

# Part III (Tele/Microscope)

## Introduction: The End of Time

**Music is the art of measuring well.**

**--Augustine of Hippo**

**If blacks get hurt, I get hurt. If whites get hurt, that's my wife, and if you harm colored people, you're looking for my children. Your unity embodies who I am.**

**--Tokyo Sexwale, South African black-empowerment crusader, married to a white woman (in Gordimer [1999])**

This section's title is premised on the idea that time is not an end in itself, but rather a means. Here we will explore what ends those (biological, historical, musical) means serve in the context of the music we've explored.

As the Introduction to Part I engaged voices discussing (especially musicological) historiography; and as Part II's Introduction brought in those discussing improvisation as a musical issue, and ethnography as a mode of literary representation of music...so this one will consider current ways of analyzing and theorizing about music as they pertain to those areas of time, selected from the FMP musical universe for close exploration.

I mentioned in Part II's Introduction that I italicized parts of my interviews to mark points of interest in defining and explaining aspects of the music we've heard and read about here. As I scan them now, I see that the general themes they sound are

- time, primarily, in both rhythmic (as moment and flow, vertical and horizontal) and

- durational (moment)/proportional-periodistic (flow) aspects;
- the body;
  - composition/improvisation;
  - childhood;
  - race/ethnicity;
  - eros;
  - language;
  - geo-, sociopolitical context

Time will, in this musical study, assume the center of the analytical Chapter Eleven. The others have been and will be discussed in the more general terms (of how they relate to that center) more proper to them in Part II's concluding (unnumbered) chapter, and in Chapter Twelve's theoretical conclusions. (In keeping with my agenda of situating this music in academic discourse and suggesting as many springboards and lines of future research as possible, I've glanced at much I found of interest in the analytical literature that I didn't pursue in this study, but may in future ones. Also, as with all the academic literature surveyed here, that in this section spans the three-decade history of FMP's existence, as part of one ongoing, still-timely concern with certain issues.)

## Analysis

The literature on musical analysis is as various in approach and focus as the recordings we've surveyed; it is thus examined here more for aspects suggestive of yet more such variety than for definitive constraints of procedure.

My first inclination and broadest strategy of analytic methodology is to let each recording suggest its own such, [1](#) according to my own subjective experience of the music. The resulting representations, crafted with care and thought, should suggest most pointedly the theoretical and philosophical questions begging most attention under the listening experience's surface. Beyond that, a grasp of what tools and approaches have been developed by others, for similar issues, focuses and eases the search required here for any new ones.

The literature I chose to consider falls into four groups: surveys of analytic methodologies currently used by musicologists and ethnomusicologists, especially in jazz and new-music studies; articles or excerpts that demonstrate one or the other of such methodologies; models of analysis of specific musicians closely related to the American free-jazz movement; and three very different books/booksets (Noll [1977], Dean [1992], and Braxton [1988, 1985], more on which later). The consideration of this work, below, will set us up for Chapter Eleven, which

presents analyses of FMP musical events.

### *Surveys*

Brownell's (1994) survey of "Analytical Models of Jazz Improvisation" opens with a citation from seventeenth-century English musicologist Christopher Simpson's *The Division Viol; or the Art of Playing Ex Tempore Upon a Ground Bass* (1665), claiming that

- If we take Christopher Simpson's advice to aspiring 17th-century improvisers on the viola da gamba and replace the terms "*Ground, Subject, or Bass*" with "standard tune;" "*Viol*" with "saxophone;" and "*Descant or Division*" with "improvised solos," we will be left with advice (though in somewhat archaic language) that would be well taken by contemporary performers of jazz music (9).

(This evocation of Western Baroque, of course, syncs up nicely with my own slant on jazz history as part of Western music history.)

Brownell goes on to pose the question of the usefulness or purpose of analysis of a jazz improvisation to a musician or scholar. Should analysis reveal improvisation as product, or process? to what end? He cites the work of Frank Tirro and Gunther Schuller as having an obvious analytical agenda of "proving" that a jazz solo can evince the same musical traits that make a Western composition "great" or less than "great." He glances at the teleological historiography imposed by these and other scholars on jazz history, positing stylistic eras of increasing musical sophistication, and genealogies of artists (eg., Louis Armstrong to Roy Eldridge to Dizzy Gillespie) likewise unfolding as evolutionary ascent; he mentions this assumption as another shaper of current analytical literature (Stewart [1973], Porter [1985], and Kernfeld [1983]). He mentions an "ethnomusicological" approach to improvisation (citing Nettl [1974]) as being a kind of universal musical behavior manifested variously in many different local practices. He cites Sudnow (1978) as the beginning of analysis concerned more with how than with what jazz musicians improvise. He mentions work that draws on formulaic improvisation of epic poetry, structural linguistics, and the oral-traditional transmission of jazz culture as examples of further such analysis.

Brownell's scan sites these two analytical approaches--toward the what and the how--as "reductive" and "processual" (borrowing Charles Keil's term) models, respectively. He sees the former as the approach that dominated from André Hodeir's pioneering work in the 1950s, and the latter as a step in a deeper and truer direction, taken in the late 1960s. That much description will suffice, as we leave him to take our own looks at the work he mentions in paragraphs to

come.

I would only note that this turn in analytical literature toward improvisation-as-process-rather-than-product (in Keil [1966]) occurred at the time the free jazz movement in America and Europe was emerging in force; analytical methodology of musical or graphic notation moved away from the centuries-old Western approach to music theory as something that could be "completely represented by a graphic record" (Keil, 25), as we will mine here. The process I do wish to graph is that of the biological clock in musical action; the musical events as wholes have rather been presented to the ear, with informal analytical points delivered orally, on the CDs of musical examples.

Potter's (1992) survey of analyses of improvised jazz shows an interest among scholars in both the oral tradition of improvised poetry and the Schenkerian revelation of motivic and formulaic development in Western composition. Both of these areas are, if not restricted, at least more specifically applied, to pre-free jazz. Potter's examples--of formulaic reworkings of pitch sequences by Charlie Parker and John Coltrane, and of Bill Evans' improvisations (to demonstrate a long-range planning and sustained development in them generally thought peculiar to composition)--share a grounding in the diatonic system's musical-historical discourse. Both sorts of approach--as also Potter's own sample analysis--depend upon the centrality of pitch relationships for their significance. This disclaimer of his is our entry point into his piece's framework for our own applications to FMP:

- Many factors may contribute toward making an improvised solo "good" or "great." A solo which shows little motivic or formulaic coherence, or which will not reduce to a Schenkerian model, or which leaves implications unrealized may nevertheless be a great solo for other reasons, reasons harder to theorize about or harder to uncover by applying one specific analytic methodology. Although there is a place for analysis in which one method is applied exclusively, the analyst must realize that it provides only a single view.

Any music analyst needs to ask two questions: Why analyze this music? And for whom is my analysis intended? (149)

To answer those questions here, we might find a reworking of Potter's analytic guidelines and framework useful. His guidelines are three:

- (1) The analytic perspective should be eclectic, holistic, using whatever approaches help explain a solo's effectiveness.
- (2) The improvised solo should be transcribed in "playable" notation, that is,

without elaborate additional symbols which can clutter the notation by striving to include every expressive nuance.

