel like it's this thing that comes

up through your feet and moves your body and your breath and your soul and then you become this thing.

Jeremy S.: I want to thank all our participants for their wonderful comments. As my parting comment, I'll say that I hope we all continue the conversations that have begun today because it seems that there is a lot more to say and hear. And so thank you all, and let's enjoy the rest of the festival.



Midden • photo by Micah Green

Casse-Tête: A Festival of Experimental Music

Panel Discussion 2

Musical Literatures: Documentation, In and Outside Texts

For centuries, the documentation of music—notation, recordings, music histories, criticism—has arguably been as important to the transmission of musical ideas and practices as musical sound itself. In the 20th century, artists working in profoundly diverse traditions challenged the adequacy of standard notation, whether for its philosophical and political implications or its musical limitations, and sought to create alternatives. Documentation of all kinds has tended to sit uneasily with some communities' insistence on the primacy of the personal connection, the personal stake in a musical tradition; recordings, histories, and other media can separate the music from the people. How have notation and documentation informed and/or deformed your musical practice? Do traditional notational approaches limit musical thinking, and if so, how can those boundaries best be perforated? Do musical texts produce a net gain by broadening reception, or a net loss by alienating music from its own contexts and communities?

Moderator: Jeremy Stewart

Rebecca Bruton, Jose Delgado-Guevara, Cathy Fern Lewis, Rodney Sharman, Alexandra Spence

Transcribed by Beki Tubbs; edited by Jonathon Wilcke.

This discussion took place June 26, 2016, at The Exploration Place in Prince George, British Columbia.

Jeremy Stewart: Good afternoon everyone. Catherine Sikora, who was a performer at the festival in 2014, was one of the people that I

sent a draft version of the panel discussion topic to help me draft it, and her take on it was very, very different than what I had in mind. I had been thinking about the country blues and the complaints on the part of both white and black musicians about the difficulty of notating some of the ideas with standard notation. This particular issue caused a transmission failure, a failure to transmit the blues through notation; white musicians were learning from notation or thinking in terms of notation with respect to the blues and, the criticism of learning the blues through notation stated that the blues as played by whites was inauthentic, and that transmitting the blues through notation was a false way of encountering that tradition. Catherine's response was to say that notation is a very convenient way of communicating musical ideas and everyone who has a firm grasp of it has an easier time of musical communication, which was a technically sound response. So I'm very much looking forward to the diversity of panellists' responses as they've had sort of a chance to consider that.

The first panellist that it's my pleasure to introduce today is the composer Rodney Sharman.

Rodney Sharman: The biggest failure in terms of the argument about oral tradition versus notation is Socrates. Socrates did not believe in the power of the written word and did not want anything to be written down, yet we only know about him because Aristophanes wrote about him in *The Frogs* as a parody. And because Plato wrote down his ideas in the *Symposium* and we only know what he thought because someone else wrote it

down, and of course it's coming to us with exactly the kind of flaw that you are talking about in terms of inauthenticity and the blues, about which I know very little.

The second thing that occurred to me is that I used to write everything down by hand and sometimes that involved uses of proportional notations, special symbols to indicate exactly what I wanted. And somehow during the course of my lifetime, the handwritten score has become despised. Some performers will not perform from them no matter how good your handwriting is and that competitions will not accept a handwritten score. I first became aware of this in a classist First World, Second World, Third World way when I was on an international jury around 2004, or 10 years ago. We went through everything and I was on the panel with a marvelous improvising musician from Amsterdam and Robert H.P. Platz, who was a conductor and a highly respected German composer. By the time we were finished we had a number of pieces that were virtually identical, and I waited until the end of juries to be able to manipulate things as best I can. I said, "I will guarantee you that every composer that we have chosen is from Japan, Germany, the UK, and maybe two from the United States." There were some obvious Italian scores too. I pointed out that every piece that had been put on brown paper, because of course people in the old Soviet countries that were just emerging at that time didn't have access to pretty paper or to computer programs or any of these things, and I also said that likely we have only chosen a handful of women, and I went through and I said these are the personal voices which I saw that didn't have the kind of documentation, recordings, pretty scores, handsome notation. So I made them choose their only selections from Eastern Europe, their only selections by women, and their only selections by Canadians also as it turns out, things that were not so elegant on the page. And we have to be

very, very careful as musicians, particularly those of us who are examining scores and choosing things, that sometimes music that looks really bad sounds really good, either because it is too dense on the page or because it is too bare and we cannot see beyond these things. Now, I've entered into the third topic without really talking about the second topic. Selfishly, in terms of my own needs, I have noticed how computer notation has affected my work and that sometimes what I do is, even though it is very simple on the page, computer programs rebel against because it has three independent voices on one staff, for example, with harp writing or whatever that even very accomplished people like Remy Siu in Vancouver, who is kind of a Sibelius maven, even though he has hours to untangle it would say, "Why don't you just take white out, write in that one note by hand, photocopy it, and put it on a .pdf?" The fourth thing, which I promised Cathy Lewis I would talk about, are those performers who use even the most precise scores as a point of departure to do their own thing, which, who knows, is maybe what Plato did to Socrates. I've worked with Cathy for a very long time; the first time she sang a piece of music of mine I was probably 17 or 18 years old. Cathy's approach to music tends to be "Could we just take the last three bars and repeat them twice before we begin, wouldn't that be a good idea? What do you think about adding a cello to this? What do you think about . . . ?" She always gives some kind of creative input that I usually sleep on before I answer at any time. And this has had the effect certainly on Linda Smith, the composer whose work you heard Cathy and Marina perform last night, who just said, "Here you are, Cathy—do whatever you want" because that's an easier way of dealing with her. So those are my four big areas of thought on notation and its failures and its successes. And it is true that there are some things that just can't be notated in standard Western notation, though standard Western notation is pretty good on the whole for

all sorts of levels of precision, but there are places where the precision completely breaks down, rhythm, pitch, timbre, quality of attack, all sorts of things, and for all of those performers for whom of course different articulations in particular mean different things.

Jeremy S.: Thank you very much Rodney. And now, I am pleased to turn over the floor to Alexandra Spence.

