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Erin Stewart • Casse-Tête: A Festival of Experimental Music Panel Discussion Participants:
Norman Adams • Susan Campos-Fonseca • Dave Chokroun • José Delgado-Guevara
Shane Krause • Rodney Sharman • Adrian Verdejo • Darren Williams • Stanley Jason Zappa



Publisher's Note

Dear Readers,

2015 marked the third iteration of Casse-Tête: A Festival of Experimental Music. Artists from all over converged on The Exploration Place Museum and Science Centre in Prince George to share their aesthetically challenging music, creative practices, and weekends with the local musical community. The festival featured world premieres of pieces by Vancouver composer Rodney Sharman and Costa Rican composer Susan Campos Fonseca; it was bookended by unusual, site-specific outdoor works by local artists; and the event hosted brilliant performances by improvisers from Victoria to Calgary, among other things. The festival was a bold success, and without a doubt the biggest and best yet.

Like 2014's festival, one of the most fascinating parts of this year's programming was in the panel discussions; in 2015, the number of panel discussions was doubled to two over the course of the weekend, which this year were hosted at Dreamland School of the Arts. The first panel discussion was on the topic of "Beyond the Universal (Imaginary) Audience;" the second, on "Engaging and Disengaging: Traditions and/of Conflict." Both were explored with vivid intelligence and candour by the participants, and both are transcribed and presented here, in the seventh issue of Dreamland Magazine.

Continuing on the theme of Casse-Tête, and again in looking back to 2014, Erin Stewart's cover for this issue draws its inspiration and subject matter from the premiere event of 2014's festival: the Piano Drop. For those who are not familiar with the performance, in 2014, the festival kicked off with a (worthless, irremediable) piano being dropped from the roof of the Exploration Place. This project was dreamed up by Peter Stevenson, owner-operator of PS Piano Service, as a way to give a last hurrah to a piano bound for the dump—something he sees only too often—while also creating a rare musical opportunity for the people of northern BC. Peter is also the creative force behind 2015's Centennial Piano Project, which involved pianos being placed in various public locations in Prince George, some indoor and some outdoor, which the public was invited to play and enjoy, for the duration of the City of Prince George's Centennial Celebration in July 2015 to mark Prince George's centenary. For some of the pianos for this event, Peter commissioned local artists to paint the pianos to add an extra flair and attraction. Erin Stewart was one of those artists.

Erin's piece consists of a piano, painted in white acrylic

and black acrylic and india ink, with images of the remains of the Piano Drop's smashed piano stretched across the surface of the intact piano via projection and then painted fragmentarily in place. The graffiti-influenced style in which the images on the piano are created is intended to suggest a dialogue between the commodity value of art versus expression, and the commodity value of pianos versus their use to create art, a kind of interweaving of creativity, destruction, and the inevitable fleetingness of everything we do.

On that note,

Your friend,



Jeremy Stewart
Publisher



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Casse-Tête Panel Discussion 1: Beyond the Universal (Imaginary) Audience • Moderator: Jeremy Stewart • Participants: Norman Adams, Jose Delgado-Guevara, Adrian Verdejo, Darren Williams, Stanley Jason Zappa; transcribed by Alyson Budd; transcript edited by Jonathon Wilcke, with assistance from Dave Chokroun

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Casse-Tête Panel Discussion #2: Engaging and Disengaging:

Traditions and/of Conflict • Moderator: Jeremy Stewart • Participants: Susan Campos-Fonseca, Dave Chokroun, Rodney Sharman; transcribed by Beki Tubbs; transcript edited by Jonathon Wilcke, with assistance from Dave Chokroun

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Jeremy Stewart • Directions

ON THE COVER/CENTRE SPREAD • *Untitled* by Erin Stewart

“The images on the piano are projections of photographs taken from the aftermath of a piano dropped off The Exploration Place’s rooftop at Casse-Tete music festival 2014. The work of art in a gallery is seen as a valuable commodity, as is a piano that sits in a living room or music hall, but both are subject to decay and to being discarded. The graffiti-like style of the integrated images was used to suggest how work that is seen as throwaway art can be made valuable by changing its context; a smashed piano can be made into art, too.” Erin Stewart

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Casse-Tête: A Festival of Experimental Music

Panel Discussion 1

Beyond the Universal (Imaginary) Audience

Very challenging music has tended not to appeal to a mass audience--at times, this lack of appeal has been calculated on the part of artists--and this fact has been used alternately to defend and to attack it. Artists working on the margins of popular practices have sometimes claimed that they make music for themselves, and yet they often still seek some more or less specialized public context for their work. How does the concept and reality of an audience enter your creative practice? What is the difference between practicing an instrument by yourself at home and performing music in front of an audience? What is your relationship to your audience, artistic, personal, and professional? What do you wish was different about audiences, if anything?

Moderator: Jeremy Stewart

Participants: Norman Adams, Jose Delgado-Guevara, Adrian Verdejo, Darren Williams, Stanley Jason Zappa

Audience Participants: Dave Chokroun, Susan Campos-Fonseca, Malcolm McColl, Rodney Sharman

Transcribed by Alyson Budd; edited by Jonathon Wilcke, with assistance from Dave Chokroun.

This discussion took place June 6, 2015, at Dreamland School of the Arts in Prince George, British Columbia.

Jeremy Stewart: Good morning everyone, my name is Jeremy Stewart and it's my great pleasure to moderate this panel discussion titled "Beyond the Universal (Imaginary) Audience."

We're going to hear from these great artists about the relationship between their work to an audience and

how that relationship affects the creative process. I don't know if I should really try to encapsulate what everyone does but if you want to provide a remark on your own musical or artistic work before you begin to address the topic that would be very welcome.

So at my extreme left, your extreme right, is Darren Williams, next to Darren is Stanley Jason Zappa, next to Stanley, Norman Adams, next to Norman, Jose Delgado-Guevara, and next to Jose, Adrian Verdejo. Darren, the floor is yours.

Darren Williams: I play primarily tenor saxophone and bassoon and have been involved in improvised music, especially freely improvised music, since the late 90s. My own work plays with the context of free improvisation and in forms derived from more popular forms of music, what they call "jazz," or "rock," or "punk." I enjoy playing the music I do because it's part of my own personal chemistry of delighting in subversion, but I try not to get to the point where it's just indulgence. Moving from Jimi Hendrix and Miles Davis and then finding out about the New Thing of the 60s, and the post players from that era especially, from Europe, and from Chicago, I became fascinated by the question, "Why they are doing this" even though it is outside the so-called accepted norm in performing in jazz, or classical music, or music that enjoys a revivalist approach. I struggled to reconcile between my own playing and studying jazz theory and classical technique, and at the same time, playing music which, on occasions at least, resembled the complete absence of jazz or classical technique.

I think it helps to be as broad as possible. If you're going to play jazz music that's fine, but you owe it to yourself, and perhaps to the audience, to also

be aware of the music of Ornette Coleman, because that's 50 years old and he's not really new anymore in the same way that Charlie Parker is not really new. I try to, in my own work, score music in various forms and guises, and I'm also very much interested in extended technique—applying different techniques to the saxophone and the bassoon—and make it sound unlike what it sounds like traditionally. There's also a physical side to my approach, to experience saxophone which is completely bristling with overtones and fingerings—I mean it's much more of a tactile, visceral sensation, a way to generate sound, so I like performing that way a lot. I enjoy the physical aspect of extended technique, and I direct a lot of extended techniques into the work I do, especially in solo work.

I will say that I also enjoy composed work by people who are also interested in pushing the boundaries of what may be playable, something that is an organized system for executing materials, versus spontaneous composition vis-à-vis improvisation.

JS: Darren, how have you reconciled the lack of a popular audience for the kind of music you like to play?

DW: I think it just boils down to . . . I know it's not everyone's bag, and by "everyone" I mean the audience at large. I learned early on while playing my first improv gigs that an audience of 14 whittles down to two, and by the time you look up again people have left . . . it's okay, it's not for everyone.

I guess it comes down to the question of what's better: performing music in a room of five people who are really into it and focused on you, and you can feel it when people are focused, or an audience of 100 people who barely register you and couldn't care if you were performing and wouldn't notice if you were on fire. So in reconciling the audience, I feel musically it comes to down to telling a story at a given moment through an instrument. I think as a musicians we all have a story to tell and the need to express. You're going to find a way to do that and

it's gratifying, I find, to share work with others, so if you have an audience there's only five people there, it's better than when no one shows up. Obviously if you're performing and 100 people really dig it, well then, fantastic. I feel like a comparatively large audience would be a burden. I feel like I have to play this music, and I guess it comes down to my psyche of always being the weirdo in class. Always having a penchant for the different or unusual. I can't seem to change that it seems to be my basic wiring. Not that, it's sensationalist, or it's something that I want to do just to fuck with people . . . it's just that if there's a different way of doing something I tend to go that way. At least that's had a profound effect on the way I express myself.

JS: Thank you Darren. Stanley?

Stanley Jason Zappa: Hi, I'm Stanley, the work I do . . . well, like Darren, I learned very early on that there wasn't really a huge audience for what I did. And over the past two decades that reality has morphed into a thing where I don't care about the audience. I don't care. Don't show up. And it's also gotten to the point where, if there are a lot of people in an audience, which is also quite rare, it's an unnatural thing for me, and the number of people charges the environment in a way I'm not accustomed to. And so, that's sort of a Glenn Gould way of going about things—I'm not super comfortable performing in front of people, I'm more comfortable in a practice room, or I'm more comfortable in a studio, where there's not this charged atmosphere of "I have come to see you, I have paid, now perform for me." I don't think that way anymore.

If I was a regular performing musician and I had to accommodate or take into account the interests and needs of an audience, I might do things differently but that hasn't been the case yet. Which brings me back to the question of "What kind of audience member am I?" I'm a poor one. I don't go out to see music. I've become very picky about my time. Whereas once upon a time, I would put my money into the music economy and pinch my nose

for three bands in order to see band number four, or I would be willing to say, “Hey, okay, here’s a band rolling through town, might as well go out and shake my pom-poms for them and be part of that,” but I don’t do that anymore. I don’t know if I’m really a good music citizen anymore and I don’t know what I can really expect from an audience because I’m such a poor audience member myself. My view of the audience-musician relationship has gotten pretty jaundiced. I’m reminded of a quote by Joseph Chilton Pierce where he says, “Culture is the enemy of biology,” and so at this point in my life, the playing of music—the putting the horn in my mouth everyday—has become a biological process. The deeper immersed into culture I get and the more acculturated the event is the more it is an enemy of what I do and of music that I see as distinct from culture. I think culture is an apparatus that affixes itself as a tick to music, like a parasite. If there wasn’t music there would be no music clubs. If there wasn’t music there would be no promoters. I’m interested in music—I’m not interested in how it’s hustled, whether you on the other side of the table are having fun, and if you aren’t I hope you leave [audience laughter].

I don’t want to bind anyone and god knows I don’t want to be bound by any kind of cultural stricture or expectations that might run contrary to my biology. I know that this view of things perhaps doesn’t bode well for this social contract and constructs that we in the West particularly have built up over the last couple hundred years. But fortunately the music we do is one percent of one percent of an increasingly disinterested listenership. I don’t square it against audience and I’m sorry that that’s the case. I wish I could say more, but I don’t care—it’s over—the genie is out of the bottle. I can’t get back into the tight shoes. And when it does happen and I can be in front of people it is another view into the thing, a crystallization, or a prism through which to see, this making of music that I do for whatever reason, because Lord knows it barely rewards me; I can’t imagine how it would reward any of you. That’s about it. I’m happy to answer questions though.