(3) As much of the analysis as possible should be displayed in musical notation. Some verbal description is inevitable, but it should be kept to a minimum. (150)

At first glance, the first point might be embraced unreservedly, the second and third less so in analyses of free improvisation (for Potter's "solo," I would read "improvised musical event" here). Playable and writable notation may work for FMP in some cases--especially with the earlier recordings--but may be completely irrelevant when the music is conceived more as sheer sound sculpture than either diatonic or chromatic patterning. In those cases, Potter's first point can help answer the question: what new notation/graphic might function as "playable" and "musical" (nonverbal) to a given sound event?

Once such a transcription can be made, it would stand, as in Potter's example (153-59), as the top line in an analysis represented by several lines. Potter uses his second line to indicate recurring pitches, resolutions, and other stepwise motions. These are short-term phenomena; longer patterns, recurring enough to tag as motivic formulas, come on the third line. The fourth (optional, and not in his example) is for any direct references to the original melody, or quotations of other sources (what Braxton calls "sub-identity formings").<sup>2</sup>

Continuing with our alteration of Potter's pre-free paradigm, we might simply generalize his layers of lines into less specific spaces for whatever patterns do emerge from the top line transcription: timbral-textural, rhythmic-temporal, volume variations. Perhaps a combination of pitch and spectrographic analysis would be most appropriate to some examples, perhaps only one or the other to others. A greater use of spectrography *as* transcription--perhaps even a "playable" one, with training--seems appropriate to a music with an aesthetic that is open both to *Klangspuren* (vocabularies of sound-surfaces as opposed to pitches) and graphic notational devices. (Indeed, expanding from Potter's warning against overdetermination in the transcription [in his guideline 2], we might consider whether a visual representation that functioned more like a Rohrshach test than an alphanumeric code--a notation, that is, that triggers the same spontaneous creativity that was at the heart of the original event, as well as suggests its sound contours, features, duration, etc.--might be the most appropriate kind.)

Keil's (1966, 1987, 1995) theory of "participatory discrepancies" (PDs) (and Prögler's [1995] analytical application of the theory to the jazz rhythm section) pertains more directly to rhythmic aspects of the music--although, strictly speaking, it is conceived and articulated to apply to *all* musical nuance too subtle to codify in conventional notation; it's just that rhythmic phenomena are easier to chart. Keil's (1995) description of the theory precludes the temptation

to use it as a justification to get even more scientifically obsessed about such codification now that our technology--such as abovementioned spectrography--is so much more powerful and subtle too.[3](#)

- Music, to be personally involving and socially valuable, must be "out of time" and "out of tune . . . only in relation to music department standardization and the civilized worldview, of course. Living, co-evolving, genuine cultures--as opposed to civilizations . . . are built upon participatory consciousness . . . deep identification . . . and continual reenchantment of the world . . . and are filled with participatory discrepancies that appear "irregular," "far out," and "wild and crazy" only to the power-tripping, control-over people still trapped inside civilization. In fact, PDs are the basis of all musical creation, analogous in some ways to the constant generation of "speaker's meanings" (Barfield 1967) by each and every one of us in co-evolving languages and cultures. PDs may also be analogous to the unrelenting operation of the uncertainty principle in physics, and the concept of an open universe (sounds good, and I hope that it's true). Conversely, it is the pre-relativity physics "laws," the dictionary definitions of words, and written control over music that are the Platonic ideas or illusions or essences, and they are dangerous to deadly ones because they buttress the big, civilized, pseudo-scientific and pseudo-artistic illusions of our time that pit us against nature (the primary reality of Gaia and species co-evolution) and ourselves (the possibility of a culturally rediversified planet with all cultures adapting well to their neighbors and to their ecological niches if the power-over tribes can be contained and retrained...) (4, a nice '60s-ish citation resonating with the words and views of many of the FMP artists)

Still, the question of measurement/notation raised by a shift from Platonically/Newtonically oriented "-ologist" to a more Pythagorean/Einsteinian "participant-observer" looms more rather than less. What can, first, the perception, then the efficient and even efficacious ("playable") representation, of phenomena beyond the overdetermining focus of conventional notation do for us? How would such analyses--of the microgestures of "swing," or of timbral/textural expression, or of microtonal pitch inflections--serve us?

The examples of such work that Keil cites (Prögler's among them) are offered primarily and simply as corroborations of the theory that PDs exist. The conversion of sound into digital information that can be graphed horizontally (through time) in millisecond shifts, and vertically (through volume and texture) in wave frequencies, simply gives the eye so much more of information previously accessible only to the ear (or, better, body; we will get more from Keil on this ahead).[4](#)

The questions it raises: how much of this subtle play is consciously perceived and manipulated by its players for their knowing hearers, and thus pertinent to some sort of aesthetic assessment? How much that is rather unconscious *should* be so assessed, and how? What are the issues of "playability" in a notation that is suggestive not by virtue of less information than a performance of it contains but rather of more? (I.e., where will the appropriation of these microscopes of sound as graphic notations to be performed take performers who accept them as "scores" in which to discrepantly participate [improvise on]?)

The whole art and aesthetic of free improvisation cultivated by FMP may be described as an engagement of sound and ear unmediated by eye (albeit seminally influenced by the visual arts), even by the inner eye gazing on an inner "score." Yet a study such as mine is obviously in the visual media of print and graphics, however grounded in sound events. My verbal/visual analytic devices will thus, like the study as a whole text, be conceived and crafted as aesthetic objects evocative of their aural references more than as scientific fingers pointing "rigorously" at the moon.

(Before leaving Prögler, something he mentioned only in passing may be worth pursuing in future studies sharing this one's concern with spontaneous improvisation: the difference between the "swing" of his focus in the live and in the studio situations).

Bastien and Hostager (1991) focus on the way a "zero-history" group (of jazz players assembling for the first time to perform) approaches its collective task--in this case, an unrehearsed concert--and establishes its optimal teamwork through individual signals interacting within pre-established theoretical and professional parameters. The focus is on how such interactions direct the flow of solos and ensemble playing; they start by settling into simple frameworks and obviousness of expression, gradually evolving into more subtlety and sophistication, and thereby effectiveness (to their goal of a stimulating musical experience).

The authors make their analytical points simply and effectively enough; what is of interest here is their flat assertion of this musical event as a telling microcosm of other social processes/structures--specifically, corporate teams and managers approaching a task for the first time, in an "unrehearsed" state and an often chaotic and pressurized environment. They offer the jazz event as a temporal condensation of such latter tasks, a two-hour version of their two-day or two-week processes, thus valuable for its analytic manageability (via a videotaping). I include the premise of this approach as applicable to my ethnographic and analytical snapshots of FMP players.

Rinzler (1993), Horowitz (1993) and Groce and Lynxweiler (1994) bring in the extramusical elements of interaction between musicians and between them and their audience. Rinzler charts and analyzes patterns of (five) interactions which he lists and defines (call and response, fills,

accenting the end of formal units, common motive, and responding to the "peaks" of the soloist). His grid of four cycles of the 32-bar tune "Along Came Betty" performed by a jazz quartet notes not the musical details articulated by each player but simply the appearance of each player in the music as he executes one of the five named interactions. A picture thus emerges of the flow of each player seizing and yielding the music's foregrounds and backgrounds from and to the others.

This flow moves through the structure of the piece like threads through a loom; the value of this approach to a free improvisation lies in the weight such a flow would take on--that of a spontaneously created, rather than a sound-stitch overlay onto one already there in the abstract. (Indeed, having produced Part I and II CD examples after doing all the readings of analytical literature described here, this and some of the other approaches we're surveying I did put to use in my CD narratives, unannounced, when the music called for them.)