Alexandra Spence: One thing I would like to acknowledge is that documentation is not the outlaw like you were saying with blues music; the document is just a document. I think in my own personal experience I early on became a little bit disinterested in notated scores and I haven't really done much notation for quite a long time because my music is perhaps more sound-based than music in a lot of ways and often more timbral or textural. I'm coming predominately from an improvisation background and find that a lot of the stuff I play is microtonal or hard to notate within strict Western notation. Only very recently have I become interested in more alternative ways of notation, like graphic notation, and more open ended scores, and simple, rule-based instructions that can then be interpreted by the performer. I often don't know if I feel comfortable identifying as a composer because of the strict differentiation between composer/performer and I feel like I fall in between and so maybe that leads to not notating stuff very strictly. What you [Rodney] were saying about computer programs is interesting because I feel like they really dictate how the work comes out. With my own experience, I do a lot of electroacoustic music as well and various programs will make me document or compose in a different way. So there's a program called "Pro Tools," which is a very linear program, so it's kind of like notation: everything goes in a line. The program "Ableton," on the other hand, is sample-based and the structure makes me think about music in

a totally different way and I wouldn't even know how to notate that on a score.

Another thing I want to talk about is field recording. So in terms of documentation, I do a lot of field recording and quite often carry around some kind of recording device with me. But then again, the recording is never the same as the sound, it's not an exact replication, it's a totally different thing once it becomes recorded. For one, the recording device doesn't hear the same as our ears hear so it'll sound different no matter how we try to make it sound, and there's also a number of issues in terms of if you're recording in a foreign country and issues of cultural appropriation and exoticism and how you use the sound or how you respect where the sound is coming from. I don't normally just present a field recording on its own, I will process it or manipulate it and put it within other sounds. It's a very personal thing for me because it's connected to the experience that I had when recording it and associate it with the memory of that and so it kind of brings in its own intrinsic narrative.

Jeremy S.: Thank you very much. Jose Delgado-Guevara.

Jose Delgado-Guevara: Well, it's hard to follow after those two great statements because I agree with both of them. There are limitations and advantages to everything we do, but I think in my own practice what is important is I want to communicate in both ways: from a performer's point of view, and as a composer: what am I communicating to the performer? And, how's that going to translate to the audience? Communication for me is very important. It doesn't matter what I'm using, like written instructions or Western notation or graphics or just talking to the performers, the important thing for me is to make sure that what I want is understood. Sometimes I also keep things as a secret. I know as a violinist



Sean Bickerton (left), BC Director of the Canadian Music Centre, presents a Certificate of Excellence for Distinguished contribution to Canadian Music to Casse-Tête, accepted on the festival's behalf by Jeremy Stewart. Photo by Micah Green.





Jooklo Zappa • photo by Micah Green



Kathleen Yearwood • photo by Micah Green



Yawns a Fissure • photo by Micah Green

what techniques will work and what will not work. If I want a particular sound, I'm never going to tell the audience. I'm never going to notate something like "make an effort to sound an F natural harmonic on the E string," because it is very hard to do. I'm never going to write that down, but I know the harmonic always going to crack a little bit. But notating that crack is impossible because I don't know when it's going to happen. So all those elements, I know they're going to happen, but it's impossible to notate that. So I use both, and manipulate everything that I have on hand in order to communicate what I want to communicate. I use what we call "Western" notation and combine that with a set of instructions, and it's worked so far for me. I've tried graphic notation and the problem with graphic scores for me is sometimes I feel that I don't work too much in textures to actually make it work. I'm more very note oriented, and the textures that I want to make the performer try to play a note that's not very comfortable to create an interesting or different texture. Something that Rodney said about, for example when you want to try to write a score for a piano or for harp or any other instrument that has different rhythms and different voices, you use "Finale" or "Sibelius" and it takes so long even though these are programs that are supposed to help you out, but it's just as well to write it by hand. When I went to school, I did learn, actually all our harmony classes, everything that we had to do for composition, everything was written by hand, and we actually were evaluated our notation skills. And writing notation actually used to be a profession; you'd get jobs from the composer and you were the person that did beautiful scores by hand. For example, in Costa Rica there are a lot of municipal bands and they always have a person that does all the notation. I have a friend who is a conductor in California, and he apprenticed with a notation expert. So his scores are beautiful, like amazingly done. I think we kind of lost a little

bit of that feeling of how rhythm is distributed, how the notes are placed in the score, and how that communicates to the performer. Sadly, for example, when you do a Finale score, sometimes you don't check your part. Like you're doing a score and you don't check your part, that whole distribution of the values is not placed correctly in the staff. The whole idea of notation, of providing that graphic communication, is lost. So I think it's important as composers, and also as performers, to actually demand that those things, if you're going to use Western notation, that those things are well placed. I just got this arrangement from this opera that I'm playing, it's a Rossini opera, and it's all full of those type of mistakes that the arranger didn't go through and review the parts and the rests and everything is shifted. You know what it says, but graphically the communication is shot. You don't have that ease, something that is meant to communicate music to the performer so you can communicate it to the audience. What I'm trying to say is for me notation is a way where that communication happens. So establishing any sort of notation is valid for me from my point of view if that communication happens. Any notation that gets in the way of that communication I find it suspicious because then why am I doing it? I mean what's the point of trying to compose something if you can't communicate.

Jeremy S.: Thank you Jose. Next, Cathy Fern Lewis.

Cathy Fern Lewis: I started out quite early doing music and most of the scores were always handwritten. And I miss the handwritten score actually for reasons which you've cited; sometimes these measures get misplaced or the half note looks like it's a quarter note relationship to the next one, and you're so used to using these visual clues that your brain has to do an extra job to kind of go "Oh my god I have to figure that out" and even go in and have to change the bar.

But more than that, I think that a personality comes across in a handwritten score. Like I'm thinking of Linda Smith and her markings are all very fine and kind of lightly notated as opposed to someone who's really got their notes down—you get a personality, whereas you have something on Sibelius or whatever it all looks the same. So I miss handwritten notation because I think there's a spirit that comes off the page in someone's handwritten.