JS: I think that’s going to stimulate some conversation [audience laughter] . . . thank you. Let’s hear from Norman.

Norman Adams: I’m kind the opposite [of Stanley] mostly because I come from a very traditional construct. I grew up as a classical musician, and I trained as a classical musician and worked professionally as a classical musician until my suspicion of classical music took me far enough out to discover improvised music. And then, my experience led me to the point where if I was going to get to play improvised music, I was going to have to organize concerts; it’s so interesting because it’s a different attitude. I feel like I’ve been fed the traditional models of concerts and halls and audiences sitting over there and performers sitting over here, and I haven’t really realized until the last year that is becoming a problem. So I went through all the traditional machinations of presenting concerts: I designed posters and I started to get grant money, I formed an organization and it got a charitable status and a board and . . . [audience laughter] . . . all this shit, and the hoops you have to jump through and jump through and jump through, which I like a little bit. I wanted to play shows, but mostly I wanted to play with other people and this was my avenue for doing that. Since I came to improvised music later in life, maybe I was 30, my education in improvised music was through my composure of these concerts and inviting guests. My school was on stage with great artists who I invited to town, so I still value and I still value that greatly and I’m still looking for people that continue to teach me things. But as happens with organizations, and as I became more interested and differently interested in running my organization—by which I mean I am the organization—I don’t have employees or anyone that helps very much, or maybe I’m not good at asking for help, but I was forced . . . well I was not forced, but the plan was to get the money and make the concert and try to get the audience to come to the concert. And at first it wasn’t actually hard to get an audience with concerts in Halifax, there was some curiosity factor initially but that kind of

tapered off, so now I have my seven people. I call them “my seven people” when I talk to my board—there are seven people whom I know are going to come to the show. That’s my grand audience, that’s my fan base. Which is both ridiculous and lovely.

When I first began to present concerts 15 or so years ago, I was very worried about how many people I would get to the show, and it was a great deal of worrying during that ten minutes before the start of the show, “Where are the people, who’s coming around?” and five of them trickle in at two minutes after—it used to drive me to distraction and I had to let that go. So I went through a period of five or six years where I didn’t worry about it at all; I’ve done everything I can to get people to come to my show and whoever is going to come is going to come. Because I have the luxury of these grants I’ve procured I can pay the musicians and pay for the hall and not have to worry about how many people are going to come.

This year just in the past eight months I’ve found that I have begun my arts organization midlife crisis, which is a fascinating. I was driving down a highway and I realized I actually didn’t want people to come. I could bring in Lê Quan Ninh from Europe or bring Xavier Charles from France to come and play at a concert in Halifax. These are people that are leading artists in the field, rock stars in the improvised music field. And it would really matter to anyone. And driving down that highway that bugged me for the first time, which is sad and interesting. It bugged me that I would go to so much effort to bring these amazing people to Halifax and no one would pay any attention to them. So, now I’m trying to reconcile that and figure out whether that’s something I should pursue or something I should abandon. I can’t shake the idea that audience is there for a reason and that audience is vital to a performative art form. I believe that audience forces many people’s brains into a different state of urgency or a different state of focus having someone else. To me it doesn’t matter if there’s two people or 100 people, although I don’t think I’ve ever played for 100 [laughing]. It doesn’t make any difference

to me whether there are two or 100 people, but I do recognize the different focus that my brain takes on depending on who is in the audience. I notice it in my collaborators as well. The music becomes better because there’s an audience that’s sharing it with us; maybe they’re sharing their energy or they’re sharing their desire to be transformed or influenced or changed by the music we’re playing. All my recordings are live recordings that I have made. I can’t escape that construct of audience, or performer and audience. What I’m beginning to think about is, “What is the model that actually works?” As an organizer I want to say things like, “What marketing model or promotions model actually brings people and how can we communicate our enthusiasm to audience member that is not versed or not educated or not familiar with our art form? How can we articulate that passion to them to encourage them to come to the concert?” How do we communicate that? That’s the puzzle and my next project. There’s something about the model that exists now that all concert presenters use . . . we send out emails and put up posters and tell our friends and put up Facebook events and we tweet about stuff, and really none of that stuff matters really at all. Until you can look that person in the eye, I’m not sure how we can get these people to feel our passion for this work so they can feel the vital nature of our work.

I don’t have any conclusions but it’s interesting . . . I mean, I’m working on it. But it’s interesting to be here and hear the different attitudes [laughing].

JS: It’s great to hear from you Norman, thank you for that. I think that’ll be very stimulating to the discussion also.

Dave Chokroun: I just want to say that my chuckle about the audience of 100 is . . .

NA: Did you play in front of 100 people once?

DC: What I was going to say was at this point I get kind of vibed out if there are too many people. I like to see everyone in the room.

NA: One of my favorite stories is: I was in Amsterdam and Evan Parker was playing at the Bimhuis. I wasn't really nuts about Evan Parker but at the time I thought I should go see Evan Parker; I'm in Amsterdam for a few days, going to go see Evan Parker at the Bimhuis, which is the most established weird music performance space in Europe, maybe. I ran to the box office and said "Are there any extra tickets for Evan Parker?" I had just arrived it was 20 minutes before the concert started, and the guy said "Oh, yeah sure no problem" and he slipped me some tickets and I walked in and there were 40 people there! I actually remember looking at some of their faces to see if it was the same people that came to my shows, because it was the same number of people! Do you guys just travel around, the same people on a bus?

JS: They do actually.

NA: I was shocked that in a cultural center of Europe, which I just imagined to be stuffed with improvised music lovers, there still weren't many.

SJZ: Can I make a quick point?

JS: Please do Stanley.

SJZ: I was just in New Amsterdam—New York City [audience laughter]—and for the most part it's a city of 13 million people, but if you take into New Jersey into account, it's about 20 million people. The night I went into the city, Charles Gayle, William Parker, and Henry Grimes were playing. There was a jam session later with James Brandon Lewis and some other dude. There was a show opening; there was about 30 people there. And they were all the same people that were going to the shows 20 years ago. In a city of 13 million. In Prince George there's 70,000, is that the number I heard?

JS: 70 to 80.

SJZ: Okay, we are 187,000 times more people in the New York Metropolitan area. So you would think if you can get 10 people to a show in Prince

George, you should be able to get 1,870,000 people to a show in New York City but that's not the case so . . . [audience laughter].

NA: I had a solid 28 last night and I always count the audience—that's one of my hobbies. Super solid!

SJZ: It's like you had seven million in New York! [audience laughter]

DW: I think seven million people in a venue would probably contravene some fire regulations.

JS: You'd have the entire fire department there so it'd be okay. So let's move on now to Jose Delgado-Guevara.

Jose Delgado-Guevara: I had a very traditional upbringing in every sense, as a classical musician, viola and violin player with a little bit of piano, and traditional lessons in composition. When I started exploring other ways of expressing myself through composition I started improvising as a warm-up on the violin or the piano, and trying to explore my instrument in ways that are very physical and going to extremes to create colors that the [traditional] music I was playing was not telling me. If I was playing a Brahms sonata or a Debussy sonata my teacher would say "Whoa there has to be piano that sounds like dolphins smiling at the rainbow." Well I don't know what that meant, so in improvising I would try to get a colour, try to understand what a colour is or why we call it "colour," or what some people call a "smell," or whatever. That's how I started improvising and trying to understand the physical need that we have to do it.

My relationship with audience has always been very interesting. As a classical musician playing in an orchestra, if audiences don't show up, you blame the manager. If they show up, it's because you're great, so it works, win-win [audience laughter].

So the Brahms is protecting you and bringing the audience to you. If you're playing Beethoven Seven you're going to get the audience—you know it. But

then if you have any name that nobody knows or something that sounds like a Clara Shumann piano feature, people react like “Whoa—I know Shumann but why is it Clara?” So you don’t get many people and sadly that’s how it works. But at the same time we try to rationalize our relationship with the audience.

Lately what I’m trying to experiment with is not exactly what I’m playing to the audience, like sitting down and coming up with a concept and realizing it in front of an audience and seeing how they react or if they enjoy it or not. My passion in music is how music experientially goes inside the audience member during the precise moment of performance. So I’m not here to construct monuments to my own music. I want the audience to brace their anger or their sadness like a beautiful moment or an ugly moment when that music was happening. So for example when I play two notes for 30 minutes with my friend Kaia, while you guys were talking through it—that was the piece. The piece was going in your heads. Or you notice Jose sweating . . . gosh! That’s the piece right. The piece is actually what we all constructed together at that moment, including the piece and your feelings about the piece or whatever you were doing during the performance. And then it’s gone. It’s like a bad watercolor. I think of my relationship with the audience is that at the moment I want to share how we all share that we’re just here for a little bit. It’s a very old fashioned concept. I really like the idea that we can actually have the music coming inside us during the performance: it doesn’t matter how intellectual we are or how basic we are—we share that ephemeral thing. And my music is trying to pulsate that in a very visceral way. When I play I try to create or improvise things that sounds so unskilled to the point it’s like, “Okay, this dude, did he really go to school, what is he saying? What is he doing?” Because I’m challenging the need that we have to create a message, the need that we have to create a communication with a sentence structure or whatever you want to call it that our brain needs, and just make it more basic. Way more basic than that. It’s enjoying the movements

I’m actually enjoying when I’m performing and sharing at that moment. So my relationship with the audience has always been that way. Very compartmentalized in classical music. I have this relationship which is a concert hall manager playing Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, and then improvising or creating a conceptual piece: it’s more of sharing that humanity that we have.

So that’s for me what my relationship with the audience means.

JS: Thank you, Jose.

JS: Adrian, please take the floor.

Adrian Verdejo: My name is Adrian. I’m a guitarist and I’ll be performing solo guitar. My background musically is pretty typical for a classical guitarist and maybe a little bit atypical for a regular classical musician, but growing up I played a lot of guitar in bands and also was studying piano and classical guitar a few years into starting guitar. I realized at some point when I was playing in bands as a teenager my tastes were, I think not intentionally, but in general, outside of the mainstream. I was very into punk rock and underground metal and stuff like this. In the early days of playing classical music I think I was just kind of setup in the traditional model which is: you go to school, study the canons, especially in the world of classical guitar, which is very much isolated from the mainstream orchestral music, as Jose described, a very general approach to learning your instrument and studying and playing in ensembles.

Guitars are very isolated by nature and there’s a lot of emphasis by default on the solo aspect. So I was exposed to the traditional solo repertoire and I did really love it for a long time and I still do in a sort of nostalgic way; as a student I studied a lot of the big works and I was very faithful to them and treated them very religiously. I just followed the traditional path. At some point as I was studying these pieces together—it takes all year to prepare a recital from

scratch, which prepares you for a professional realm in theory. But when I finished school and started into my own thing, I realized that time would be better invested in expressing what I wanted to do myself. At some point after my grad studies I realized that I didn't really want to practice in a room by myself anymore. Even just keeping up my technique was such an effort and there was this imagined expectation that the audience wanted to come and see these works and participate, and I was kind of championing the voice of guitar by trying to represent the culture of the classical guitar or what have you. After doing enough gigs and a lot of teaching there was a point after my grad studies in the first couple years I became disinterested in practicing that repertoire. The time I would have to myself to make music was spent just doing improvised noise recordings that very few people listened to. I was completely dissociated from playing for an audience. At the time I was doing a lot of restaurant gigs, wedding gigs, and all the usual stuff that you expect to do. I was playing in chamber music also and more and more felt myself separating from what the audience would expect from me and from the expectation I was putting on myself.