Horowitz, like Rinzler, offers a number of specified elements (nine) as his explanation for the value of live over recorded musical events. Heading his list is "the interactional element" Rinzler looks at, as well as that extending between players and audience. The others are extramusical elements (e.g., the mass-emotional dynamics of a particular interpretation in a given social context, such as those associated with conducting Tchaikowsky turgidly rather than tranquilly, or improvising freely with delicacy and stasis rather than in a frenzy of dynamic catharsis); social verification of status (that of one whose taste, for a given music, is "good"); musician-audience personal networks (where the two constituencies can establish interpersonal and professional ties); comparing frameworks (confirming that the musicians can perform live as well as or better than in the studio); social status of the audience (not, as above, lying in its musical tastes but rather in whatever social class might be associated with the music); cultural exclusivity (a deeper version of the preceding); the serious and the enjoyable (one can "shop" through music through live events without committing oneself to buying a recording yet); and measuring live versus recorded sound (the two different acoustic experiences).

These categories can serve here as suggestions for ones more or less applicable to the audience-musician relationships in FMP events. They recall descriptions of audience-player dynamics described in Chapter Six, particularly those about the audiences' willingness to tolerate long stretches of boredom while players explore and experiment before breaking through to the musical experience, and about the general disinterest and aversion to anything smacking of "show business."

From Rinzler's look at musician-musician interaction through Horowitz's at musician-audience interaction we move to Groce's and Lynxwiler's at the audience alone, in what the authors call "The Silent Performance: Audience Perception of Musicians' Nonverbal Behavior." This short but thick piece on the reception of popular music offers some insights that may prove more

useful here than a first glance might suggest. In short, it calls attention to the importance to an audience of the elements of theater in music. Audiences want to see musicians play their images as much as their music. Musicians themselves value this part of the total aesthetic.<sup>5</sup> In the case of FMP artists, this would include as much free play in persona (sans showbiz affects) as in music making.

Jackson's (1990) review of two books on Schenkerian analysis argues for that methodology's applicability to twelve-tone music. Understanding the spirit of Schenker's approach to be a way of getting at, through his traditional diatonic ratiocinations, the less directly rationalized melodic patterns and artfully hidden layered structures suggested (thus revealed) thereby, it is worthwhile to consider how the approach might also be altered to work with free improvisations that draw as heavily and as freely as does serialism on diatonic-chromatic materials (and that with instruments constructed for same).

Worthwhile for two reasons: as an expansion of an analytic tool that shares Western roots with this music, and as a way for this music to dictate the shape and direction of that expansion. It is important to refrain from imposing onto an aesthetic analytical criteria foreign to it, but if that larger culture in which spontaneously improvised and nonidiomatically composed music is situated is to feel its peculiar influences, such intellectual constructs or "proofs" of them can only help. And if (especially the European) musicians can benefit from such scholarship at all, it will be from reflections they themselves find revelatory of their own subconscious terrain's *Western strata*.<sup>6</sup>

Some variation of this methodology might be most fruitfully applied to recordings by von Schlippenbach, especially those of compositions deliberately based on melodic or serial material; to free improvisations framed by tunes (e.g., Brötzmann playing "St. James Infirmary"); and to the more melodic and tonal East German players. And, perhaps, to the least likely candidate--something that is more obviously intended as a percussive and/or *klangfarbliche* piece, by Fuchs, Johansson, or Dörner--just to see what buried linear melodic logic does underpin or emerge from such a piece, if any, when said logic is so deliberately and thoroughly avoided.

Rink offers further support of this mutation of Schenker, in arguing for the latter's respect of improvisation as the heart and guiding light of the compositions he (Schenker) analyzed. Rink further addresses the possibility that Schenker was over-intellectualizing improvisation unduly, in the light of historical accounts that

- it permitted an audacious flouting of compositional "rules" and even thrived on harmonic and formal license. One has only to look at accounts of improvisation in the early nineteenth century to discover what Robert

Wangermée (1950, 230) calls the "lack of perfect logic," the "rapid abandonment of certain ideas for the sake of new and contrasting ones," and the "absence of internal structure" that apparently prevailed. (8-9)

Rink then argues that what Schenker meant by improvisation was that practiced by C.P.E. Bach over a thorough bass, implying that much of the abovementioned "flouting" in the nineteenth century was simply "bad" (tasteless, trivial) improvisation.

The question this brings up here is: what *makes* for "good" or "bad" free improvisation, as practiced by FMP artists and others? We saw in Chapter Six that from their initial raucous deconstructions of then-current "formal conventions" (of jazz) they nonetheless had a sense of aesthetic integrity that disallowed audience members from joining in the fray of free blowing. What constitutes the difference between the unchecked scream of a Peter Brötzmann (like many highly skilled players, largely self-taught) on his sax and that of an eager, self-teaching novice screaming with equally heartfelt instinct? How would we represent and analyze the difference of the two gestures in a way that conveys the musician's (*Kenner's*) strong sense of his own professional and creative identity and of the amateur's (*Liebhavers*) lack thereof?<sup>7</sup>

Rink does his own Schenkerian analyses of nineteenth-century "free compositions" (fantasies), one each by Beethoven, Schubert, and Chopin. His point is to show--sometimes in contrast to other analysts who saw only irrationally broken rules in the samples--that Schenker's grounding in Bach's practice of improvisation extended well beyond its historical context and into the compositional practices closer to our time.

My interest in this point lies more broadly in its suggestion that what may look like FMP's ideological abandonment of earlier improvisational practices is in fact more properly understood as a transcendence through mastery of them, and that they are thus present as background and middleground in some of the very pieces seemingly most removed from them. (An example: Brötzmann's *Machine Gun*, so unrelentingly intense an energy piece, exhibits a structural flow within that intensity that keeps it from burning or fizzling out. At first glance that flow would seem to be determined by the breath of the horn player alone;<sup>8</sup> but what sort of silent framework does his flow of screams suggest as their motivation and grounding? Possible answer: Brötzmann alluded to his "Western" conditioning as coming into play when, freely improvising with his Moroccan peer Mahmoud Gania and African American Hamid Drake, he would be the one to put borders, ends and beginnings, on their relatively continuous flow. One sees such pacing, delimiting and varying at work throughout the recordings we've examined, as noted in Part II.)

*Most* broadly, Benjamin's (1981) general exposition on Schenker's ongoing relevance to Western music scholarship speaks more than all the above to his relevance here. Schenker's system was not an abstraction devised by a professional academic whose relationship to musical events and processes looks more like a labor of specialistic, technocratic careerism than of love-or, if of love, hardly one undertaken without pay, against the world, as Schenker did his own such work, to serve his own passion for and devotion to making and submitting completely to the music.