As to for vocal notation, I remember when I first picked up a Berio “Sequenza” score in Zurich in and I carried that score around for about three years with me. It just totally frightened me to look at this crazy notation of the “Sequenza.” And like you say, there's a key, how to interpret all these different sounds and things that Berio wanted. And when I finally was brave enough, I began to embark on learning the piece. And I was so amazed when I did finally learn it and felt really good about it and never had heard a recording of it; after I had performed it several times, I found a recording of Cathy Berberian doing it, whom Berio wrote it for, and I was really quite stunned how similar it was because you would think that with this wide variance of interpretations, like wide vibrato or timelines that have just been seconds, that would get disturbed somehow from performance to performance, and yet the basic characteristics of the piece and the integrity of the piece was really there. It was totally recognizable, and for me that was really quite something and something I didn't expect. On the other hand, I've performed sound pieces with Christopher Butterfield not so long ago along with a Dutch woman, I think her name is Greta.

I interpreted the things on the score; the score was really basically written for a non-singer. And Greta wrote Christopher back and with some criticisms about the fact I had been singing too much. So there are some things that can get

lost in notation, but generally speaking I've had pretty good success interpreting notations of the pieces that I've received. From what Rod said, sometimes I have some suggestions, but they are often contextual. Maybe I'm just old enough now and grouchy enough I want to do it my way, that somehow a little bit of the interpreter's choice, I think, in some instances, and sometimes the composer likes it, sometimes they don't.

Jeremy S.: Finally, Rebecca Bruton.

Rebecca Bruton: Thank you everybody. I think the conversation of handwritten versus digital is really interesting. I was raised as a classical violinist and then became a fiddler, but became a fiddler through notation and I always felt that was a huge limit to me because I would meet fiddlers, like from the east coast, who had learned entirely by ear and I felt that they were much better fiddlers than I was because they understood it in their bodies whereas I understood it as notes moving across the page. Fiddle music is a dance music that's performed with a group of people and it's about bodies moving together, and I felt that is lost when fiddle music is written down; it's really hard to communicate the context. I have a jazz degree and I found also the way that you learn jazz, or jazz within a university, is you have the fake book and the fake book has all the famous jazz tunes and then you memorize the changes, but very often we're still learning jazz from notation and then memorizing changes and that's also different from the way that jazz was transmitted when it was first emerging. Jazz was very much a dance form that was learned by ear and wasn't so tied down to the individual composer of the tune; it was an act of receiving a tune and then changing the tune a bit and putting out your version of the tune and then improvising on the tune and then a new tune would come out of the improvisation. I would say the majority of the music that exists in the world now and has existed has not been

notated, and I think there's many important traditions out there that have never been notated and never will be notated. And I think now a bigger question for me is around recorded music versus live music and how music is disseminated and how anytime you visit the Internet there are so many things you can access and listen to; how does that music carry on through history? Because once it's made it's disposable; I feel like even putting out a CD feels disposable, so how do we engage with music that has longevity and meaning when there's so much out there and so much constantly just being churned out and most of it not notated, most of it digitally produced, or produced through some kind of collaborative relationship? Now I do a lot of notation and am primarily a composer and I write hand scores because I don't think very well when I'm in front of a computer. I also write my essays out totally by hand because I feel I can complete a thought more succinctly if I'm going through my hand to the paper versus on the computer because on the computer I can constantly erase myself and there is no permanency to it. So when I write by hand it's like I've formed the thought more completely and then it comes out as a more complete statement and then I can go and edit that, but when I work on the computer it's like I have these tendrils of thoughts coming out and they all get truncated before they even get put down. But I feel that that's been a barrier to me because I'm a millennial coming up in a world where you're expected to produce things very quickly; producing handwritten scores is not a fast process—it's laborious. I try to look at notation as one tool amongst many tools for doing music, and I think that notation is my tradition as a white person of European descent and that's something that interests me too. I spent a long time exploring Balkan music and Middle Eastern music and looking for a tradition that made sense to me and I was very against notation for the longest time, but now it feels like it is my tradition. But I can't view it as the way of making music, it's just one way

of making music and there are many significant musical traditions I don't think notation works well with or belongs with. In writing down notes I'm often worried about my ethical relationship with the performance because it feels so against my grain to just have one person writing down the music with somebody else interpreting it, and usually I prefer to be in conversation with the people that are going to be playing it. My teacher now is Owen Underhill in Vancouver and my teacher before was Martin Arnold in Toronto and they're always saying "Get so specific, so specific, because you're not going to be in the room," and it's hard for me because I want to be in the room with the players and get to know them and really hear them and it's hard to just write a thing down and send it off to the instrument, which feels like it's different than the person and the personality of the musician.

Jeremy S.: Thank you so much, and thank you everyone. What an excellent assemblage of ideas.

There are a couple of things I'd like to follow up with before I turn the conversation over to everyone if I may. One of the things that I had also been thinking of in the topic, and I think it's more or less explicitly there, and something that was very important to me growing up as an unschooled musician and a rock musician, were music histories. Now, music histories have a relationship with recording and notation that can be very complex because I think that in a lot of very well notated traditions or traditions where notation is very significant, music histories become about imagining a personality for the author of the notated work whereas in rock music and some other traditions, like I think of perhaps people are familiar with Michael Ondaatje and his book *Coming Through Slaughter*, which is a very imaginative narrative of the life of jazz musician Buddy Bolden who was one of the early Dixieland musicians in New Orleans about whose music we

know practically nothing but who is this kind of towering figure because of the life that he lived in music and transmitting that music personally to people who became very famous and were able to talk about his influence and make history of an otherwise very vanished person. I think there is one photograph of this person, no recordings of his music, no documentation besides what people have said about him, so like Socrates in that sense. And I just wanted to sort of ask everyone, if this is an evocative question, how music histories have ignited your imagination or impacted your practice in terms of making you perhaps wish for a music that you didn't have access to or colouring your perception of music that you did have access to and that was formative to that interpretation. Or, in other words, are music histories significant to your practice?