And I embraced that more at some point and start to enjoy feeling alienated. I like seeing people walk out of concerts; I don't mind actually [audience laughter]; it's like a small victory or something. Recently I did a concert and somebody I had never met before came up and said "I don't think I liked that" and I said "Well I really appreciate the honest, actual reaction." When you perform a more general program you're just used to hearing, "Oh that was nice; that was interesting." That is a vague general point of feedback; it's just as a musician you put a lot of work into these concerts and to hear the negative comment was interesting. I'd rather hear "That was awful I just wanted to walk out." It's just not a point of trying to be contrary or anything, being around everybody on this panel and this festival is very rewarding and to have an audience that is participating and very engaged is very much a treat.

In Vancouver I was fortunate to fall into the New Music community and I still work every actively with them. I do still enjoy doing contemporary music, and for the past few years I have done a lot of traditional repertoire and was always saying "yes" to things when people need a guitarist. Recently I've decided to say "no" to things that really aren't my normal study or taste. I mean the situation is, everybody who's participated in chamber music knows that you play, you invest a lot of time into practicing and rehearsing these pieces and they get performed once and go to the graveyard of once-performed pieces, then you move on. In the meantime you've dropped your own program for a while, so between teaching and doing my own gigs I'm happier to do performances of music that are more meaningful for me. Sometimes just riding on the Skytrain or something, or taking samples of the population, you realize that probably these aren't the kind of people that would want to hear you play anyways. Sometimes you walk with a guitar and people engage you in conversation; they want to know what you do, or they want to tell you about their guitar or whatever, and tell you about their favorite recordings. It's a way of communicating in a conversation to try to explain or justify what you do and I find it becomes increasingly difficult and something that I don't want to actually do. I'll just say, "I'm a guitarist and classical musician," if you say "contemporary music" people are a bit puzzled—"Is that Coldplay or something?" or I'll say "I'm an electric guitarist and I play classical guitar;" there's really no context for that. So I'm happy to invite people to come see me play or always happy to play for new audience members, people that are less familiar or less specialized. But the numbers don't really bother me. I'm happy to play for audience of five or an audience of 100. And I don't mind people not really understanding it. I think the general consensus on this panel seems to be that we kind of inevitably go down this road of doing things for ourselves and I think if you want to continue as an artist you want to express yourself—there's no avoiding that. So the issue of the audience is just something that has to be dealt with. We do

our best to bring people into the concerts whether it's for our own gratification or financial reasons or just representing the art in general: it's all healthy, it's all positive. I don't think it should be the main thing we have to face. The kind of music that we're engaged with is not going to sell out giant theatres and stadiums, which is just reality, so I'm happy, like I say, I'm happy to play for small audiences, appreciative audiences, reactionary audiences, those who don't care at all, or those who don't like it. It's all valid as I see it.

JS: Thank you Adrian, and thank you everyone for your words and thoughts. There are a few ways that we could proceed because I think we need to move into discussion and there are a couple of ideas that occur to me that I'd love to see explored further. It occurs to me now, after hearing everyone speak, that part of what informed the idea for this topic was my background as a writer; when we study creative writing something everybody talks about is an "ideal reader" or an "imaginary reader." No one here today has an imaginary listener or an ideal listener for whom you improvise or compose. So, is there someone in your music world that you address your music to, whether it's a real person or someone that you wish for—is that part of it?

DW: I think it's an aspect of consciousness, at least for me

JS: Can you expand on that?

DW: If you're doing something—perhaps you've got a running commentary in your head about that says, "Oh wasn't that funny," or, "That was not the best way to do that." I mean I never really feel completely alone . . . there's an aspect of mental awareness as if you have a mental proofreader.

JS: I'm hearing you say that existentially there's always the presence of the sense of possibility of being observed and that conditions how you feel about what you're doing all the time and you bring that to your improvising practice as well. Like the sense of an observer, as in, "How would this

look, how would this look to someone, if there was someone else here?"

DW: It seems that whatever actions I am undertaking, whether it's music or doing the dishes, there's still an aspect of consciousness that is a mental big brother, the sense that is of what you're doing and this aspect of yourself knows that you're doing something, and you know that you're doing it, whatever it is, and maybe that leads to inner critique, so when you do a piece of improvised music you come off the stage conscious of a self-analytical process.

JS: Jose?

JD-G: Given my education none of my teachers posed questions about who the audience is, or who your reader is. It was always "Okay, this is your theme, this is the instrumentation" and it was very technical. So I never questioned the audience. There was no imaginary as a tool of education. I never had a teacher telling me specifically, "Okay Jose, I like your theme but I cannot imagine your reader or your performer here." It was more like "Oh that bassoon cannot play that, is that what you want?" That I got, you see, see what I'm saying, but I never, had that specific directive to consider the audience. I think it's a cop-out when teachers say, "Okay spend two months imagining your imaginary reader in anguish."

JS: They don't really do that, no

JD-G: But they do anguish still. What I went through was always very technical instead of trying to imagine an audience. The school I attended wanted to make sure we as composers had the technical tools to realize the specific statement or communication. But it was not "Now, there's well-crafted statement, it's going to actually be conveyed correctly." If it isn't conveyed correctly by the composer we're going to blame the performer for poor conveyance. So I think that the intermediary here is giving the music to the performer to create

the magic. The performer going to come to the composer and say “Okay you’re telling me that you want this, but if I read your music I cannot actually convey this thinking, or this way of performing” and then we negotiate and then we’ll see if the performer, by reading our music or by following instructions, can convey what I have in my head as the composer. But the composer does need the performer to imagine our audience. And then we blame the performer if things go wrong.

JS: The performer is your first audience

JD-G: No—the performer is the magician. The performer is the one that actually does it. And composers and particular performers can develop good relationships. The performer feels your music and knows “Jose likes long pauses” or “I know Jose hates space for notes; he likes clusters of noise” and “I know he likes consonance.” It’s a relationship we build over years. All composers are extremely specific and that’s what sometimes we work with composition teachers. Communicating with the performer is very important for us in order to convey a message to the audience; in school we work on how to convey to the performer the things that we want, not to the audience.

JS: Dave did you have something?

Dave Chokroun: I do; I’ve got a short laundry list of things. The first thing is that this conversation reminds me of one of the famous Beethoven entries from Slonimsky’s *Lexicon of Musical Invective*. The entry contains a note from Beethoven to a performer that says something like, “When I wrote that part I was moved by the almighty. Do you think I care about your fiddle?”

So that’s the first. The second is, after listening to those last comments, I wonder if it’s too simplistic to say that your perfect reader or your perfect listener is yourself, when you are the composer-slash-instant-composer? What Adrian was saying made me think about a couple of things . . . I’ve

made noise recordings at home that I don’t think I’ve even played for anybody, but I like to listen to them at home. I was trying to design a certain sound that I wanted to hear and it kind of goes like “GZZCHHHHHHHH” for half an hour, and that’s really cool! But I think nobody else needs to hear that, and I have reached a point where I like doing solo improv on the instruments that I play most of the time . . . I don’t know if I need to do this in front of people, and it’s not about privileging one kind of playing or another. I play Bach at home as well—badly—I don’t need to do that in front of people, that’s for me alone.

NA: Is there music that you need to play for people

DC: I don’t know!

NA: Is there a divide? I’m just seeing this divide between those of us that improvise music or think of weird music a personal interior part of our psyche, versus music is a performative, transformative product that we’re trying to change the world with . . . no? Nobody’s talking about the politics or the subversive political power of improvised music—are we talking about two different kinds of mind?

DC: I don’t know man; I think that’s a day’s worth of discussion.

DC: Statistically I’m a bass player most of the time, but, the guitar and bass have something in common which is that they travel across pretty much every style, and so people ask me, “What kind of musician are you?” And I eventually came up with answers like, “Um, most of the time when I’m a professional musician I’m playing jazz in restaurants, so statistically I’m a jazz bass player.” But to unpack your point about the transformative power or the political economy of what we’re doing when we’re doing this . . . the question is, is it kind of a privileged position to say, “I’m doing a concert,” because perhaps most music isn’t done at concerts. Perhaps most of the music people consume is done as work, not at a concert. And the kind of relationship

you have to an audience where you're playing jazz in a restaurant becomes very different. One of the guys I play restaurant gigs regularly with in band always says, "What can we do tonight to get fired?" How far can we push the frame of this condition that we're laboring under, how far outside can we go in this condition and how much can we recuperate this time playing at the restaurant for our own work and our own leisure while getting paid for it; how far can we go without getting fired?

JS: Lovely question, and it is a question about audience. You said something in there Dave about ourselves as our ideal listener that made me want to hand it to Stanley, because of some awareness I have of Stanley's writing in which he went through this whole giant thing with Harold Bloom, about how in positing an ideal listener, you're talking about the anxiety of influence. The idea is very Freudian of course and we're playing to our musician fathers—it's almost very patriarchal, it's an absurd frame of reference in one sense but it's also the idea that what we create is a challenge of some kind or a response to an inheritance where we have to somehow live up to an audience that we will physically never encounter, which consists mainly of specialists. I know you [Stanley] have explored that a lot.

SJZ: Right, well it makes me think more of Ian Forster and his book *Aspects of the Novel*. He says that when you're writing, you can change "writing" to "playing music." His construct is to imagine that all of the musicians from all of time are alive right now, and imagine you're sitting a circular table with all of them, and you have to make dinner time chit-chat. And so John Coltrane is to my left, Pablo Casals is to my right, right there is Shostakovich, and over there are The Shags, so that does weigh on me . . . when you're at the dinner table just kind of making chit-chat you don't have to produce *The Ring Cycle*, but you do want to get on and kind of sound somewhat intelligent and feel good. I don't so much subscribe to this idea that music has to be fun, but there are so many other things that are such a drag and are so abnegating and are so demoralizing

that part of me wants to keep it light and pleasant but within the level of the big dinner table with the real thinkers. And so, to the degree that we're influenced by musicians we've never heard, and to the idea that we have to navigate the getting outside of Coltrane's shadow and this, that, and the other, for me, as a simpleton who is not really in the music economy, I just want to, I don't know what I want . . . I just want to have a nice dinner, in the company of the great minds and the great musicians of our time, trying to converse with them. I don't know if that was an answer to your question, but again I don't even listen to myself. There's all this talk about, "You got to listen, music is about listening, you got to listen to yourself . . ." Huh? I'm like a wind chime on the house: when the wind blows, I go, "clank-clank-clank," and no one cares or claps or listens but that's what happens, and I think that we are all that wind.

What comes out is what comes out, Harvard Scholar, Down syndrome—it's there now and we're never going to get it back. So I just try and let it roll through me and maybe have fun with it and just have an experience, try and get off the treadmill of ultimate monotony of nothingness, try and be in a moment and try and make it somewhat rewarding, I mean cause the antonym to that is everywhere, and it's just waiting for you.

NA: Do you think that the process trying to make something meaningful to yourself could be transmitted or translated to other people?

SJZ: I don't know. My experience in communication with others has been fraught and a lot of times I'll try and say one thing and it'll be interpreted entirely differently. So on the one hand I try not to say anything of any real consequence or meaning.