Schenker's approach is difficult because it demands an understanding of the music that is born from the struggle to engage it fully, not from a detached control or manipulation of it. Benjamin:

- Schenker repeatedly went further, to point out that he regarded the ability to improvise coherently as a prerequisite for using his theories. He distinguished, of course, among the average music listener, whom he believed capable only of passively apprehending the simpler linear progressions, the average musician, from whom he expected more developed, but still passive, apprehension, and the creative user of his theory who, as he said, must share to some degree in the master composer's capacity for "aural flight," or *improvisatory, long-range hearing*. (160, my emphasis, to recall Potter's mention of long-range planning in the improvisations of Coltrane and Bill Evans, above)

Of Schenker's own book *Free Composition*, Benjamin says it

- is not primarily an intellectual approach; it does not demand an unusual capacity for logical thought, a prodigious grasp of abstractions, or a way with words, and it certainly does not call for interdisciplinary competence. The things it most requires are a deeply-rooted, almost visceral sense for tonal continuity, long-range aural memory, the gifted musician's talent for mimicry, extended here to include the imitation of analytical and notational style, and, as is true for all artistic enterprise, a highly developed need to communicate in concrete ways. (161)

These and similar statements (many asserting the importance of improvisatory skill as a prerequisite of real mastery of an idiom) establish Schenker as a role model more than a prescriptive figure, and Schenkerianism as potentially universal ("The ultimate implications of Schenker's theory are, therefore, no more ethnocentric than they are democratic. The theory merely tells us that the clearest pictures of distinctive musical behaviors are to be obtained by studying the musical activities of those who produce music and, perhaps more importantly, by studying what they produce" [166]).

My own identification with Schenker and his approach manifests in my overarching vision of Western music as a "background" to jazz, jazz as a "middleground" to free jazz and the branches it took in FMP artists, and the latter as the "foreground," all comprising the one musical cosmos. Less macroscopically, I see my own analytical approach as Schenkerian in spirit: a dig, as a musician, for the *Urgrund*--in this case, musical time, instances of pulse, periodicity, proportions of duration--and a derivation of other aspects therefrom, played out on (my equivalent of) middlegrounds (one or more patterns of pitch, timbre/texture, noise) and foregrounds (of metaphorical/mythical/poetical meaning). I found that my experiences with (per Kramer [1988], and Ferrara [1991]) repeated listenings, and (per Benjamin [1981]) with "long-range aural memory"--such as I described regarding Cecil Taylor's FMP concerts, in which spontaneously improvised moments would seem to reappear, unplanned, throughout the sets--made Schenker's approach to tonal music resonate with my own engagement with FMP's free improvisation.

Pressing (1982) sees conventional functional (post-Bach) common practice harmony-analytical and Schenkerian melodic-linear/layer approaches both as potentially useful in looking at pre-1950s jazz, but less so beyond it. He argues rather for the relevance of the set theory of pitch classes used (mostly in America) to analyze the music of the Second Viennese School of composers and its recent lineage in the work of Pierre Boulez, Milton Babbitt and George Wuorinen. His analysis of six progressively more sophisticated jazz excerpts (Thad Jones' "Big Dipper," Charlie Parker's/Supersax' "Cool Blues," Dizzy Gillespie's & Warne Marsh's "Salt Peanuts," John McLaughlin's "Sanctuary" and "The Dance of Maya," and John Coltrane's "Offering") looks dry and forbidding but is actually a clear and powerful tool, once learned.

In brief, pitch class set theory affords a way to order pitch relationships that embraces at once tonal, modal, and atonal systemizations by looking at the placement and frequency of intervallic patterns, their degree of similarity or difference in terms of intervals and patterns used, voicing and voice leading within and between these sets of intervals, and a "sound ideal" that can be characterized from that data. (Kramer's assertion of "cumulative listening" as an analytical tool supplements this approach well; if you begin to hear patterns and organization where at first you heard fewer or none such, analysis of pitch class sets can quickly corroborate your experience with contours a score won't transparently reveal.) Set theory strips away the diatonic framework and terminology (that free-jazz players left behind in practice but, understandably enough, did not replace with some new and improved literate-systematic paradigm or notation) without dismissing the idea of the significance of pitch-interval patterns; it thus suggests an analytical middle ground between tonality and atonality (thus between free and pre-free, in jazz), tracing easily the development of one from the other in a given musical event.

The application of this approach to free improvisation is obviously valid in the case of an artist

such as von Schlippenbach, whose instrument, compositions, and professed influences contribute a weight to issues of pitch relationship not as present in most of our percussionists and wind players; it is also valuable as an analytical bridge from pre-free to free jazz, which so many see as fixed across an unbridgeable divide. If musical sequencing technology could "hear" and notate a recording, we could manage a pitch-class set analysis of every note of a long, fast piece, an analysis that would not be more trouble than it was worth. As it is--unless one can get von Schlippenbach to perform on a MIDI keyboard--one might content oneself to slow down on tape some short selections notable for typical or atypical character and make some analyses of pitch class sets, just to see what they reveal.

My own sense of such an approach is that it would reveal patterns more than motives--specifically, the row-like chords he mentioned developing--pitch patterns as components of textures, or vertical platforms for horizontal flows, often subsumed in the percussiveness and/or speed of their execution, not musical statements to be developed for their pitch relationships. What would then be of interest might be a comparison with something like Kernfeld's analysis (ahead) of Coltrane's formulas, to see the way pitch arrays in von Schlippenbach (compared to the similar well-charted process in Coltrane) are learned, memorized, embodied and relegated to the background of the music, and to examine their relationship to the more conscious, foreground decisions about time, volume dynamics, and textural areas.

Another clear analytic tool--reductive information, from information theory--captures the contour of background familiarity and foreground innovation that happens in improvisation. Winter (1979) likens the reductive informational method to the game Twenty Questions:

- For example if pitch number 6 is played in random sequence consisting of only eight pitches with equal probability the questions are as follows:

Is the note in the first four? No. It is pitch 5, 6, 7, or 8.

Is the note in the third pair? Yes. It is pitch 5 or 6.

Is the note pitch number 5? No. It is pitch 6.

Information theory is built from information flow, leaving aside that information's possible meaning. The equations cast information first into "bits," then "streams;" the processor of the information (in our case, the listener) is a factor in defining its theoretical definition by the act of perception. Thus, a first hearing of something contains much information, a second hearing much less, a third perhaps none; then a change from that contains much again, sheerly by virtue of the change (think of a ticking clock noticed at first--informing your ears--but not at all later;

then think of the sudden influx of new "information" your ears pick up from the sudden silence when the ticking stops).

The analytic principle to extract here (though recast, simplified, from Winter's substantial math) is that analysis of a free improvisation can be based on a look at the oscillation between departures from and returns to repeated elements (in the absence of a preset grid--a tune, a system--against which to set improvisations, one can yet let the spontaneous utterance establish its own such platform on the fly). The information flow thus graphed would show the same flux between familiar and innovative within a free improvisation as is clear in a pre-free one; i.e., where 0 information = the "head" and 1N = improvisations on it, 0 information also = any (and not necessarily pre-) established parameter, 1N = any change from it. (This accounts for, again, my experience with Cecil Taylor's performance on my first night in Berlin, when he stopped one flow and started a new moment in the music.)

Winter expands such bits into streams, and charts the flow of a musical excerpt with bar graphs representing fluctuations of information. The concept behind this approach will also inform our divisions of analytical units, in Chapter Eleven.

### *Examples, Notations*

Of the following nine examples of analysis of improvisation, including two dense books, only one (the single German one, Noll's) departs from a focus on pitch and rhythmic relationships as the central criteria, and even that one relies (as do the others), with few exceptions, on conventional notation to make its points (we'll look at Noll's departures from such notation in closing). The other dense book's (Berliner 1994) thorough exploration of mainstream tonal jazz is well served thereby; his extensions on said notation to capture nuances of timbre, articulation, harmonic overtones, dynamics, and rhythm and other elements besides pitch (melodic-harmonic) pattern comprise a satisfying integration. However, it is as clear what is the root and trunk and what the branches in his analytic palette as (to his credit) it is in the musical terrain it charts, a terrain we see here as background.