Rodney S.: I make personal transcriptions of other people's music all the time. It started in response to a piece of Michael Finnissy's Verdi transcriptions, and I created these pieces out of a misunderstanding. I was at a James Clapperton, who at one time was one of the great interpreters of music on the piano, and James gave this phenomenal recital of what is called *New Complexity* with pieces of Ferneyhough, and then he played an encore of *Aida* transcribed by Michael Finnissy. I had been in the opera orchestra in Freiburg and I knew *Aida* rather well and I had no idea what was going on at all and loved it. And my dissertation supervisor Yvar Mikhashoff was sitting next to me; he is a very large man and very theatrical, and he drew himself up in his chair and said "My dear, can you not hear how untransformed the entire scene is in the left hand," and I couldn't. And so I wrote an homage based on Michael's work, or should I say inspired by Michael's work. I took "Nessun Dorma" before it became famous as the soccer song in 1989, and drew musical graffiti all over it, and sent it to Michael Finnissy dedicating it to him and he wrote me back saying what a lovely

transcription but actually the *Aida* transcription is just little fragments that I distorted and the final duet is not in there at all. So I created something out of a misunderstanding and then wrote nine pieces based on this. I've written transcriptions of Scarlatti, I wrote a cello piece that Marina is going to be playing that has real chant in it and is based on writings of Teresa Avila who had these raptures, but the first one occurred when she was singing "Veni Creator Spiritus," so I went to the "Liber Usualis," and it's the only time I've ever used medieval music in my work. So I used historical music as a springboard because music, of course, can on one hand be, as it often is in what I do, about the natural resonances of the instruments themselves so that the instruments give birth to ideas. But sometimes music can be about music and I think that's what you're talking about so it's very, very much a part of what I do, not with every piece but with many pieces, particularly when I'm writing for piano.

Alexandra S.: When you study music, music history is such a big part of your degree. But I criticize the way that music is taught, perhaps because currently I'm doing my MFA at Simon Fraser University and the music program is influenced by a visual arts program and within visual arts you're always thinking conceptually about what you're doing. Whereas, within my own experience of my music undergrad where I studied clarinet performance and composition, I felt my work was never questioned as to why I was doing what I was doing. We were often taught to write compositions based on things that have come in the past, like an exercise in writing a serial composition or that kind of thing, which is good to learn basic skills. Maybe I'm just a bit stubborn but even when I perform on clarinet, I find it difficult sometimes to play melodic music because I feel if I play melodically it sounds like I'm referencing classical music or jazz music and I don't necessarily align with either of those

histories because I don't feel like they're my history. My dad's a jazz musician, and I've been really interested in jazz music more recently in my undergrad. I came from a classical music background but I always felt like I was trying to sound like someone that wasn't myself. So perhaps I'm more interested in electronic music at the moment because it doesn't have such a big history and I find that, even though now I guess it does have a history of 50 years plus, but still I find some of the sounds I can create refreshing because I feel like they're not referencing any other historical musical moment.

Jose D.: So for me, I have a connection with histories, but it's an emotional connection when I hear the music and how I've heard it. I always react emotionally to music from the past, I don't have a depth... For me, it's a reaction, a feeling, I like it in a very basic way. I'm not very intellectual in that sense, if this is my music or not my music or something like that. I like it or I don't like it, and to a certain degree that's a luxury but I do appreciate it. And the way I use it in my practice is, if I call it a practice, in my compositions, is try to recreate that emotion in some way or another and try to transmit or communicate that emotion to the audience. I don't try to justify my compositions even to myself intellectually, though I use the tools that I've learned going through music school in order to create something that I know may be effective. When you listen to the composition or your piece being performed you can see what was effective or ineffective. So the way history affects me is just emotional; I don't try to see if it belongs to me or doesn't belong to me, I just try to remember what I felt, either the first moment I heard it or if there's a continuity of when I hear it again if I feel the same way. Then there are the things that intellectually I discuss, and I was discussing actually in the park with Carolyn and it was how history has affect, the history of recording actually, how we recorded all those

things, because we were talking about Boehme and we were talking about the last scene and we were talking about the singer, the tenor Corelli, and how there's a recording of him, how he lost it, and he starts singing the Mimi part, ah Mimi, and he just went all the way, and there's no notes, no nothing, he's literally crying and screaming to the point that it's a called YouTube type of recording. But I think we live in the shadow of recordings. Like when you're teaching Debussy's sonata for violin or you're teaching whatever other piece, my students just try imitate the performer. So history, or what we consider history right now, is affected a lot by recordings. I have to explain to my students that recordings are engineered, it's not a live recording and you're never going to produce this amazing sound all the way through and then cut through an orchestra the way a recording does. So what I'm trying to say is there's a negative and a positive a way I relate to history. The positive way is my own when I compose and then if I use history to compose music and this way is my visceral reaction to what I've heard in the past and what I'm listening, and then the way I see it when I'm teaching students how it affects them when they listening to a recording and they think that's the goal of the performer to sound like a recording and then that's when I don't like it.

Cathy L.: As a performer, I have to say histories completely affect how I approach singing. Certainly, going through the different genres, if I was singing Lieder it's different than singing French chansons and early music; they all require a different colour, and of course recordings have informed that somewhat. But the texture, the harmony, and the feeling that you want to create inside that and sound kind of pulls it out. For example, Baroque music uses no vibrato, French music is a little bit lighter and impressionistic than the German music, which is much more a kind of solid sound. But in performance practice, I call on all of those things as part of my paint box

of colours to choose from and it's guided by the composer's directions. Without a doubt historical representation, and recordings to a certain extent, have influenced me as a performer. When I was going through university, it was suggested that we not to listen to recordings so we could come to our own interpretation of a piece that wasn't copying; I think that is a danger, trying to sound like something and not finding your own voice.