NA: You're failing!

SJZ: The thing of it is, getting back to Harold Bloom, is that the real meat of the stuff comes from

the misunderstanding. I want to put out all this nonsense and you're going to misunderstand me and you're going to take that and build it, and I've been listening to John Coltrane since I was 14 years old, I've been misinterpreting him . . . I've been trying to be him but I have been failing, but what comes out of those feelings is what you're maybe going to listen to on Sunday, but there you go. I'm just going to give feelings, and you can take them you can leave them you can interpret them or you cannot interpret them; the birds are out there singing, I'm going to go out there and chirp a little bit, and go back to the nest and eat a worm.

JS: Norm, the point you were making earlier about the model is something that I'm totally fascinated with all the time, and I live and breathe it all the time because I'm trying to make it happen, and I look around this room and see all these incredibly beautiful brilliant people and incredible richness that we have in this room and that we had over at the venue last night and so on and it really moves me that this gathering is possible. And I spend a lot of time thinking about what are the things that mitigate against this and the "drudgery of daily life," which is a phrase that occurs to me a lot and that I really hate because, of course, daily life isn't drudgery—fruit grows on trees pretty much by itself and it falls off and we eat it and so on. Actually it's not necessary that daily life be such drudgery and yet it so often is, but against that, all these sort of techniques have been deployed, right? Posterizing is one, Facebook events is another, going to sponsors and asking them for money in exchange for recognition and discussing their strategic goals, and going after public money, which so far this event has not received. This network of relationships that we have today in this gathering makes the idea of audience to me, it really reconfigures it, because there's this idea of an audience as being a relatively homogenous mass that we just have to magnetize. If we produce the right element, there will be the right attraction toward the element, and then that mass will be attracted to our event. But reaching all the people, actually speaking to the individuals,

seems to be where the success happens if there's going to be any in the music, in the marketing, so to speak. In Prince George the mainstream brushed up against this festival in the biggest way last year when we dropped a piano off the roof, and that was our opportunity to bring in people to see us break some furniture—the idea of dropping the piano as a musical performance, and the destruction of the piano was the attractive part for many of the people, but not a real desire to listen because as soon as the thing hit the ground, everyone cheered. It wasn't a listening experience, it was a watching experience. The activity was like I writing a letter and then addressing it to someone; the letter was addressed to someone—there's an address at the beginning of the letter and that's the personal side, but there's also the address on the envelope, and that's the institutional side. So, who music or a letter is addressed to becomes a commodity but also the personal relationship side of it. Does that speak to you, is the, has that been your experience with what you're doing?

NA: Absolutely. The idea of figuring out how to talk to people . . . we want to make this into some kind of commodity that we are selling to people to put in the most commercial . . .

JS: In exchange for money.

NA: In my experience I don't really need the money. I need the money to pay my artists. I need the message to go out and be heard. It might sound cheesy but I think it makes the world a better place to have this voice making that political statement that we don't all have to do what we hear or see on TV or whatever.

Maybe that's where the divide between music that we play for ourselves and music that we play for others lies, the divide between pure performers and producers where producers need to think about how to get the funding. The producer side of me thinks about those things and the performer side thinks about how can I make my music stronger and how can I make it more interesting and more expressive

and more . . . more more more. It's a fascinating, it's a big wall that is difficult to cross or circle back. Telling people is the hard part.

JD-G: To address your point about addressing a letter, Jeremy . . . we're coming from male privilege. We don't care—we just think our message is important and then we take it for granted. I think that's why you haven't got an answer, see what I'm saying. I think as privileged males we think, "We're doing it, you're here, you're listening to it," that's why you haven't gotten an answer. It's like, is what I'm saying actually important for you? No! I haven't even thought if it's importance for you. I'm going to play and you're going to sit down and I take that relationship for granted, and that's from a position of privilege because I think, "This is what I deserve" . . . I don't even question my right to be in front of you and playing, and that's why there's no specific answer from any of us. I mean we're just doing it and just accepting it. If I have an audience of five or 100, it doesn't matter—I still have a message I'm going to convey. It's from a position of privilege.

NA: There's no aspect of us earning that privilege?

JD-G: No! [laughing] I don't think so!

DW: I think you have to earn privilege that comes when you learn to play an instrument; when you get up and you perform, you have to learn how to be comfortable with performing and learn how to talk about what you do and why you do it or at least put in some thought.

JD-G: That's a process, that's not a privilege. I mean you'd be privileged to go through the process, but that's a great privilege . . . But when I'm talking about male privilege: this is why we haven't been able to say why we don't take our audiences into account is because we actually don't think about the audience-performer relationship when we do our music. And that comes from a position of privilege because we are not going to be discriminated against, we're going to put ourselves there and people are

going to listen to us.

NA: If we really spent a lot of time thinking about our audiences we might be forced or inclined to change our material or change our music so it will appeal to more people, which I don't think anybody here wants to do. So we have to change the message that we're giving in order to keep doing the work that we do without compromise. We have to figure out how, which is not privilege—it's hard work.

JS: I think Stanley has a point and Rodney has a point.

SJZ: If you drive down highway 97 and you go through Washington just before you hit Oregon there is a small Greek Orthodox monastery [St. John Monastery]. They have a little pamphlet and that says they are here to pray for peace in the world, and sell cheese cake, and coffee, and really good baklava. Everyone shows up to get the coffee and the baklava—no one cares or shows up or is audience for the nuns praying for the peace of the world. So, maybe we need to sell cheesecake.

NA: But the customers are rubbing shoulders in some kind of distant way with the monks perhaps . . .

SJZ: . . . in an extremely distant way through a pamphlet . . .

DW: Maybe the money used for cheesecake goes to buy new rosaries and things . . .

SJZ: . . . or paying the rent, or paying for the snow plough or whatever and paying for the pamphlets, so they've divorced their primary work though this commodity pursuit.

JS: Which we all do to some degree, except for the idle rich.

SJZ: Yeah!

JS: Which I don't think anyone here is, and if they

are, don't tell me because I'm going to be coming to them [audience laughter].

NA: But they haven't compromised their work, which is praying for peace. They just found a venue to facilitate their work.

SJZ: Inasmuch as they have to spend time getting the getting the coffee out, and you can go pray, but these are two distinct things . . . I don't think you could even watch the nuns pray even if you wanted to—it's none of your beeswax. They're going to wake up at four in the morning to do their thing then it's coffee time!

JS: Rodney, what did you want to say?

Rodney Sharman: It's a question of "For whom do you write?" I never think it about as a composer, but when I write program notes, I actually write for a specific person, who is Ayo Suzuki the visual artist. I don't know if you knew her. She's passed away now; she's the sister of David Suzuki. You might've seen her incredible macramé sculptures in the library of the library in Toronto, the ones with the water and the stones. But she went to every single New Music concert and she didn't know anything about instruments and she didn't have any historical background in music whatsoever. She was a wonderful artist who just really liked New Music. So whenever I write program notes even to this day I write thinking of her, and I always encourage my students to write the program for someone like that. When you're speaking to someone who doesn't have a musical background, you have the respect to say "short note" rather than "staccato" and use the words they know.

Susan Campos-Fonseca: As a composer I believe in the imaginary listener but I design the experience. I think about the experience of the public and the downtown and try to imagine the person who live in this space. I don't believe that as a composer I think my music is the only important thing—I try to create music for biological experience. I believe

we are animals and it is very good and try to create an experience. I think the artist is like a shaman and I think it's important because the Western society is conditioned by courtesan society, like the old guard and the elite, and there is a need to break this conditioning. I love your comment about the small audience. We can be successful with that small audience—this is very important. The problem with a big audience is capital. The people of the theatre think, "You are successful because you have a very big audience." No—you are successful because you have a small audience who loves the experience you designed for them.

JS: Right. That's wonderful.

RS: I think we always think about the audience in the program, as in the experience of the audience and where the members come from . . . and in the classical music world I know when I sat on programming committees, there was a person who pointed out that every one of these pieces on the program is in the same key, which occurred to no one. Just trying to shake it and trying to make it, trying to have a beautiful dinner rather than a potluck.

JS: Yeah, although I've been to some beautiful potlucks . . . Malcolm, what did you want to say?

Malcolm McColl: I just want to speak as a member of the audience because I'm looking at the room here and everyone here is a performer or creative in some way and I'm the person that comes to the show.

JS: And you are a guitarist

MM: Okay, I have a guitar. But it's not part of my presence here today. Live music is in the past five or six years has become really critical to me. I'll say that experimental music, other than the Casse-Tête weekend, is not part of my experience—it's not something I'm looking for. But when I'm here, I really enjoy it, and there's moments of transcendence for me, someone who comes from a popular music background, so just take it as a compliment,

everybody, that I appreciate what is happening here. There's going to be moments where I'm going to roll my eyes when something doesn't really work for me [audience laughter].

Earlier there was a discussion about the small audience. My experience as a member of the audience in Prince George I don't think is unique. Audiences are small for live music. It's so hard, unless it's U2 or Lynyrd Skynyrd at the CN Centre people don't come out to hear, especially people that are the road warriors, the people that are driving back and forth across this country with the guitar and a bass and they show up and they play and there's 10 people there. And 10 is a bonus some nights. Some nights it's three people and the bartender's one of the three. So it's not something unique to experimental music world. It's so hard . . . I try to get people to come out and I say "Live music! It's live music!" I've never really had a bad experience at live music. And it's intimate. What I enjoy is the chance to see what's going on. Jazz isn't something isn't something to listen to casually, but to see people playing jazz and see the interplay and the dynamic of the music even without an understanding of it, I can feed and see that a theme is developed here, and it's expressed over here, and then reiterated. So my mind has grown somewhat from seeing live music. I encourage you to keep doing what you're doing.

JS: I love it, and everyone perform for Malcolm now. When people do go to those concerts at the arena of course they watch the performers on the TV because that's the experience now.

MM: Or they record it on their cell phone and they're not really connected to the immediacy of the performance. They're not really connected to the performance. They're recording someone who's going to be a quarter of an inch tall on their screen and they won't look at it again. But they feel the need to somehow record it. Whereas I walk out of concerts and sometimes I can't tell you about the music that was playing but I know that during each moment in that show I was involved.

JS: One other little observation is that you [Malcolm] actually do have quite a good context for experimental music and I think this is important because terms become obstructions. "Experimental" is the stupidest term, but it's serving a purpose of some kind. I know that you're a listener of Jimi Hendrix and of some other guitar players who definitely pushed the envelope but they were able to translate it into a popular context and enrich the popular context with very challenging practices and I think that we all benefit when that happens, which seems to happen more or less by chance when chance is permitted, or by accident, and punk rock is a big example of that too. Dave I should really give you the floor.

DC: It is a very important point that music has mostly always been played in small rooms. And Stanley and I were talking about it just a couple of days ago; if you're a student of the history of jazz and of free jazz one of the pivotal events is Ornette Coleman in 1959 getting a regular gig at the Five Spot, which is the jazz spot, and Leonard Bernstein comes down. Everybody is checking out Ornette Coleman because it's the thing to see that week. You have to dig around in the secondary sources . . . I think I got this out of Paul Bley's autobiography: the Five Spot is actually really shitty. The descriptions say that it was a bar in the Bowery. The bathrooms were behind the stage and the floor wasn't level and everybody who played at the Five Spot was standing in piss. And it's not a big room either, but this procession of 20 or 30 people who were in that room over a few weeks 60 years ago has taken on significance in the literature of free jazz; you never know where these things are going to travel to.