Dean's too, as noted in Part II, is primarily about patterns of pitch and pulse, and conventionally notated, even though his focus is on the post-diatonic issues of post-'60s jazz and new improvised music. We do get a glimpse of composers who themselves use alternative notations (153-59, 120, 76), but no such alternatives are enlisted or devised for analytical tasks.<sup>9</sup> Dean does devote an Appendix to the issue of analysis; it is preceded by the short parting chapter, "Music-sound-text-image," which suggests (indirectly) that the graphic, textual, and sonic dimensions of those pieces that contain them would be most properly served by their analytical

analogues (i.e., graphic/visual "notation," text, spectrograph, or even a sound event that makes an analytical point about another one).[10](#)

Stewart's (1979) look[11](#) at the rhythmic nuances of Clifford Brown's "chain-associative" motivic development of a standard head, and of the several choruses that make up one solo suggest a development of melodic out of harmonic emphasis that opened up the move through melody *away* from harmony taken by Ornette Coleman and subsequent free-jazz players. Kernfeld's (1983) close and lengthy study of John Coltrane solos holds "melodic coherence" up as the object of analysis. He opens with a scan of similarly oriented literature (8-11) then summarizes it into his own working definitions of

- 1. Paraphrase improvisation: A pre-existent melody recognizably shapes pitch selection, rhythm, and contour.
- 2. Chorus phrase improvisation: Primarily harmony and harmonic rhythm shape pitch selection.
- 3. Motivic improvisation: An intervallic or rhythmic idea recurs with modifications as a partial basis of a particular improvisation or set of improvisations. Harmony shapes pitch selection in the modifications.
- 4. Formulaic improvisation: A melodic response to a particular harmony or structural context recurs among several improvisations. (12)

The methodological problems in isolating such elements he attributes to the dissolution of clear scalar hierarchy--thus a clear sense of what was a root and what its relative, what was a motive or formula and what a variation--as the music became increasingly chromatically malleable (even before becoming atonal). He concludes that his approach--mining transcriptions for the four types of improvisation above--is useful when applied carefully and selectively to clearly diatonically ordered jazz (as he applies it here, to Coltrane's pre-1960s work).

In his attempt to find and define a relationship between repetition and creativity in four Coltrane blues improvisations (all in F), Kernfeld calls up six continua:

- 1. Subtle resemblances and redundant duplications.
- 2. The construction of continuous new melodies and the assemblage of unrelated ideas.
- 3. Melodies recurring only within a single improvisation and those found in all

four recordings.

4. Isolated, possibly coincidental, pairs of melodic fragments and large, significant families of intertwined melodies.
5. Lengthy fixed melodies and melodic cells that are seemingly arranged, interrupted, elided, and rearranged.
6. Repetitions independent of rhythm and harmony, and reiterations tied to a particular relationship to the pulse or to an exact metrical position within the 12-bar chord progression of the blues. (18)

He judges the results as not only formulaic but unimaginatively so (in contrast to Charlie Parker and a good oral poet, such as described by Lord, following):

- The singer of tales is at once the tradition and an individual creator. His manner of composition differs from that used by a writer in that the oral poet makes no conscious effort to break the traditional phrases and incidents; he is forced by the rapidity of composition in performance to use these traditional elements. To him they are not merely necessary, however; they are also right. He seeks no others, and yet he practices great freedom in his use of them because they are themselves flexible. (45)

In contrast, Kernfeld sees in three solos on Miles Davis modal tunes a motivic rather than formulaic approach to invention that leads to better results. His concluding picture of "two Coltranes"--one straitjacketed in mechanical clichés as a result of coming to the end of the diatonic-chromatic rope, the other welling with new ideas in the wake of the new modal game--is a reminder of Winters' piece on reductive information: "information" (music) decreases with repetition, increases with change.

Both Winters and Kernfeld suggest here, then, the benefits of looking for evidence of fulfillment of one approach--in a solo, or over the course of many--and for its yield in a turn to another. For example, one might compare something from the beginning of FMP's *Kaputtspielphase* to something from the end, and to something from the beginning of a subsequent new way of playing for clues as to what musical elements are present or absent or altered. Kernfeld's own self-imposed limitations (to pieces with clear root tones) need not apply so strictly for us to unearth a given player's self-developed clichés and successful escapes

therefrom into invention.

Porter builds on Kernfeld's insights to argue that Coltrane's motivic improvisation's inventions within forms not only were in themselves inventive but also reflected and/or contributed to the improviser's compositional sense of his own over-arching forms. Porter's presentation of "A Love Supreme's" tonal plan (605) features its clear macrocosmic reflection of the same pentatonic scale that dominates the piece, including its omission of the one tone that would weaken its formal symmetry; his look at the close connection between the text of Coltrane's poem and his recitatives on the form remind us again of the suggestion that musical *form*--something we're used to conceiving and manipulating in the abstract, as opposed to *content*--is as much a part of an improviser's neurological "hardwiring" as is linguistic grammar generation.[12](#)

With that and another offhand comment on Coltrane's typical compositions of the time (620), Porter's concluding picture is of a biological imperative that leads to successful composition--for improvisation, and through improvisation--just as it does to successful improvisation. For this study, Porter simply alerts us to the possibility of analyzable formal structures in free improvisations; once their formulas, motives, and/or other building blocks are determined, we can look for the building comprising them, and for what it might say about its builders.

Block's (1993) application of pitch-class set analysis to two Ornette Coleman solos yields a sense of the artist's ability to depart from a given harmonic function without sacrificing the harmony itself (e.g., he could play a minor seventh chord as an abstract sound, not something bound to a conventional minor-seventh context). Tonality is thus retained, but transformed from developmental to sonorous (much as in folk traditions, only here that sonorous tonality is exploited for its fullest chromatic potential, as in pre-free jazz and tonal Western art music).

Block's particular application might model most usefully an analysis of some of the East German improvisers, who have developed along similar post-tonal lines much more than the Western ones. (Correspondingly, Williams' [1992] answer to the question "What Kind of Composer was Thelonious Monk?"--that he wasn't one to conceive of tunes as heads to be stated set around chord changes to be run so much as one who presented melodic/motivic/rhythmic statements in compositional and improvisational expressions in fertile symbiosis--will connect to those Easterners the one Westerner [von Schlippenbach] most influenced by Monk. Perhaps this framing of von Schlippenbach will lead to insights into the integration he achieved for the piano as an *ensemble* instrument in German [unlike most American] post-free improvised music.)

In general, while analyses built on common ground with common tools (i.e., from pre-free jazz studies and composition studies) are desirable for situating FMP's discourse in its parent and

neighboring ones, we don't want to fall into the trap of "justifying" free improvisation by trying to prove it "as good as" composition (any more than "jazz" should have to be "America's classical music" to be respected).

In all the analytical literature I've found pertinent to this or that aspect of the music of my purview, Daniel Werts' "Pitch Organization in Cecil Taylor's *Legba Crossing*" stands as a supreme example of the kind of analysis I find most satisfying (and, again, Kiroff's similar one on Taylor; I'll focus on Werts' because FMP published it, and because he played with Cecil).