Rebecca B.: I find that's a really interesting point around finding your own voice by not listening to recorded music versus finding your own voice by listening to a lot of recorded music and emulating others, and then after practicing the craft of emulating others, finding the way that you do the thing. I've felt disappointed in feeling that so much of how I've been exposed to music has been through recorded music and that feels like a very consumer-oriented way of being with music. When I was leaving the home I grew up in, I often would meet people whose parents were musicians or who played music and I felt really like I had missed out on something because there was no live music in my house, but my dad introduced me to Robert Fripp's guitar badassery tape recordings when I was 12 so that's a pretty important thing I was introduced to at a young age. We had so much recorded music in our house, so even though I wasn't raised with a bunch of people sitting around singing to each other or having a parent playing an instrument, I still had a very important set of musical traditions transmitted to me through my parents who are really into music, and that's a really broad array of music and there was very little classical music within that so that was my personal rebellion was becoming a classical violinist with a dad who is an ex-punk rocker. But there's something I thought of, oh I think that with so much recorded music out there there's a tendency to think of music as an object rather than a set of relationships within a setting or a context. I think that can create its

own problems because music is a cultural history and it's not just an object, and a lot of music might not even be considered artwork within the tradition that it came from. I think music as an art object is a very Western classical way or just Western, big "W" Western, way of experiencing music and sound. Now I feel a lot of preciousness around the people that I've met who have been my teachers. I became a composer because I worked on a landscaping team that Martin Arnold, the composer, works on, and he spoke to me and he inspired me to compose and then he became my teacher, and it was the conversations I had while working side by side with Martin Arnold in these mansions in Toronto that that feels like one of the richest musical experiences I've had in recent years, those conversations. So I feel like I'm part of the lineage of that group of musicians that have all been influenced by Martin Arnold in Toronto, and now I've come out to B.C. and I've met Dave Chokroun, the bassist, and he also has a good relationship with Martin and Dave is 15 to 20 years older than I am but I feel like we share this relationship to the people that we've known at different times in Toronto and those things feel really important and meaningful to me and a way of anchoring myself in a really consumer-oriented music world.

Rodney S.: Zulfikar Nathoo, a recent graduate of the master's program at UVic, was telling me that there are well over 10,000 Ismaili chants that are not recorded or written down, so I said, "This could be your life if you wanted it to be." But how astonishing that this extremely rich liturgical tradition from a group of extremely privileged people, because they are a particularly wealthy caste of people, was never written down, has never been recorded, that all they have are words and an oral tradition. The second thing that occurs to me, because music histories tend to be oral, right? Cathy and I studied with talkers. I studied with Morton Feldman who is a tremendous talker and

so much of what he said was never written down or recorded but it changes you. He would tell these stories and these other things that change you much in the way that your [Rebecca's] stories about Martin, even perhaps even the smell of the foliage, that somehow the personalities that accompany this oral tradition, which really is a generational thing, pass things on from people to people. These become, I think, more guides for ethics in some ways than guides for artistry. And it is of course traditionally how religion is taught by telling stories and it's up to you to be smart enough to be able to figure out what the parable means and the Buddha, Christ, and the others, they never explain...

Jeremy S.: When you talk about a generational thing, I think the word that I might tack on to that might be "inheritance" because it is something that continues to be passed down and that increases and increases in value it seems. And so you talk about Morton being a talker in a way that feels precious and sort of this tiny little widget of what it must have been like to actually study with him. The talk and the oral tradition: one of the things about it that's an advantage and that bears on jazz music and discussions around jazz music is that it does stay situated within the context of the relationships and people. And that is also part of how it's an inheritance, the people pass along the music, and also as you've indicated the ethical and spiritual orientation toward the music, what it should be used for, who it belongs to, what it is, clue: not an object.

Perhaps I'll interrupt here to turn it over to responses from our audience.

Oro Barton: I wanted to share a brief anecdote based on what you guys said, it just came to mind, it was just an anecdote and I'll share it in short. I was in a hostel in Glasgow preparing my dinner and there was a charming lady hanging out with

me. She was a music historian and she told me this story, and I think it has morals about what is lost in notation and Western tradition are all in this little story.

She was studying these chants, like Dark Ages, like 1300s, 1400s, definitely when you have the lord of the manor and the serfs, like in the middle ages, and they have these serf drinking songs that they've dug up. And so this is an American lady, for fun, would drink at the pub and sing these serf songs with her friends, and these songs are rounds, in the pub getting drunk, slurring more and more, shouting more and more old English as they went, and as soon as they reach the point where the round reveals a song about an old lady is having sex with the farmer's cow in the field or whatever. They are all horrendously explicit, disgusting political commentary on the power structure at the time, and no one knew—this lady and her team discovered this— that these rounds are just filthy, just downright filthy, and they're hilarious because the filth is lost in the notation but is still encoded and the only way to release the encoding is to play it, and it will just come out.

Rodney S.: There's a piece by an Indian composer living in Germany, Clarence Barlow, which is called "Spright the Diner" by Nib Wryter, and Barlow was talking about this endlessly in Darmstadt, giving a very unDarmstadt-like talk. This would have been about 1988, and every time a German musicologist would get up, because he was just talking about the spright and about the diner with no technical explanation, which is very unDarmstadt for the age. And Clarence Barlow would say "Make use the full title please," and they would have to say "spreize deine beine breiter," which means "spread your legs wider"; that's all he wanted. He also wrote a piece called "Çoğluotobüsişletmesi," which has something to do with waiting for a bus in Turkish, just so that German announcers, again the 80s when it was very difficult to be Turkish in Germany, would

have to say something in Turkish just the way the Turkish people had to constantly say something in German, just as a political statement make a great German speaker try to say something in Turkish.

Jeremy S.: Now we could go down an incredible rabbit trail that maybe is not well advised, but I will just touch on. It is actually very well founded that the history of obscenity in literatures of various kinds is, within European tradition specifically, in addition to being titillating, a vehicle for political critique. There's a whole history of that, especially the kinds of writings that were suppressed in pre-revolutionary France, and even going back to some of the earliest visual pornography, I mean the Greeks were great pornographers and so were the Romans, but you know sort of the medieval pornography, woodcuts and so on, having it was criminal so it would often have messages that were also against monarchy and so on. But to express what is outside the bounds of the textual order and the moral order and the political order becomes allied, so I'm not sure if we really want to go that much further down that road but it was I was enjoying that cross talk that appeared there.

Malcolm McColl: There have been a lot of ideas that have popped out here and things are percolating under the surface that probably won't surface for a few weeks. But something, and I'm trying to think of how to phrase this as an open question. The initial premise of this panel was a notion of oral versus notational transmission of music, and I think what pops into my head is first reading Brian Wilson doing "Pet Sounds"; apparently he sang each piece to the musicians in the studio with 20 musicians and would sing the bass player's part and he would sing the keyboard part and sing the guitar parts, and so there was no score per se, and then he would walk around and do it again. So that's like an extreme oral transmission of what he's hearing that he maybe can't transcribe. But I was thinking too—Jose

when you said there's a particular harmonic which is difficult to play, would you use an oral transmission there to supplement a notational thing?