JS: I am already seeing what next year's panel is going to be. We're going to talk about the role of literature in the transmission of musical ideas because it's so tremendous. And maybe on that note we can conclude the panel with some thanks for all these amazing musicians who spoke.

Casse-Tête: A Festival of Experimental Music

Panel Discussion 2

Engaging and Disengaging: Traditions and/of Conflict

Music-making is common to all cultures, but its expressions are not. The histories of colonial dominance have tended to be histories of dominant colonial musical practices as well; European music asserted its superiority as European societies colonized the world, and today European tonality still rules the airwaves. As artists, we inherit a situation, a set of sometimes conflicting, sometimes colluding traditions of music-making, from teaching to instrumental culture to repertoire to the conventions of performance and reception. And yet successive avant-gardes have often based their existence on a flight from certain traditional boundaries, aesthetic, political, moral, and so on. How does your musical practice challenge tradition? How does it grow from tradition? Have avant-gardes themselves become traditions unto themselves, and if so, how has that affected their possibilities?

Moderator: Jeremy Stewart

Panel members: Susan Campos-Fonseca, Dave Chokroun, Shane Krause, Rodney Sharman, Stanley Jason Zappa

Additional participant: Interpreter for Susan Campos-Fonseca: Jose Delgado-Guevara

Audience participants: Samuel Stevenson, Darren Williams

Transcribed by Beki Tubbs; edited by Jonathon Wilcke, with assistance from Dave Chokroun.

This discussion took place June 7, 2015, at Dreamland School of the Arts in Prince George, British Columbia.

Jeremy Stewart: This is the second Casse-Tête panel discussion for 2015 titled "Engaging and

Disengaging: Traditions and/of Conflict." The topic for this discussion is neutral and addresses the traditions we inherit as musicians when we learn things from each other, from institutions, from teachers, and through our instruments. The topic is also about the idea of avant-garde practices becoming traditional over time and being recuperated in various ways. I want to address the role of not just tradition but history in our practices.

The panelists today are Susan Campos-Fonseca, Rodney Sharman, Dave Chokroun, and Shane Krause. Let's have everyone present two minutes or so about themselves and their practice, and spend five minutes on the topic, and then we'll open it up to discussion.

Susan Campos-Fonseca: Good morning. Well, I am a professor at the Universidad Autonoma de Madrid in Spain, and a professor at the University of Costa Rica. I studied musicology, orchestra conducting, and composition, and academic composition. I am also interested in the problem of colonialism and the colonial theories applied to music. The first problem is that music is not a universal language. Music is an ethnohistorical creation. When we speak about music, we speak a lot of problems of colonialism and the models in Western culture that maintain systems of empire, and music is part of the colonial program. Music is a form to listening to the world; it is a form of understanding the sound, the rituals, and the ceremonies. They are a form of creating the self of the people. But, that terminology of music has been created in Europe for European people, because in America and Africa people have different words to call this phenomenon, no? The other problem is the

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Norman Adams • photo by Jeremy Stewart





Saxophone Quartet (L-R: Stanley Jason Zappa, Jonathon Wilcke, Darren Williams, Shane Krause • photo by Chris Wagner









Rodney Sharman • photo by Chris Wagner



Casse-Tête: A Festival of Experimental Music Panel Discussion Group

L-R: Carolyn McGhee, Jonathon Wilcke, Jose Delgado-Guevara, Darren Williams, Jeremy Stewart, Dave Chokroun, Rodney Sharman, Samuel Stevenson, Susan Campos Fonseca, Cathy Fern Lewis, Stanley Jason Zappa, Alyson Budd, Shane Krause, David Green, Adrian Verdejo

(continued from page 18)

question of creating fixed pitches in music. When we create fixed pitches, we colonize the sound.

Interpreter (Jose Delgado-Guevara): The way we write music, when we write it and we print it, is the way we colonize sound, through the process of writing.

Susan: Well, the ethnomusicologists or historians or maybe European people go to Africa, America, or other places. When Rome goes to Europe and colonizes too many nations with the system of notation to record the music. Notation is a form developed for learning music, but it's also the form that colonizes the possibilities of the sound with the attitude that, "This is the correct sound, this is the correct rhythm, and you need to reproduce music exactly according to how it is written." When ethnomusicologists go to Africa and listen to the sounds, they think, "Oh! This is African music, this is the rhythm of Africa," and they codify it through notation. They go to America and listen to Aztecas or Peruvian or First Nations music, and they codify what they hear through writing. When a nation creates national identity, it says, "This is our national music, this is our tradition, this is our folklore, this is the reality, this is the truth of our music." But it is not, this is a translation of the sound, it is the process of colonializing the sound in the same way that consonance is valued over dissonance, when 18th century or the people invent harmony or counterpoint or compositional techniques, they try to create categories of thinking, like in philosophy. It is a rational system of the sound. And the radio is a form of colonizing the sound.

In resuming to the first question: How does your musical practice challenge tradition? In my case, I am born in Costa Rica. Costa Rica is a Latin American country, but I don't make Latin American music. This is the first condition of my music: I don't make Latin American music. Why? Because I think this is a form of colonizing myself. The people

think, "Oh! She is from Costa Rica, she makes Latin American music." No. I make music. I select sounds, I create experiments as a person, a composer, and a contemporary artist. Yes, I was born in Costa Rica and am from Latin America, but I don't need to make folklore or salsa or something like that because I'm Latin American, no. The other question, how does your practice grow from tradition? Well, tradition is an invention. We make traditions real [Speaking in Spanish] . . .

Interpreter: We make our traditions real just by repeating it.

Susan: Repetition makes it real because you think this is real because we make it and again and again and we think tradition is real. It's the same with contemporary art. We think, "Oh! contemporary art is dissonance, it's choking, it's broken," and repeat and repeat and repeat and repeat, and we think, "Oh! I am experimental. I am breaking all of the rules," and repeat. I think being a contemporary artist is not breaking rules again and again and again—it's trying to listen to the world, listen to the people, listen to our time, and trying to communicate something or not, but I think we need to listen our time and try to be in our time. A phenomenon of our time is the colonialism. Colonialism is real. We colonize the existence every time. With regard to avant-garde traditions, I think the possibility of the avant-garde is only tradition. Avant-garde is like Maximalism; for example, you think about Mahler, about John Coltrane—we are in a global world. I think tradition is part of us, is part of our discipline. We are musicians, we are part of the colonial system, but we need to understand this is part of us, we can't negate it [Speaking in Spanish].

Interpreter: We cannot get rid of it, we cannot get rid of that we are part of traditions, we cannot get rid of the fact that we are colonial beings.

Susan: But like Carol was saying this morning, the problem is the solution. Yes, I think so.

Jeremy: We will now turn over the floor to Rodney Sharman.

Rodney: When I was thinking about how to address this topic, I was thinking about it very much in terms of the music that I write, which is about music. A lot of the music that I write, for example the guitar piece that you heard last night, has to do with the tuning of the instrument, and the sounds and resonances that emerge from the instruments themselves. Many of my ideas come from working directly with instruments, and these ideas give birth to music. But I also write music about music, which started because I was studying in Buffalo where there were many marvelous pianists who were asking me to write pieces. I wrote one piano piece, which was the one real idea I had for the piano. The idea was to have the three central octaves of the piano completely forbidden and I would write the sweetest possible chords such that playing the piano was like banging a drum and breaking glass at the same as there was this sweetness, and at the end of the piece, using harmonics on the piano that would simply come through as a kind of contrast to this. The piece is extremely restricted; it really was the only idea I had that came from the piano. So I thought, "How am I going to address all of these marvelous people who are asking me to write?" The answer came when I went to a recital by James Clapperton. James Clapperton doesn't play so much anymore, but when he was a teenager and in his early twenties he was thought of as the pianist who could play anything, and his reputation came because he replaced a pianist on very short notice. So, he gave a recital of so-called new complexity in Buffalo with pieces of Xenakis and James Dillon and Brian Ferneyhough, and the technique and intensity of the playing was unbelievable from somebody who looked 15 and was 20. And at the end of his performance, he accepted tremendous applause, saying he was going to play part of the Verdi transcriptions of Michael Finnissy, titled *Aida*, as an encore. He sat down and played this incredible piece. I knew *Aida* well because I was thinking of colonialization and politics. I got a job in the Friburg

Opera Orchestra because there was a production of *Aida* in which all of the Egyptians—well you know the story—the Egyptians colonize Ethiopia and it's an Ethiopian princess and this political conflict, essentially. All the Egyptians were dressed as Nazis and all of the Ethiopians were dressed as Egyptians, and they used real footage of Rommel in the desert and footage of Mussolini's biplanes gassing Ethiopians, and Ethiopians throwing spears at the planes. About a third of the orchestra refused to play. I auditioned and was playing as an extra in the orchestra, and in a sense I capitalized on the situation, but I was a student. From this experience, I knew the opera very, very well, and while I was listening to this radical piano transcription of the opera, I couldn't recognize a note. I was sitting with my teacher Yvar Mikhashoff, a great talent and a very large man. I said, "Yvar, this piece is wonderful but I don't hear anything, I don't hear any Verdi at all," and he raised himself up to his very large size and said, "My dear, could you not hear untransformed in the left hand the entire last scene, the duet where the sand is coming and they are about to die?" and I had not. So I thought, okay, I really love this, I will write a piece in imitation of this piece because I have no ideas of my own. So I went to the pianist who had asked me to write pieces—notably Tony de Mare—and asked, "What are your favourite opera arias?" The pianist replied that his favorites were all Puccini, so I started with *Nessun Dorma*, which was less famous then than it is now, and I took the entire, recitative, all of the aria, and left it untransformed except for playing with the rhythm just a little bit, which I replicated three times, and I drew musical graffiti over the top of it, dedicated it to Michael Finnissy, and sent it in the mail to him. This took place long before there was email, and Finnissy wrote me back and said, "What a lovely piano piece, beautiful transcription, but you know that I only used fragments of *Aida* in this piece and that there really is very little Verdi in it at all." So, in fact, I had done what we were talking about yesterday, which was that I had misunderstood a piece of music and accidentally wrote something original by trying to write something in

imitation. Since then, I have done transcriptions of nine different opera arias and duets for piano. I've done a transcription of Mozart's *Là ci darem la mano* for flute, voices with the vocal parts untransformed, and piano. I've used Gregorian chant in a piece about Teresa of Ávila in which I use the chants she says she was singing when she had her first raptures, and I've done transcriptions of birds, so I've actually done transcriptions of every period in Western music: Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, and Romantic. So, in a sense, I plunder Western culture for ideas. That is, I think, more than anything, my relationship to the music is of the past and to tradition. Yes, there is an American experimental tradition of which I think I have an understanding in part because of my education. Unlike Susan, although I speak in public a lot and do a lot of education, I'm not part of academia; I've always been part of concert music, whether in the so-called new music world of festivals and small concerts and so on, but also of the orchestral row, opera, and dance, a lot of dance, so that's, I think, my relationship to music of the past.

Jeremy: Thank you Rodney. Dave Chokroun.