First, like the musical event itself--since Taylor's way of imparting his charted pieces to improvisers is oral, without notation--it is built from the bottom up by one who played in Taylor's band. Werts was in the thick of the thing he so thickly writes about, could see and hear aspects of the musical event as it unfolded in real time. In addition, he had rehearsal tapes to work from, so he could supplement his experience as part of the flow with the subsequent detachment and distance of one who listens to a tape of a performance of which he was a part--which is to say, a detachment and distance marked by just as much compulsive-obsessive fascination as marked the participation's up-close and visceral engagement, as every musician who listens to tapes of music he has made or helped make can attest.

Moreover, we know what these rehearsal tapes were like, thanks to Lindenmaier's transcription of Taylor talking the players through the piece note by note, instrument by instrument, a text laid out on the page in evocative abstract shapes, in the typographical style of the old metaphysical English poets.

I've never played in or been to one of these rehearsals Taylor leads, but I've played with many musicians who have, and have heard their accounts. Imagine Beethoven talking an orchestra through one of his symphonies without a score, note by note, instrument by instrument, deliberately, so that they learn it by heart; now imagine Schönberg, or Stockhausen, or Braxton doing the same thing. As Johannes Bauer told me, the work of a few hours telescopes into days and weeks when you forego the literate for the aural/oral transmission, especially if you aren't familiar with Taylor's musical ways. I've always found it puzzling that the FMP players who are so famous for wide open, spontaneous blowing, and democratic relations amongst themselves on the bandstand, and so averse to reading down the dense parts of a score, would have such patience with one who insists on talking them through a series of pitches, of all things; but, as Bauer told me, once you get the information orally/aurally, it is deep in your body for good, and your performance of it issues from there rather than from the more superficial level of literate facility.

Looking back, this European submission to Taylor's vision and process strikes me as an instance of the ancient oral traditions throughout Eurasia and Africa that I'd been seeing up

close at Wesleyan for years: the devotee learning directly from the guru in action, hanging reverentially on every word of instruction, imitating exactly every note. The student's total immersion in the master on a bodily level is conceived to lead to one's own individuation into mastery in the end, not to eternal slavish devotion. The FMP players had no problem with this, such as they expressed having with the written score of a Braxton, or even with (in the case of Kowald's students) the creative "conduction" of a Butch Morris. Apparently, both of those contexts smacked too much of the slavery closer to their own home, to the supremacy of a score and the will of a conductor.[13](#)

Taylor himself told interviewer Meinrad Buholzer in 1984 (cited in Jost 1988: 99), "To sit down and write a piece of music and to ask musicians to perform that music under the same directorial tutelage that Handel gave his musicians, seems to me to be rather questionable in concept." In fact, more of Jost's contribution to Taylor's first FMP recordings' (the two-CD set *Alms/Tiergarten (Spree)*) liner notes--a contribution, like all his analytical writing, also fruitfully informed by the player's insider experience, different though he and Werts are in content and approach--deserves citing here, for the light it sheds on this study's long muse on the body, and on composition and improvisation; and, not least, for its opening pages' opening engagement with Taylor's music and the challenge of analyzing it.

Jost cites Gary Giddins asserting that "Cecil Taylor is fundamentally a composer." Not so, says Jost, citing Taylor:

- I am not interested in compositions, in discipline, and all that academic stuff, where everything is determined. That's all prison cells...it does not have anything, or very little, to do with the contemporary spirit of musicians who want to create...we all realized a long time ago that music does not exist in the notes, *it exists in one's internal cavity, one's body, or more sentimentally, perhaps, one's heart*. Certainly in one's head. But the notes are only signs, communiqués, to the thrust of the music (99, my emphasis).

Then Jost writes,

- ...Cecil Taylor is by no stretch of the imagination 'essentially a composer,' and certainly not one whose work should be measured alongside that of Anthony Braxton or Barry Guy and/or Pierre Boulez or György Ligeti. For inasmuch as Taylor furnishes his colleagues (or himself, for that matter) not with compositions in the traditional sense of permanently fixed musical configurations, but, on the contrary, provides them (and himself) with "processable" materials; and inasmuch as he doesn't give instructions, but makes suggestions and offers--then Cecil Taylor is clearly not a composer, but

first and foremost, an *improviser*...

The focus of Jost's article is not the FMP recordings it accompanies, but other parts of Taylor's corpus. To return to Werts' analytical handling of *Legba*, look at (on following page) Lindenmaier's transcription of the rehearsal of the piece

The musical event, when learned and played, is about forty-seven minutes long; Werts takes twenty-five pages of notation such as this to convey it. As you see (below), real-time markings take the place of measures, a pulse is indicated, graphics and words combine with conventional pitch notation to sketch the unfolding sound. In all, this musical transcription has the transparency and not-overly-determined clarity of an analysis that approaches Potter's ideal of replayability.

Werts' essay itself takes twenty-one pages to deconstruct and bring out aspects of this transcription that are similarly lucid, and more revealing. First, he starts right out with the time divisions he perceives forming and sequencing around changes of tempo, texture, and harmony; he acknowledges the arbitrary and subjective aspects of his divisions, but counts them small; he marks their durations and proportions.

Then, limiting himself to the composed skeleton of the piece, he writes out the "pitch-class collections of each section," discovering each section to be focused on a

- particular harmonic area, one containing many fewer pitch-classes than all twelve; in this regard, *Legba*'s surface differs radically from that multitude of serial and atonal works where the constant turnover of all twelve pitch-classes amounts to a kind of stylistic imperative (162).

He then maps those pitches out onto a matrix designed to show their contiguities and proximities graphically, so as to get a sense of harmonic textures as "areas" that shift throughout the matrix from section to section; and to assign numerical relationships to the pitch arrays within each area, number arrays that readily suggest or reveal Taylor's own pattern of melodic voice leading or harmonic construction. Werts derives a set of rules therefrom that he sees governing the piece, proceeding to discuss its harmonic-melodic contour within and across sections.

All very clear and elegant. I would only have liked to know more about the relationship between Taylor's hands at the keyboard and the pitch-class arrays as mapped on the matrix, to base the analysis in the physical demands of fingering.

Beyond the good example of Werts forging in conventional scholarship's terms an analytical approach that fully engages with the music, I find most interesting his mention of a

"painstakingly slow" (two-and-a-half-minute) unfolding of a twelve-tone array that Schönberg would have done in seconds. Compare that with *NY Times* classical music critic Bernard Holland's (1995) comparison of a Webern String Trio with a Cecil Taylor performance during the same week:

- Time was on our hands. I refer not to the 72 hours that separated the two happenings but to the way music uses--indeed, *is*--time. Mr. Taylor and Austria's arch-epigrammatist brought to their respective concerts different watches, ticking at different rates. One man kept time by surrendering to its flow. One took time by the arm and asked it to change its ways...

Mr. Taylor's music progresses with the kind of patience the West has learned from the East. While Webern's clock whirls swiftly--a lifetime spanned in minutes--Mr. Taylor sets his watch to ours. The next five minutes of a Taylor composition seem as uncertain as the next five minutes of our lives.

Webern might have accused Cecil Taylor of "barbaric lavishness with time," of "soft abandonment" to its flow and "boundless patience" with its endlessness. The words are Thomas Mann's, an admonishment spoken to the tubercular protagonist of "The Magic Mountain." Mann's Herr Settembrini is remarking on the vastness of Asia and its dangers to the Occidental mind: "We Europeans have as little time as our great and finely articulated continent has space," he says. "We must be as economical of the one as of the other."