Jose D.: No. Well just the normal way you would write a harmonic for the musician.

Malcolm M.: I guess what I'm thinking is that when there are sounds that you're hearing, is there is an oral role to supplement notation? You've transcribed something, you have music, but you've got to realize that there are some very specific things you want to hear but how can you describe it on a piece of manuscript paper so I can send it to somebody to hear it? And I'm wondering if you find as performers and composers with whom an oral expression is what will encapsulate what you're trying to get out?

Jose D.: In the string world, there's this quartet in England called the Arditti Quartet, and they specialize in modern contemporary experimental music, like string quartet and helicopter music. And the leader of the quartet, Mr. Arditti, actually has just come up with an extended techniques for violin; he's put them in a book, and it costs like 3,000,000 pounds. It's all the techniques that he's seen other composers use. He has a very personal interaction with composers, kind of like what you said. He had composers having tea, playing with his kids at his home, and then would take them upstairs and rehearse for six hours just to establish a dialogue between what the composer writes on paper and what the violin can do or the string quartet can do and then they can establish that dialogue and see if it is satisfactory to the composer and eventually to the audience. But there's already a tradition for, at least in the string world, of what it is, like if you write a cluster or if you write certain squiggles you more or less know what the composer is going to go for. And then if you have a very good interaction with

the composer, you might talk to the composer. Or if the composer is deceased, usually there's a dictionary or a person that has played the piece. So there's always either a combination of both, an oral tradition or printed tradition. Like Mr. Arditti did, they write the bible for extended techniques to explain what a composer means when they write it this way. So "extended technique" means what the instrument traditionally is not allowed to do and what composers are forcing the instrument to do beyond the regular sounds that the instrument itself can make. So that's one of the things of how I would respond. In my case in particular, I know F natural and E string is a very hard harmonic to get because the E string is very close to the fingerboard so it's always going to crack. When it cracks, it's going to make a little whistle sound, and violinists hate that sound; they want to have a more pure sound. But I would tell them "No, no, do it on the E string" because I know it will crack, but I will keep it as a secret.

Cathy L.: These techniques though, and composers seems to be challenging them all the time and wanting new ones, so this Arditti fellow's book is going to be outdated pretty soon or need to be updated.

Jose D.: Oh yeah.

Cathy L.: Interestingly, I will be working to perform two new works at the end of July and have been in discussion with the composers saying, "How will I write this?" because they want something specific. We've been actually trying to find ways to get what they want. It's been really quite interesting exploring how to notate it. I am lucky because I get to talk with the composers and actually hear what they want, but it does become difficult in this case where I decided earlier, where I didn't get it; I didn't nail it for the composer, they weren't there to say oh it sounds too singing-like right now.

Alexandra S.: It also works in the reverse. Another MFA student I work with is Ben Wylie who is a composer in Vancouver and we improvise and have a band together. And when I'm performing his compositions, he often gets me to improvise, and then he finds sounds that I produce which he wants to notate, and he has to struggle to notate bizarre sounds he has never heard before. So there is also not just the composer coming up with an extended technique but the composer learning from performers. And also if you're basing a piece of a particular performer, then there's a difficulty in how you get other performers to play the same thing.

Rodney S.: In the standard repertoire, there are two pieces by Debussy for flute that have a different philosophy: the opening of "Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune" starts on a C sharp, which is the flute's "wolf tone"—it's the note you can never do well. And so some flutists use altered fingerings and move their embouchure and they try to make the most beautiful sound possible.

Rebecca B.: Just a really quick comment. The poet Jordan Scott, who resides in Vancouver currently, has a book called *Blurt*, and his practice is that he's a lifelong stutterer, and it's quite a significant stutter; when you speak with him it's always there. And his practice has been to cease to train himself to stop stuttering but rather write poetry that he thinks will cause him to stutter. But he doesn't know when he's going to stutter, so he writes these poems that are so hard for him and then it brings in this element of chance and total chaos because he doesn't know when his body will work for him and when it won't work for him. And I really like that idea also as a composer of writing things where you don't know exactly when the wolf note is going to happen. You know it's probably going to happen around this place but when it happens it's going to create a bit of a train wreck in some way, and then I find those

train wrecks and that element of failure to be, to use a jazz word, that's what makes it swing or what makes it come alive. So I liked what you were saying about just making the player do the thing that they really don't want to do and then seeing what happens with it.

Jeremy S.: And so perhaps we will conclude here, although certainly I think that we could continue on. I ask that we can all join together in thanking our wonderful panellists for their thoughts and words.



Darren Williams • photo by Micah Green

Supplementary Correspondence between Jeremy Stewart and Catherine Sikora on Musical Literatures: Documentation, In and Outside Texts

In the process of planning the panel discussion topics for the festival, I consulted with past participants, sending them draft topics for comment. One of the past participants who wrote back with exemplary and pointed feedback was Catherine Sikora. The following is an email exchange that occurred between us on June 10, 2016, after I had sent the topic drafts on June 6. My huge thanks to Catherine for her thoughtful comments, and for allowing me to publish them.

Jeremy Stewart

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Email from Catherine Sikora dated June 10, 2016:

--How have notation and documentation informed and/or deformed your musical practice?

Notation and documentation both are, as I see it, tools to be used by the artist, and as such both have been enormously helpful to me, and as with any tool, their usefulness increases and broadens with each advance that I make in my understanding and use of them. I find notation to be a highly efficient way of jotting down ideas, working them through and then communicating them to others, just as written language is also a pretty effective tool. The ease of recording and playback that we now enjoy is also a huge asset, and being able to record and listen back to huge amounts of the playing I have done has played a very important role in my development. When I was just starting out in free improvised music, I was fortunate enough to have weekly sessions

with two far more experienced musicians than I, which were all recorded. I listened intensively to these sessions, and we discussed and criticized them, and then tried to improve on them in each subsequent session.

--How do traditional notational approaches limit musical thinking, and how can those boundaries best be perforated?