Dave Chokroun: I am constantly frustrated that I have to admit I really do have a classical music education. I have a musical family and was immersed in the classical tradition. These days, I'm mainly a composer, a non-genre improviser, and a jazz bassist. Also, I play in a punk rock band, so I jump all over the place. At the end of the day, I am a traditional musician—my foundational spot is European music. I had a thought while Susan and Rodney were speaking earlier, which is something that my teacher from Victoria, John Celona, used to say, "How come the white people get musicology and everything else is ethnomusicology?" But then again, I also like something that I've heard composer Frederic Rzewski say, "I'm a traditional musician," which kind of accurate for him because he is somebody who has really made an effort to pull folk material, especially stuff that has some kind of political signification, into his work. But

then there's a tradition of incorporating folk music, and the tradition of a European white guy doing that is just part of the tradition because it's as old as written music. The question about what we are representing when we play written music versus any other kind of music, and that is something I've given a lot of thought to. I was trained on the piano, but avoided piano for about 10 years and went back to it a few years ago because I wanted to do some writing that worked through the piano and anatomizing the history of Western music, and also the idea that the piano is an object of the industrial revolution. The modern piano arrives with the ability to make a cast iron frame, which could not have made even in Beethoven's time. In some ways the piano is a very old instrument; it's like we're playing something that's essentially the same as it was in 1850: a wooden grandfather clock with all these wooden parts. At the same time, the piano is the height of 19th century technology. The piano is ubiquitous because everybody knows how to go to one and bang something out. It used to be, really, before recording, one of the main ways that music was transmitted, so, it's very possible that the level of music literacy was higher, although I don't really know about that. My idea about the piano is that it's something completely industrial, really kind of ubiquitous, at least in European and North American white culture, and it's something that anybody can walk up to and bang on, making it a very low level, populist instrument. But at the same time, the very highest level of working with the piano, for example Tony de Mare, or Frederic Rzewski, or Cecil Taylor, or Vijay Iyer, is very, very high, and in fact so far beyond what even some of us here who play well can even imagine, right? So when I started working with these ideas, I went back to the kind of stuff I performed in the piece, which I improvised from a few written pieces that I worked on. There is all of this Romantic stuff in there, and there's jazz. I'm not sure exactly why I made the decision to take it off of the page— it seemed like it was in the spirit of the week.

The idea that writing is colonization is interesting,

and it reminds me of some of the basic stuff Gilles Deleuze writes about the refrain and the example that he uses in *A Thousand Plateaus*, which is a child walking home in the dark. A child walking home in the dark is singing and the song becomes a way of navigating through a frightening territory. I think some of the things we do when we are taking past music apart, especially in what I'm calling white people music, is what we mean when we're talking about re-territorializing something with a history that is connected to colonialism and oppression and redefining it into something that is not as messed up. It's part of asking the question where we came from with this, what are we doing. I'm going to stop there, but this is the kind of thing that keeps me up at night.

Jeremy: Thank you Dave. Shane Krause.

Shane Krause: I blow through several different reed-affixed woodwind instruments. I consider myself to be an improviser, both in the North American free jazz and the European free improvisation territories, although I also work on traditional jazz and non-traditional concert music. I'm by no means an academic. I've gone to school for music, but my primary source of income is driving a bus, and I enjoy that because it keeps my conversations very short, ideally, because I'm probably someone who has some form of undiagnosed social anxiety disorder, so just to get that out of the way. All these ideas that we've discussed are things that I think about entirely in my own head at times, so my experience with transmitting them to other people is pretty limited. Of course, it's a big question, so the big question is where to start. As someone who works within free jazz and works on the jazz tradition, there's the big colonial question right there, it's the question of whether as a Caucasian I have any right to that music. There is a great deal of respect towards all those musicians and their cultures, but the question of whether I should be finding my own thing is another thing. I also noticed that I'm not actually listening, which actually me saying "Can I go now?" I'll join in once we get more into the

discussion. Just with music, I'm hitting dead ends. Jeremy: So let's open it up and get the conversation going. I think that Stanley has something he wants to say.

Stanley: I've always wondered what would happen to Baroque music, Classical music, and early Romantic music, and maybe even late Romantic music, if you were gonna play that music and you were gonna conduct that music and you were gonna teach that music, and if you could only have clothes from that period, and you had to get on the bus in those little velvety knickers and a big ruffly collar. That's what you gotta do, you know, and you gotta throw away your cell phone, and if you get sick you get leeches or you get a potion or something. If you wanna play music from the 18th century, you have to live an 18th century life. What would happen to that music? Would people still be programming it? Would people still be so hot to trot?

Dave: Are we playing period instruments?

Stanley: Well, maybe, yeah. Sure. But even if you weren't, you're gonna commit to Classical music then you gotta commit to Classical music: you gotta dress it, you gotta eat it, you gotta...

Shane: Well then the question as people who play music from the African-American tradition is then do we have to set ourselves up in a way where we are constantly in fear of police?

Stanley: Many of us are constantly in fear of police. That's an easy one. Done.

Shane: But in a more overwhelming manner.

Rodney: It's a wonderful fantasy. Changing the topic, when I think about colonialism and aspects of the questions that you asked, one of the things that occurred to me were all of these intercultural orchestras that exist now. One of my oldest friends, Joël Bons, has this group called the Atlas Ensemble in Amsterdam, and there's an intercultural orchestra

in Vancouver too, where he brings people from Turkey and from Armenia and so on and makes this orchestra out of instruments from all of these different cultures with different tunings. This has been done in Vancouver for a very, very long time in a kind of non-funded way. It is becoming funded now and is strangely one of the things that government funding is really encouraging—let's have Chinese instruments playing with Western instruments with symphony orchestras—let's have these things together. And I have resisted this for some 20 years of being asked again and again and being told, "But look how nicely you write for plucked instruments, imagine that you're working for these from other cultures," and when I said could I use a Celtic harp I was told absolutely not, which is one of the reasons I didn't do it. However, now I am writing for the oud, which is how it was I came to write a lute song, and the biggest difficulty I have found is exactly what Susan is talking about: very skilled musicians from these traditions are baffled by Western notation. It makes them very nervous and upset, and somehow these organizations are trying to pair composers like us with musicians who don't necessarily read Western notation; it really is the notation that's the hardest thing.

Susan: They have their own notation.

Rodney: They have their own notation, although the oud does not. The oud is learned usually with a master and large numbers of students who imitate. The master plays something simple and the students play it back. I researched it and tried to get as deeply into understanding it as I possibly could given the limits of my knowledge and where I live, and I have the good fortune of friends who know things about this who send me information and people I know who have actually experienced this, but it's something that's given a great deal of consideration right now and a great deal of funding and support and I'm wondering if people have thoughts about that.

Susan: The idea of wielding a tradition, and the

idea of Baroque, Romantic, Classical music, is an invention—it's not real. The historians put together papers and scores and instruments and made an interpretation. We can't be in the 18th century because in the 18th century they aren't thinking, "Oh! We are in the 18th century, we are renaissance"—it's not real. Now we live with history all the time, and we think "Oh! I am a free jazz player, and they say, "Oh! The tradition of free jazz is put on you, Oh! Free jazz is so real, no?" But when Ornette Coleman are coming to make this music you stop thinking about it, just make it. The problem with tradition is the fantasy of tradition. You [Rodney] spoke yesterday about imaginary listeners. I think we're listening a tradition in our imaginary, our fantasy.

Shane: I was reading in *Musical Times* an article about discussing these ideas of tradition, and the article is largely a bunch of academics arguing over what is right. "This tempo indication means this, no, no it means this." We don't have recordings, so there's such a degree of conjecture. Well, it's music, and to what degree is that important? I was also reading an article about the paleo diet, which says we should be eating like cavemen, and I can't remember what field he was in but someone wrote an article saying, "If we're going to eat the paleo diet then we need to start eating grain that's rotten and full of funguses that are probably going to give you mild hallucinations and there's probably far too little rat shit in your food." There is romanticism about this period thing, and within music or any form of thing, tradition is something that has an established length of time, and our ideas of how long something has to be before it's called tradition are amazing. Like, we say we do it because of tradition, well how long and because why, why did that tradition start?

Jeremy: I'd like to see if we can tease out a couple of things for a second and then I think Samuel has something that he wants to throw in.

It seems to me one of the things I'm hearing is the fiction of a tradition or of history as we inhabit

it and work with in various ways, the fiction of representativeness, who has the right to use certain kinds of materials, when are they to be used, and who gets to count as an ambassador of this particular group or period of time or body of knowledge which again is a negotiation around stories. We have to take them back and back again to what are they being used for, not just who is using them, because then we just end up in a “who gets to speak for whom” conversation, which is not an unworthy topic but it’s not the only topic because that to me again funnels into what are they being used for. So, is there a claim that a certain tradition is being used, like is this fiction of tradition being used to grab some kind of legitimacy, which can in turn, take you back to a materialist analysis, be used to get money, to get a position that will allow you to get money, and be able to have access to various kinds of privilege, and I think that’s again why colonialism is bound up in this question of tradition because how do we come by all these things and then what are we using them for. Samuel?

Samuel: Yeah, so I guess I’m hearing patterns and I’m wanting to maybe try to give names to some of them and talk about some of the patterns. Stanley, what you posed is part of what I was hearing in that you know we can’t know, like we can’t fully know Baroque and even if we went back and wore all of those things and ate all of those things, the truth is as soon as you got on a bus with, you know, like an emo kid . . .

Stanley: And your cell phone went off.

Samuel: . . . or a cell phone went off—we don’t live in those eras and no matter how much we incorporate and borrow from those eras—we are still living now. We can neither deny the traditions that inform us nor can we deny the fact that we are living in a time that hasn’t been interpreted yet from the future, which is both liberating and scary. I think there is something about the notating of music as a form of colonization, this taking something which is alive and about relationship and expression and codifying

it into this fixed piece and not just codifying it just as a practice in and of itself, but codifying it in this way that says “This is the template, this is the right way that it should look,” and then all of a sudden everything else is in relationship back to that text.

The most powerful text I read in this art therapy program I just finished was around indigenous research methodologies, and the guy boiled it all down to an indigenous model of research at its foundation is about relationship. So, it’s like if colonization is about ownership, you know, then at least the way this guy was posing an indigenous research model was about relationship, and from this perspective of relationship we have an obligation to ask the question, “What is this used for?” You can’t just go into an indigenous community, extract sociological data, and then use it to oppress people; if you wanna go in and get information, if you want access to the knowledge, to the music, or whatever it is from the people, then there’s a reciprocity that you are signing up for. So, something about these two kinds of dialectics, the objective, the idea of an objective piece of music versus what I think you were saying Rodney, which is, through imitation something of your own got expressed, even accidentally, but you weren’t saying, “I took this, I don’t know the exact artist, but I took this piece from the Romantic period and I am playing Romantic music, this is representative of all Romantic music.” I started with this thing that I was told was Romantic music and something completely different came out and here’s what it is. So, there’s something that like admitting and owning the subjectivity of our art seems like a way of undermining the objective, the fiction of objectivity that comes with colonialization. Does that make sense?

Shane: I think one of the things that happens when an outsider looks at a culture and extracts sociological data is the problem is that there’s a lot of asking all the wrong questions, looking at the relationships all the wrong way, and saying things in ways that our societies have structured. There are some musicians for whom I have a great deal of respect and whose

music I enjoy, but who have tried to respectfully study the music of the aboriginal people here, just in North America, which is problematic in a lot of ways, but whose use of the music became quite off the mark and became a form of colonialism. You can want to share that music with the world but at the same time be disrespectful in a big way towards what the music.