Werts has given us a glimpse of the musical mechanics whereby time--history?-- is slowed, stopped, redirected: repetition, new information introduced in small steps spaced widely--like biologists' theory of evolution as "punctuated equilibrium"--to maximize the drama of contrast and change within stasis. (I am reminded here of Sven-Åke Johansson's similar process of improvising words, lingering over a static but pregnant image by repeating, varying slightly, wordplaying, teasing out a statement slowly, not speeding through many curt ones.)

### *Noll's Klangflächen*

Noll notes in his Introduction that with the absence of full scores and the advent of recordings, analyses of jazz have historically been Western interpretations of transcriptions cast in Western terms (notation). In his Conclusion, he sees that as irrelevant to free improvisation, as to much of twentieth-century music (e.g., French Impressionists, Stravinsky). He develops from the example of Gunter Hampel's music three *Klangflächen* (sound-surfaces): continuous (drone-like, or gliss-like), periodic (serrated), and conventional (idiomatic-like, e.g., "flamenco," "latin,"

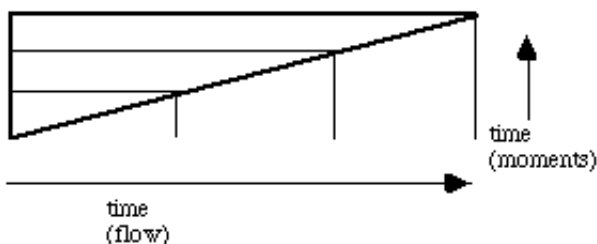
"bluesy," etc.). Simple *Klangflächen* are indivisible; combinations of simple ones make for equally indivisible complex ones. Noll's notation for *Klangflächen* is intuitively graphic (such as a horizontal straight line for drone)<sup>14</sup> and/or onomatopoeic (DdDdDd for a roll on the rim of a snare drum).

Noll does further analysis on Albert Mangelsdorff charts/performances, first those rooted extensively in the traditional harmonic/melodic/metric matrix, then some developing through partly, then totally free premises. As he did with Hampel, he shows how these strings of notes and motives and rhythms can be broken down into sound surfaces (p. 88 is an elaborate example of that: many surfaces like a patchwork quilt, all made out of notes and pulses).

Noll's theory of the use of the *Klangfläche* (singular) in free jazz improvisation starts by looking at its means: repetition (three kinds: regular, imitation, variation). A thing is drawn and redrawn in time until it stands clearly outside that flow, in consciousness. Noll invokes and quotes philosophers including Husserl, Deleuze, Hume, and Bergson, in a discussion of how successive moments effect a continuous present, in consciousness.

A *Klangfläche* is such a present, its sound units its successive moments (Husserl's diagram, ahead, shows the way a vertical "present" emerges out of a horizontal flow of "moments"). The *Klangfläche* can be established by repetition (even of one sound--thus Coltrane's signature tone could be a [simple] *Klangfläche* that evokes his presence, even as thirty minutes on his "My Favorite Things" could be thought of as one [complex] such *Klangfläche*. Recurrence, reiteration, retention: memory things, music as a time-sense catalyst.

So: in light of our reading of Winter, let us say that *Klangflächen* emerge from 0 information (e.g., when the drone's sonic *characteristics* are absorbed and forgotten, we enter drone *land*, that soundscape); 1N information consists of such an emergence. A *Klangfläche* can be short or long, in combination, so:



**Fig. III.1: Husserl's schema of standing and flowing time, applied by Noll to musical time.**

The horizontal layers are *Klangflächen*; the vertical lines are the moments of transformation

from construction to completion of one and emergence of another. The important point is the indivisibility of *each* triangle, though only the smallest is "simple" (complex ones are also indivisible; in this sense is the whole greater than the sum of its parts).

With repetition, Noll includes "density"--*Dichte*, thickness--as another element of *Klangflächen*. "Parameter couplings" (between parameters such as slow, fast, loud, soft, low, high) define the density of a *Klangfläche*. He then proposes ways of notating individual *Klangflächen*. His constructs are essentially graphic analogues of note motions (e.g. 105), of charting density (with the matrices of couplings), then similarly "tying together" (*verknüpfen*) *Klangflächen*.

Noll (106-07) defines types of *Klangflächen* for the *Verknüpfungen* table, a matrix of possible couplings of those types (e.g., a drone and a rough-noise sound). After that *verknüpfen*, evolution of *Klangflächen* is charted (112), showing how their overlaps can change their nature (e.g., from slow to fast, etc.).

Noll then relates *Klangfläche* theory to traditional jazz theory (mostly that developed by German scholars). He starts with meter and pulse as the elementals (parallel to linguistic phonemes) from which beat, swing, syncopation and drive (morphemes) derive. Much as we saw him trace the development of notes/phrases/intervallic patterns/structures through to his concept of *Klangflächen*--step-by-step--here he brings rhythm fully into *Klangflächen*, equal with pitch. *Atentakt* ("breathpulse") is a unit of time proposed for free improvisation; drummers, by virtue of having no present time-keeping duties, are thus constrained by *Atentakt* in wind players, thus able to interact melodically, as wind players can play rhythmically. Noll sums up the practical symbiosis, interpenetration of metrical and nonmetrical *Klangflächen*, one emerging naturally from the other (126).

Noll closes by saying that *Klangfläche* theory is not only concerned with free improvisation but also with graphic and verbal approaches to notation designed to represent, analyze and instigate it; his selection of ten recorded pieces (including one of my Chapter Eleven's close focus, von Schlippenbach's "Sun") shows the range of applications of his graphic analyses to real recordings (and will inform mine) (127-38). His (141) table comparing straight and free jazz paradigms is noteworthy for showing free jazz as more a subsumption of traditional elements, an assimilation/incorporation/transcendence, than a mere eschewal of them). He ends with Dalhaus' reservation about free improvisation, that without form/function music becomes a potpourri. *Klangfläche* theory tries to *explicate* the form/function that has been *implicated* by the players all along.

Directly pertaining to Noll's philosophical (phenomenological) underpinnings are Ferrara's (1991) rich applications of the work of Husserl, Heidegger and other philosophers, linguists, and scientists to musical analysis--including two specific and extensive examples of his own

analyses so informed (Ferrara's "eclectic method" of musical analysis is described and demonstrated in the second half of his book; the first half is devoted to its theoretical and philosophical underpinnings, which we will examine ahead).<sup>15</sup> As his word for it suggests, the hallmark of this method is the use of different analytical approaches to address different aspects of a single musical event. In this, unlike the others we have looked at, his is like the approaches taken by Braxton (1988) and Wadada Leo Smith (1995), the two closest in their musical material to that of this study.