I don't believe that traditional notational approaches do limit musical thinking; I believe the limits, if they exist, are in the mind of each musician. It is important to remember that the tools are just that, tools, and may be used (manipulated, augmented, anything) in any way that the musician sees fit in order to fulfill their vision. So many breakthroughs have happened in notation, the rules have stretched and expanded enormously in the past century; *The Rite of Spring* is a one such piece that immediately comes to mind. Anything that can communicate on paper a sonic work such as *The Rite of Spring* is not in any way deficient as a means of documentation, in my opinion. Of course, with the advent of electronic music, non traditional instruments and sounds, the definition of what is considered to be music has also stretched and expanded, and so other means of creating scores have been approached. Having worked fairly extensively with various different graphic scores, digital apps, loose verbal instructions and conducted instructions, I still believe traditional notation to be by far the best means of communicating a concrete sonic idea. In fact, arguably, it is the only one-the others are perhaps starting points, all subject of any amount

of variety in interpretation, and (to get slightly off topic) in my opinion the performer of such works is in fact the creator of the work, and not the individual who created the instructions, vague as they are--it certainly can be seen to complicate the issues of intellectual property ownership.

--Do musical texts produce a net gain in reception, or a net loss in alienation?

I'm not sure I full understand this question, can you please elaborate for me?

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Email response from Jeremy Stewart:

Dear Catherine,

Thank you so much for these generous responses--brilliant as always! To expand on the last question, I was thinking of the role music history plays in separating music and its stories from the people who made it. I'm skirting the edges of the some of the very old arguments that have been made about notation and the earliest blues and jazz--that conventional notation was inadequate to the music, because you couldn't properly notate the "blue note" or how to "swing," for example. I'm very glad you brought up recording, because I have also read very old arguments that you can't learn to play jazz by listening to recordings, but only by playing with people who have played with people in a chain of hands back to Dixieland. The purpose of these arguments, when they are made by practitioners, is strictly musical, but part of the net implications of these arguments is to keep music that is by and for particular communities protected within those communities. I think it's important to not reductively make it about "race," since the real historical conditions of these musics were not strictly confined that way, but it is certainly connected to concerns about appropriation (speaking of our friend Stravinsky,

who borrowed jazz ideas in ways that have been argued both to misrepresent and to exploit African American expressions, while critics were all too happy to perpetuate these outcomes). (Can I be clear that these are not necessarily my arguments?)

In fact, the earliest jazz musicians were very skilled in the reading and writing of music, despite what some historians have given us to believe; for that matter, how official histories structure a relationship to people and traditions is also behind my thinking on this question. Maybe in the same way that putting folk art in a museum can be seen to take it away from the people who made it and give it to the privileged, I want to raise questions about taking a living tradition and putting it at a remove, what that does to the context, to the people. Now that I reread my topic, I'm not sure I'm really summoning any of this! Thanks again for your very thoughtful responses, by which I benefit greatly.

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Email response from Catherine Sikora:

Dear Jeremy,

This is all very interesting, and challenging for me to think about and to try to express my feelings on.

Yes, of course the early jazz musicians were highly proficient--one would have to have ears nailed on not to realize this. Perhaps people now are forgetting that careers in classical orchestras were not available to these musicians, should they have wanted to take that path? There is a story about Stravinsky coming in Birdland while Charlie Parker was playing, and Parker played a quote from *The Firebird* when he saw the composer. I do not recall the source of this story, and cannot verify it, but I do believe it!

I think I may be once again veering off topic, but here is my opinion on notation/ interpretation of styles, etc: To execute anything in music at a high level, it is absolutely necessary for the musician to be absolutely invested in what they are playing, with a profound understanding of it and commitment to it. May I give a crude analogy of the opposite, with written language (the value of which nobody questions), which would be a child reading a text aloud, pronouncing the words correctly but having no clue about the content, because it is simply beyond his level of understanding. Music notation can fail in the same way, and being a “good sight reader” is not everything when it comes to interpreting a piece. I think this applies to all styles of music, whether they are passed along aurally or written down (one could equally learn a seemingly simple blues chorus by ear, but without a profound relationship to the instrument and the sound it will fail). What I am getting to is that there is another level of commitment that must happen, something deeper and intangible, impossible for me to define, but without it the musician is, to quote

my father in law, merely a stenographer. Maybe it all breaks down to the relationship between the musician and sound, their profound wordless understanding of and commitment to that sound. It cannot be quantified, and it certainly cannot be taught; it can only be found through long hours of deep focused and thoughtful practice, listening and study, but aside from those requirements I believe it to be available to anybody. I do not agree with anybody who would say that a certain music may only be performed by certain types of people, and I believe that great musicians of any style will recognize and respect one another. The rest of it is up to the others.

I try to always remind my students that all I can do is offer them possibilities, and for them they must dig deep and find their own personal truth in music. There are no short cuts!

If any of this makes sense, then please feel free to use it, and I would love to read about the panel after it happens.

Casse-Tête: A Festival of Experimental Music

Panel Discussion Participant Bios

JOSÉ DELGADO-GUEVARA



Violinist, violist, composer and educator. Canadian born in Costa Rica, educated in Costa Rica, Michigan, France, Mexico and Mississippi. Simple gestures to create an emotional effect.

FRANÇOIS HOULE



“a spectacularly versatile clarinetist who appears to have no limitations stylistically or sonically”
—Mark Swed, LA Times

Clarinetist François Houle has established himself as one of today's most inventive musicians, in all of the diverse musical spheres he embraces. He has been listed on numerous occasions in Downbeat magazine's Readers and Critics' Polls as “Talent Deserving Wider Recognition” and “Rising Star”. Inspired by collaborations with the world's top musical innovators, François has developed a unique improvisational language, virtuosic and rich with sonic embellishment and technical extensions. He has worked with Joëlle Léandre, Benoît Delbecq, Evan Parker, Samuel Blaser, Gerry Hemingway, Marilyn Crispell, Harris Eisenstadt, Michael Bates, Myra Melford, René Lussier, Alexander Hawkins, John Butcher, Georg Graewe, Jerry Granelli, Håvard Wiik, Gordon Grdina, Yitzhak Redid, Guillermo Gregorio, Eyvind Kang, Hasse Poulsen, and many of Canada's top creative music artists.