Jeremy: I'd like to bring together a couple of things with just this tiny story. There was a blog post I read containing an interview, I can't remember either the interviewer or the musician's names, but one of the speakers was a jazz musician and he was talking about why you can't learn to play jazz from a record. He talked about relationships and music and was saying, "Well, if you learn jazz from a record you can imitate jazz, but you can only play jazz if you have played jazz with the people who played jazz with the people who played jazz back to the beginning." I did some thinking about that and realized for all of us that's still a very real possibility; it's not remote that hand-to-hand passing along of jazz still exists and is unbroken, and of course records, you know, are a feature of that in another way, they are not irrelevant. With the question of appropriating music, it's the relationships you have with the people whose music that might say something about how that music is also yours.

Shane: Well, I think in terms of learning jazz I take issue with people saying that you can't learn jazz from recordings. I think that the ideal is to play with a bunch of people and learn from them but learning from the recordings is a happy medium compared to how a lot of people, myself included, learned how to play jazz, which was going to a school and reading a bunch of books. Jazz should be an oral tradition and you should be learning to play through the tradition. Coleman Hawkins learned to play the music by playing with other people but he also learned to play the music and learned how to play different things within the music by learning from records. Charlie Parker was learning things from records, and so was Eric Dolphy and Ben

Webster. Ben Webster would more often learn to play songs from operas from records and then he would take that and apply what he learned to his own music, rather than approaching music from chord scale theory; chord scale theory is an easy way to play jazz, i.e. you say "If I see this chord then I play this scale," which is rife with problems.

Dave: There's a great story in Alfred Appel's book about jazz and modernism about Charlie Parker playing his regular gig in New York, and one night, in walks Stravinsky and a whole entourage. The story is described by Appel, who was there, with Charlie Parker giving no clue he's aware that Stravinsky's in the audience. The band comes in and opens with "Koko," which is not the usual opener. It's a very fast song, and Parker starts soloing and plays the intro from "The Firebird." The point is that we don't know where Charlie Parker learned that from. Maybe he had gone to see it live, or he studied the score, or he had a record, possibly all of these; I mean the problem with music is that it is kind of inevitably social, right?

Shane: Which is why I'm not better at it.

Dave: So, there is no zero sum about how you learn it. For jazz I don't think there is a substitute for kind of putting in the hours playing with people, but it's the same thing playing a Beethoven symphony with an orchestra. I mean, a first year student who is talented and practiced can walk in and play all the notes, but you have to play those orchestral pieces a half dozen times before you really know them.

Jeremy: I think that part of the essence with the hand-to-hand idea of passing along jazz is not just a pedagogical claim so much as I think it is grasping for a basis for a non-exploitative cultural exchange.

Interpreter: We are mixing up canon and tradition in our conversation right now.

Various: Yeah. Good point. Probably.

Samuel: I'm curious if like, for the panel, and Jeremy what was it you just said? Searching for a non-exploitative way to . . . ?

Jeremy: A basis for a non-exploitative cultural exchange, which I steal from Nathaniel Mackey. Cultural exchange, yeah.

Samuel: If I hear a John Coltrane piece and then my approach to what I play next isn't "how do I play his genre" but it's "what does that piece move in me?" And then the response may include part of his technique, but it is about what's moving in me. And then the way I introduce it to the world is about how I was moved by John Coltrane, not, "This is my continuation of John Coltrane's legacy."

Susan: I think of tradition, canon, and heritage. We have our main traditions of different worlds, different cultures, different people, we have the canon of different musics, different composers, and musicians, the canon of the score, we have the canon of the composer, the canon of the interpreter, and we have the heritage, the idea that something is heritage for the humanity, for the Canadian people, no? Maybe we need to...

Interpreter: I hate to pronounce this word because of my accent, but it would be great if you can focus on one of these things, either heritage or canon or tradition, but not trying to call "canon" tradition or "tradition" canon.

Jeremy: Right, not to conflate them.

Interpreter: Yeah because at the moment we sometimes are talking about canon and we're talking about tradition, and sometimes we're talking about tradition and it's indeed canon.

Dave: Well I think they're overlapping things, and also I'm not sure of the exact definition so that's my excuse.

Jeremy: You could argue different kinds of

definitions of any of them, but they do seem to merit some kind of teasing out.

Dave: Surely like a canon is something that situated.

Susan: I think we are speaking about canon. Canonical jazz, canonical classical, and canonical contemporary music.

Dave: There isn't one canon—they're situated culturally, they're situated even in the microculture of a specific institution, so it's the difference between being a composition student at one university and a student at a different one where they have completely different approaches.

Susan: You mention Coltrane, Beethoven, and Verdi often, and we speak about composers and speak about musics and about patterns and styles, this is canon. We don't speak about Canadian music or we don't speak about traditional folklore, First Nations music for example. You speak of First Nations, but we don't speak about their music because we don't play this music in the festival. We don't speak about heritage because the problem is heritage for who? Humanity? 18th century? 19th century maybe? Heritage for the humanity, no? But I think we are very concerned about canons because we make experimental music, and experimental music tries to break with the canon, and tries to explore new ways—this is the idea. Colonization is a problem because the idea make an experiment is the idea of a process . . .

Interpreter: Open ended action.

Susan: . . . and the idea of tradition [Speaking in Spanish]. . .

Interpreter: . . . the idea of tradition is something that is already completed in itself, whereas an experiment is open ended.

Jeremy: Probably we could get closer to the idea of tradition if take more of a pedagogical focus and talk

about how we learned to do what we do, but I think that canon has asserted itself in this conversation as a central issue because of how dependent it is on power and how power depends on it, so the idea that canon is used to coerce us.

Rodney: I think we're talking about it because it's easier to speak about.

Shane: When Dave was talking about the piano, I was thinking about the incredible way in which the piano has an effect on ideas of music around the world because, it's such an inflexible instrument set in almost all cases to one temperament system, it exerts an influence over correctness of intonation and tuning in an incredible way. I mean I'm reading stories about people within the jazz tradition, I shouldn't use the word "tradition" because then we go back to that argument, but people within the jazz community talking to other people about the incorrectness of their intonation on instruments other than the piano and—I have to use "tradition" again—the tradition is a flexibility of pitch, and there are a lot of alto saxophone players largely who tune really sharp because they enjoy that sound, and I think the piano creates ideas of correctness in intonation while really intonation is a flexible and fluid thing in cultures around the world; different cultures have different approaches to tuning and I think some of them are quite, quite, quite different from what we do, and equal temperament is not all that old but it is considered correct.

Dave: The piano is this artifact of capital that disseminates the scale and canonizes the scale.

Shane: I should have said keyboard instruments, chromatic keyboard instruments.

Jeremy: Piano empire.

Stanley: And like all empires, it's crumbling.

It's amazing what traditions are held on to. I think of medicine—medical traditions are not really held

on to. There's always innovation; people say "Let's throw this machine out and save for the new machine to do this new way of doing things," yet in music we have our hooks into the tradition of music and we are going to make sure that every man, woman, and child in the world faces Mozart at some point or another in their life.

Susan: But Mozart is not tradition, it is canon.

Stanley: But there is a tradition of you taking your children to see the damn Nutcracker at Christmastime, and you are going to be part of the tradition of hearing the beautiful Mozart.

Susan: [Speaking in Spanish]

Interpreter:[Responding to Susan] In English, that's what the tradition is. There's no word for *costumbre* in English. I mean we can split hairs and say that a tradition is also a custom, but then we are splitting way too many hairs, but if you want to go there, that would not be a tradition, that would be a custom.

Stanley: Well there you go, and there's no real custom for bringing your children to see black music. There's no tradition for bringing your kids . . .

Susan: In Latin America we have this tradition because Latin American people think afrodescendent, black culture is part of our tradition, is part of our identity.

Interpreter: Not all of us.

Susan: Not all, but at the time, for example, there is the idea of African diaspora, no? You speak about white people, but I think black people have the same concerns. They say, "Oh! Our music!" but in Latin America we aren't white, black, or Indians, but we have the problem of class. The people of high class think they are white and they need to study classical music because they are better than other people, but it is politically correct say, "Oh! But we have black

culture, it's our black culture, it's our Latin culture, and we have Indians, and the Indians are very important for our national identity." But the idea to make, the idea of heritage, political heritage, to include everyone in the discourse of class.

Stanley: Cecil Taylor says in an interview, that the interviewer says, "Well, you know rock musicians," and he goes, "Woah, woah, what does that even mean? A rock musician? Or a jazz musician?" And his point was that those are social qualifiers: you're a musician, but if you're a rock musician your caste is maybe here, if you're a jazz musician your caste is maybe here, if you're a classical musician then a whole other social and class aroma fills the air and it sparkles and everything. So the class issue still isn't really been successfully spoken to, you know. Who would feel like they got their money's worth if they went to London to see Shakespeare performed in the little round Shakespeare building and it was all acted by black people from the Bronx and recent Chinese immigrants and they were talking in their dialects? It would be interesting, but I think a lot of people would say "Give me my damn money back."

Shane: In the new "Fantastic Four" movie, they've cast a black man as Johnny Storm.

Stanley: And they wanted to cast a black man as James Bond and people just about lose their damn minds.

Darren: They approached Idris Elba to be James Bond and he's like, "I don't want to be the first, I don't want to be that guy."

Stanley: Black James Bond. It's not like, can this guy act? No, he's Black James Bond. Love it, Black James Bond.

Shane: But I think that speaks to how quickly people can consider something tradition, consider something canonical.

Jeremy: Right, yeah, and we might even add

another word beyond custom, heritage, tradition, and canon, which might be convention.

[Laughter]

Stanley: But you know that's all to serve repeatability.

Dave: I got two words: Vienna Philharmonic.

Stanley: Yeah, all kinds of black composers getting heard and played through the Vienna Philharmonic.

Dave: They famously refused to hire people who weren't white and Austrian.

Stanley: And then there's the story . . .

Rodney: It's very funny, if you were in Munich in the 80s, because of this, these fantastic orchestras are all Austrian women who are commuting so they can see their families. The Munich Chamber Orchestra was almost entirely women because they couldn't get a job in their own country.

Susan: This cultural status.

Jeremy: I think that because of the time we should probably conclude our discussion for this morning, but I would like to thank again all the participants, everyone who's here, and especially our panellists.

Casse-Tête: A Festival of Experimental Music

Panel Discussion Participant Bios

Norman Adams



Norman Adams is Principal Cellist of Symphony Nova Scotia, and the Artistic Director of suddenlyLISTEN Music. A student of Hans Jørgen Jensen, Bernard Greenhouse, and American new music pioneer Pauline Oliveros,

Norman has been a soloist with SNS, and Les Jeunes Virtuoses de Montréal. He has been guest principal cellist of the National Arts Centre Orchestra, and has performed chamber, and improvised music throughout Canada, the US, France, and the UK. His performances have also been heard across the country on CBC Radio. As an educator, Norman has been a faculty member at Acadia University, at Scotia Festival of Music, String Fest at Memorial University of Newfoundland and the Acadia Summer Strings Festival.

In 2010 Norman was awarded an Established Artist Award by the Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council, for his varied work.

In addition to his work as a classical cellist, Norman is well known as an improviser and electronic musician, playing free and creative music in North America and Europe. Norman has collaborated with many leading artists including Joëlle Léandre, Gerry Hemingway, Eddie Prévost, Pauline Oliveros, Buck 65, Jerry Granelli, Marilyn Crispell and Evan Parker.