His extensive touring has led to solo appearances at major festivals across Canada, the United States, Europe and Australia. A prolific recording artist, he has released over twenty recordings as a leader, earning multiple Juno Award and West Coast Music

Award nominations. He is the founder of Afterday Audio, a record label dedicated to the documentation and dissemination of his many musical projects and collaborations. In addition, he has appeared on numerous recordings on the Songlines, Red Tuncan, Leo Records, Drip Audio, PSI, Between-the-Lines, Nuscope, Spool, hat[now]ART, Redshift, CRI, among others. He was artistic director of the Vancouver Creative Music Institute for 5 years.

François Houle is a Backun artist and clinician. He plays Backun clarinets, mouthpieces, bells, and barrels. In January 2015 François joined the Artistic Team for Steuer Reeds in Canada. Visit François online at www.francoishoule.ca

JOOKLO DUO



“It is like the roaring energy of punk meeting the possibilities of improv or like watching someone microwave jazz until it explodes all over the window in a yellow paste.”

(Was Ist Das)

Blowing minds all over the world since 2004 with hundreds of charming performances and some cult records, Jooklo Duo (Virginia Genta on reeds, flutes, piano, percussion and David Vanzan on drums) keeps spreading their powerful and uniquely vibrant sound, deeply rooted in free jazz avant-garde but heavily influenced by traditional folk music, and at the same time open to extreme sound experiments.

Over the years the perpetual research for new and challenging combinations has led Genta and Vanzan to form a large variety of ensembles and to collaborate with artists as Bill Nace, Chris Corsano, Thurston Moore, Dror Feiler, Dylan Nyoukis,

Hartmut Geerken, Makoto Kawabata, Sabu Toyozumi, Tamio Shiraishi, and many others. This year at Casse-Tete, they appear in their JOOKLO ZAP-PA incarnation with Stanley Jason Zappa.

The duo has also been working with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company alongside John Paul Jones and Takehisa Kosugi, performing for “Nearly Ninety” in Madrid (April 2009, Teatro del Canal), and in London (October 2010 at the Barbican Centre).

CATHY FERN LEWIS



Cathy Fern Lewis is renowned as a highly versatile soprano and sound artist.

An ambassador and active exponent of Canada’s new music and art scene, Lewis has premiered over one hundred pieces by prominent composers and created her own multi-media works that push the boundaries of performance.

Lewis earned a BMus from the University of Victoria, BC; and devoted three subsequent years to vocal training in Europe and Canada, studying under luminaries Frances James Adaskin, Selena James, Mary Morrison and Pierre Bernac.

She appears as soloist with symphony orchestras and in recitals of new and traditional music. Her improvisations have shaped the work of collaborators from other disciplines; many pieces have been written expressly for her. Lewis’ personal creative explorations are uniquely interdisciplinary, combining movement, sound, film and installation. Her site-specific work has been presented by art galleries and festivals in Canada and Europe.

Lewis lives in Victoria BC and teaches at the Victoria Conservatory of Music.

RODNEY SHARMAN



Rodney Sharman lives in Vancouver, BC, where he is Composer-in-Residence with Early Music Vancouver and the Pacific Baroque Orchestra. He has been Composer-in-Residence with the Victoria Symphony, the National Youth Orchestra of Canada and the Vancouver Symphony.

Sharman has been Mentor-Composer for Turning Point Ensemble in their collaborations with the Prince George Symphony Orchestra, assisting young composers in writing new music for members of both ensembles. He was guest with the PGSO in January for the premiere of “Song from Faust”, Robin Norman, mezzo, PGSO conducted by Jose Delgado-Guevara. He performed (flute and voice) with soprano Cathy Lewis and pianist Dave Chokroun at Casse-tête, 2015, www.rodneymarman.com

DARREN WILLIAMS



Darren Williams is a saxophonist and bassoonist who pushes the limits of improvisation and extended instrumental technique into regions that are lyrical, terrifying, uncanny, and “more fun than spiked punch live” (Georgia Straight). Called “a raw, vocal explorer,” (Stuart Broomer, Musicworks, Downbeat) Darren has performed with many renowned musicians including Eugene Chadbourne (USA), Chad van Gaalen (Calgary), Myk Freedman (NYC), Mats Gustafsson (Sweden), Ig Henneman and Han Bennink (Netherlands). Darren holds a BFA in music performance from York University and has studied with Casey Sokol, David Mott, George Lewis, and François Houle. He is involved in numerous ensembles and projects, notably co-leading and composing for the free-jazz quintet Robots On Fire which performed at the 2013 Vancouver International Jazz Festival. Currently Darren lives in Kelowna, BC where he operates a concert series dedicated to the presentation of experimental/improvised music called the Skin And

Bones Music Series, which has earned him two Okanagan Arts Award nominations. Williams was awarded a Canada Council for the Arts grant for a national tour completed in the summer of 2013 to promote his debut solo album *Reed*, a collection of his own compositions. afivepence.wordpress.com

YAWNS A FISSURE



Yawns a Fissure is the collaborative effort of musicians/sound artists/composers Rebecca Bruton and Alexandra Spence. Performing with violin, clarinet, analog and digital electronics, they create structured improvisations that are equal parts music, spatial cartography, and witchcraft. Together they wander through a delicate Chernobyl landscape, unveiling tiny, surprising sounds at the edge of silence. awnsafissure.wordpress.com - afivepence.wordpress.com - rebeccabruton.com

KATHLEEN YEARWOOD



I have been composing, singing, writing and playing live for 46 years. That is way too long. kathleenyearwoodordeal.bandcamp.com
kathleenyearwood.tumblr.com

STANLEY JASON ZAPPA



Living Man. Pan-Tonality. New Textures. Jaya Saraswati. Born in California. Raised in New Jersey. "Educated" in Vermont. Masters degree in "doing things the hard way" in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Drove around America aimlessly. Then Portland. Now in Okanagan. Enormous debt to Bill Dixon, Charles Gayle, Milford Graves, Marco Eneidi, Daniel Carter, Rashid Bakr and many, many others in the Free Jazz diaspora. Equal debt to Conlan Nancarrow, Frank Zappa, Die Winteriesse, Phil Lesh, Reggae and Lebenden Toten. "play every note at every tempo and every dynamic at least twice in no particular order." "more = more"



Jooklo Zappa • photo by Micah Green



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