Since 2000 Norman has been the Artistic Director and Producer of suddenlyLISTEN Music, an organization that both presents an annual series of concerts of improvised music, featuring a broad range of local, Canadian and international artists; and produces a wide range of other performance projects. He is also dedicated to sharing music with all

people, co-leading the bi-weekly suddenlyLISTEN Improvisation Workshop for the past nine seasons.

Norman is dedicated to the arts community, and serves on the national board of The Canadian New Music Network, as well as on the boards of The Canadian Circuit, and Strategic Arts Management. He is a former board member of Symphony Nova Scotia, and has served on juries for both The Canada Council for the Arts and various Nova Scotian arts funding bodies and organizations.

Norman makes his home in Halifax with SNS principal violist Susan Sayle, and their two teenaged sons. Together, they spend their summers living and working on Prince Edward Island. Norm's passion for music is equaled by his love for riding and racing bicycles, and if he's not playing the cello, or organizing a concert, he's probably out cycling on the roads and trails of Nova Scotia and the Island.

Visit suddenlyLISTEN at www.suddenlylisten.com and Norman's website at www.normanadams.ca.

Susan Campos-Fonseca



Composer, Music Director and Musicologist Susan Campos-Fonseca believes: "Minimalism is an asceticism ... The real virtuosity, as understood by some non-Western cultures, is the ability to find the heart, the soul, of a sound. Not in

the artifice, which often promotes Western music." (Original quote: "Yo creo que el minimalismo es un ascetismo... El verdadero virtuosismo, según lo entendían algunas culturas no occidentales, está en la capacidad de encontrar el corazón, el alma, de una sonoridad. No está en el artificio, algo que la música occidental suele promover.")

Susan Campos-Fonseca holds a Ph.D. in Music from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM), Spain. She is a musicologist whose research focuses on philosophy of culture and music. Campos-Fonseca has received the 2002 University Council Award from Universidad de Costa Rica, the 2004 WASBE conductor scholarship (UK), the 2005 Carolina Foundation Scholarship (Spain), the 2007 “100 Latinos” Award (Spain), the Corda Foundation Award 2009 (New York), and the 2012 Casa de las Americas Musicology Award (Cuba).

She has served as coordinator of the Feminist Musicology Research Group MUS-FEM of the Iberian Society for Ethnomusicology (SIBE), fellow at the Center for Iberian and Latin American Music (CILAM) of the University of California-Riverside, and as visiting scholar at the Department of Musicology at the University of California, Los Angeles.

She serves on the advisory boards of Boletín de Música, and IASPM@Journal, and has been a guest editor for Trans: Revista Transcultural de Música. Her books include *Herencias cervantinas en la música vocal iberoamericana. Poiésis de un imaginario cultural* (2014, 2012 Casa de las Americas Musicology Award), and the co-edited volume *Estudios de género, corpo e música: abordagens metodológicas*, ANPPOM-Serie Pesquisa em Musica no Brasil, Vol. 3.

She currently coordinates a project on sound art, culture, and technology at Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR), where she is professor of History and Music Research at the Sede del Atlántico (Turrialba) and Scholar of the Instituto de Investigaciones Artísticas-IIArte (Sede central Rodrigo Facio).

Festival premiere: Three Butoh Meditations. More information: <http://www.susancamposfonseca.com/tag/meditaciones-butoh/>

Web page: www.susancamposfonseca.com

Dave Chokroun



Dave Chokroun has been featured at the Art Gallery of Calgary, Casse-tete, FUSE, LIVE Biennale, Open Space, Powell Street Festival, Vancouver Jazz Festival, and Western Front. Current projects include Radio Free Stein, a critical sound investigation of Gertrude Stein's plays; doom/drone/improv trio Crawling Human; and lefty garage punks The Salvos. His compositions have been performed by Arraymusic, neither/nor, and nach Hause. Dave holds an MFA from Simon Fraser University and also studied composition in Victoria and Toronto; his teachers include Owen Underhill, Karen Eliot, and Gordon Mumma. He is the artistic director and CEO of the online label and pata-physical disinfoshop The Institute for the Study of Advanced Musical Research.

Jose 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.

Shane Krause



Shane Krause is a saxophonist and clarinetist who was born and raised in Prince George and now based out of Victoria. Though primarily operating in the areas of free jazz and free improvisation, he has also been active in indie rock, playing with bands including Secret Mommy and They Shoot Horses, Don't They?. His musical practice has recently had an increased focus on performing composed music; especially that of the New York School composers such as Cage and Wolff, and the wandelweiser collective composers. As an improviser, Shane has performed with a number of notable performers, including Mats Gustafsson, Tatsuya Nakatani, Chris Dadge and Christian Munthe.

Rodney Sharman



Rodney Sharman lives in Vancouver, BC. He has been Composer-in-Residence with the Victoria Symphony, the National Youth Orchestra of Canada and the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. In addition to concert music, Rodney

Sharman writes music for cabaret, opera and dance. He works regularly with choreographer James Kudelka, for whom he has written scores for Oregon Ballet Theatre, San Francisco Ballet and Coleman Lemieux & Co. (Toronto). Sharman was awarded First Prize in the 1984 CBC Competition for Young Composers and the 1990 Kranichsteiner Prize in Music, Darmstadt, Germany. His score for the music-dance-theatre piece, *From The House Of Mirth*, won the 2013 Dora Mavor Moore Award for outstanding sound design/composition (choreography by James Kudelka, text by Alex Poch Goldin after Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*). He was a 2014 Djerassi Artist-in-Residence, Woodside, California. www.rodneymarman.com.

Darren Williams



Saxophonist Darren Williams has been winning over audiences in Western Canada with his unforgettable performances that stretch musical boundaries. Born in Winnipeg, now based in British Columbia, Darren holds a BFA in

music performance from York University and has studied with Casey Sokol, David Mott, George Lewis, and François Houle. As a seasoned live performer 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). 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. 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. Audiences can expect to be mesmerized by Darren's incredible array of extended techniques on the saxophone as composition, improvisation, and physical endurance are explored within solo performance. afivepence.wordpress.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 aim-

lessly. 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”

Directions • Jeremy Stewart

Next year's Casse-Tete: A Festival of Experimental Music will be held at The Exploration Place on June 23-26, 2016. We're working on another wonderful lineup of Canadian and international artists, and on working with the dynamic set of variables that frame out the festival's logistics to ensure that it's the best event it can possibly be.

Some very new possibilities are beginning to emerge around what Casse-Tete can grow to accomplish. Providing archival documents on our website is an area that is being explored with some positive indications. We already provide a manual on "How We Dropped a Piano," which details every part of the preparations for 2014's Piano Drop, in a way that could help other groups wishing to do the same thing. We also have every past Casse-Tete festival

program offered for download. We are considering how we could share music, videos, writings, and more by artists connected to the festival, and even those not directly connected, but whose work inspires Casse-Tete artists or has perhaps moved in a similar direction. Steps in this direction can currently be found at <http://caseteterecords.bandcamp.com>.

Developing further site-specific and/or outdoor performances is an area of high interest as well, especially after the extraordinary success of Jose Delgado-Guevara's "Contact" at the ruins at Ginter's field. This piece attracted as many as 100 participants and random passersby and pulled them into a world of sonic and human exploration that was beautiful, moving, new, and overall very impactful. "River



photo by Nick Tindale

Channel Music” and 2014’s Piano Drop were also well-attended, artistically unusual ideas that benefitted from being held outdoors.

In the same way that the Exploration Place is a wonderful asset as a venue in Prince George, the parks that have hosted our outdoor events are unique strengths our city has that should be made the most of. We also have extraordinarily supportive Leisure Services and Parks departments at the municipality that have greeted outlandish musical ideas not with the attitude of asking “why do you want to do this?,” but rather “how can we help?”

A promising idea inspired by the financial difficulties of 2015’s festival is to have 2016’s festival free to attend. This year, ticket sales were projected to grow the same percentage from last year that they had grown from the first year to last year. This projection was backed up by a larger commitment to marketing, including advertising making up a larger percentage of the budget, a greater commitment to social media, more posters, and a host of other measures. Nevertheless, the projection did not pan out; people have suggested that it was because we didn’t do a spectacle on the order of the Piano Drop (as we did in 2014), or that the city was burned out by the Canada Winter Games in February, or that the change in weekend was too drastic, or various explanations for why attendance stagnated in 2015.

All these reasons could have impacted attendance, but what we know for sure is that if the budget hadn’t depended to the degree it did on these projections, it wouldn’t have affected the festival the way it did. To remove attendance as a budgetary factor could move the event in the direction of sustainability, which is part of where the proposal to eliminate ticketing would come from. On the other hand, there would still be a correlation between attendance and the availability of public funds (also a disappointment in 2015), as well as the level of participation in terms of donations and volunteerism. If ending ticketing effectively removes a barrier to access, it’s possible that these other streams could be encouraged. In the

absence of information to base such a projection on, we would have to wait and see.

For the festival to grow, it needs to become a registered nonprofit society and have a board of directors and a constitution and bylaws and an annual general meeting and monthly board meetings and finances reviewed by accountants and all the things that go into having an institution that is bigger than the individuals involved.

Within the existing structure of the festival, there are already connections to other disciplines beyond music. The promotional materials for the festival, as well as the staging of the festival sites, have a visual element that has connected visual artists to the work. The second year of the festival involved a Poet Laureate role that led to the production of a chapbook of poems inspired by the music. The festival’s panel discussions have brought it into connection with philosophy, musicology, and other explicitly intellectual approaches. This kind of branching out seems hugely promising for the future of the event.

I have been dreaming about what we could do in 2017. What I am imagining at this point is a two-week-long event in Prince George that brings together an array of challenging art and thought into a dialogical, collaborative space, with an educational component, as well as great opportunities for public engagement.

What if we brought amazing artists and thinkers from all over the world here, and featured them alongside our own outstanding local talent in a program that consisted of workshops, debates, lectures, seminars, and other kinds of educational programming during the day, and a concert every evening for two weeks or so? We could aim to host 20 to 30 students, conceiving of the opportunity as having a local focus, but an international scope.

I have been imagining a festival/conference/course of study with the title and theme “Life Becoming Music.” The thematic threads that would be followed with respect to programming might be Indigeneity

and Decolonization; Ecology; Polity/the Political Economy of Cities; Language and Aesthetics; and Music. The idea, again, is to work with themes that have a significant local connection, but a global context. The idea is also to contribute to the removal of music education from a context-free bubble, helping expand music education to encompass discussion of the world in which all our musical activities take place, and where and how music interrelates with the other thematic elements under consideration.

While a program like this would take years to fulfill its entire promise, it would have to exist in the first place to ever do so. The technical problems of developing it pose an interesting challenge to the community without being obviously impossible. It's a question of having the funds to attract top talent to teach and perform; the community network to cover needs in-kind that would otherwise require cash; the ability to create a campaign to attract the

necessary students; and the venues and other resources required to deliver the program successfully. If this sounds like something you want to be a part of, there are many ways to do so, no matter where you are located—so please be in touch.

In any case, we are presently accepting proposals for presentations in 2016. To make a proposal, visit www.cassetetefestival.com and use the form on the Contact Us page. We will continue to accept proposals for 2016's festival until the end of 2015. We are going to accomplish incredible things together, so thank you for reading, and thank you for being a part of the Casse-Tete community.

Jeremy Stewart



photo by Nick Tindale

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