Ferrara claims for his book:

- Within the perspective that is developed in this book, 1) significance in music includes but goes beyond form or syntax, 2) what caused a work to be made need not bear upon its significance, 3) psychological *consequences* in musical experiences do not necessarily bear upon musical significance, and 4) music understood as pleasure is a secondary issue. What is of import is that music can be expressive of the most profound human concerns and can exemplify those concerns in ways in which ordinary language cannot. Thus, despite the fact that formalists reject the possibility of a *method* that would support systematic and rigorous analysis of musical reference, there is an attempt to formulate and implement such a method in this book. (xv)

Ferrara's "eclectic approach to musical analysis" is designed to ground any and all analytical *fixedness* in the *mutable* potential--of meaning, interpretation, reception, representation--inherent as the mystery in music. Thus its ten steps are characterized by "open listenings" that precede and follow (as steps 2 and 8) several analyses for predetermined aspects (step 3: "syntax," or pitch relationships; 4: the "sound-in-time," based on the German-phenomenological focus we will examine later; 5: "musical and textual representation," i.e., iconically referential music and/or narratives or wordplay that accompany it; 6: "virtual feeling," or the music's emotional affect; and 7: the "onto-historical world of the musicmaker, for cultural context [step 1 prologously situates the musicmaker in that context]). Steps 9 and 10 epilogously summarize implications the analysis holds for performance (9), and assess the analysis' methodology based on its outcome (10).

With some modifications, this approach well suits our purposes. We are looking at a variety of free improvisers for both their distinctions and similarities, and for what both sets of traits contribute to a theory of free improvisation. The flexibility and feedback mechanisms, the comfortable motion between whole and parts, between one type of fixedness and another without absolutization of either, all serve us well. The second open listening (step 8) Ferrara conceives as an expression of the assemblage of analytically fixed aspects as a unified whole. This step suggests faith in the analyst's consciousness and expressiveness, his or her creative

imagination, to image such a whole, having exhausted analysis's potential for constructing fixed images of all parts. This is remarkable when we consider that those parts include interpretations of meaning (step 5) and feeling (step 6); those parts, along with the more strictly rationalized (1, 3, 4, 7), are presumed by step 8 to be summable into a whole greater than their sum. More clearly, step 8 is designed for the aesthetician/philosopher-theorist, after the historian, sociologist, music technician, and music hermeneutician have had their says.

The following from Ferrara's discussion of this second open listening illuminates it:

- "Music" *happens* in a musical work when the analyst responds to the multiplicity of levels of musical significance in that work. The experience and understanding of this interaction clarifies the meaning of Heidegger's notion of the "strife" and is the ultimate purpose of the bridging of sound, form and reference. The proposed eclectic method has been designed specifically in response to this non-static conception of music. (185-86)

My modifications of Ferrara for this work run as follows:

- - 1) my first open listenings best *determine* what my fixed analyses will be (optioned from those considered thus far, and new ones), rather than simply *frame* them; in some instances, a syntactical analysis will be irrelevant (though "the sound-in-time," rooted as it is in theory and philosophy, never will be);
  - 2) in deference to my material's peculiar relationship with time, discussed above and ahead, I specifically discuss an event both as it *flows through moments* and as it *stands in a moment* (recall Noll's [Husserlian] concept of "horizontal" time flows triggering "vertical" definitions called "moments," the longer and greater of which both contain and stand with the lesser and shorter, as indivisible *Klangflächen*). Each recording has a single sound identity defined by its ending (re: Ferrara's discussion of Heidegger's discussion about death as the defining event of a life, next chapter);
  - 3) for "musical and textual representation" I recall the promising work of Mellers, Dalhaus, and White as examined in Part I, taking care not to cripple my insights with the misplaced tentativeness of the scientist emboldened only by empirical "proofs," rather trusting in insight's wings as an artist trusts in her work's;
  - 4) on the other hand, "virtual feeling" might be even more delicate than

"meaning" (once we understand the mutability of the latter, we can fix it variously and responsibly). I am thinking of the critics who have dismissed music as "angry," "hateful," "violent" or "empty" that was neither conceived nor presented as such by its makers. This is an area, particularly in jazz and free-jazz discourse, in which reception and representation have dominated and violated generation and presentation. My experience as a player serves me here;

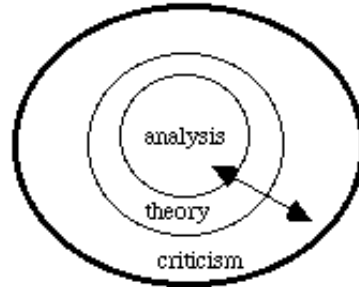
5) Ferrara's "performance guide," modified to accommodate the analysis of a performance fixed not on paper to be re-performed but on a recording intended only to document and re-inspire spontaneously improvised events, will contain reflections on such re-inspirations and such possible events.

Cone (1967) sees as symptomatic of a fundamental irrelevance of pitch relationships as an analytic framework for post-tonal music the fact that the latter is as sensible within the former when inverted or reversed--a fact not true of its timbral/rhythmic (attacks, phrasing, dynamics and other textural expressive devices) unfolding, nor of virtually all other (especially time-mediated) arts (such as film, literature, dance, etc., discounting the few special cases of pieces conceived to do so). This phenomenon transfers directly to the free improvisations conceived and practiced by FMP artists on chromatically constrained instruments (or, in principle, on instruments constrained by any discrete pitch division, as opposed to those [such as fretless bowed strings, trombones, the voice, the synthesizer] allowing a continuous pitch range and/or more of a sheer timbral/textural emphasis [such as effected through extended techniques exploring the "noise" (*Geräusch*) capacities of instruments and other objects, and the synth]). One can imagine an atonal free improvisation and an atonal composition being distinguished from one another *only* in the oral mode of performance, where time's forward flow is an analytical constraint, and being indistinguishable on paper.[16](#)

What this says is that there is something perfectly analyzable in a piece of music--or a musical event--but it isn't that which makes it music; and that which makes it music is perhaps more accurately called describable than analyzable. To explain this, Cone offers the example of a painter who first draws a sketch and then adds color to it. As a drawing, the picture's formal aspect rests on lines and their relationships, which can be analyzed and discussed in geometrical terms. But what is so analyzed and discussed is not the finished picture, nor even the sum of the parts they are. Cone calls the decisions the painter makes about adding colors to the drawing "absolute" (though not arbitrary), thus beyond analysis. One can only like or dislike such decisions, not prove or disprove their propriety. In the end, Cone's statement seems directed at a scholarly community that he feels has gone scientifically overboard in analysis and needs to get back in touch with the mystery at the heart of music.

Lewin (1967) takes issue with this statement not in principle but as expressed; he insists on

clearer, more carefully drawn lines between "theory," "criticism," and "analysis." Roughly, theory is the paradigm from which analyses are drawn, analysis a method for specifying musical statements, and criticism a discussion and assessment of meaning, one that contains both theory and analysis within it, wherever it itself might be situated (i.e., some other discipline, or in larger general or specific cultural and historical contexts). I understand this so:



The double-pointed arrow denotes the way we can devise theories/analyses to inform a specific critical inquiry, and also the reverse--devising theories/analyses to see what critical points they make.

Lewin's response to Cone and Cone's final response to him read more like refinements on Cone's initial points than attack-defense of them, and the thrust of those points we can see as a collapse of hierarchy into network. Pitches, their patterns, the statements of their pieces all hang together like a (two-dimensional) surface (per Noll) indeed, rather than a (three-dimensional) structure with layers, depth, necessarily hierarchical relationships of parts. It is like a move from a representational to an abstract art that drops the geometrical simulation of depth perception.

Back to Schenker. As Rink foregrounded Schenker's improvisational sense, Cohn and Dempster (1992) point out the ways in which Schenker's system, so conceptually hierarchical, in practice functioned more like a network. (This suggestion goes well with Noll's concept of a nonhierarchical network of sound-surface, since it raises and addresses the troubling questions begged by abovementioned collapse.) These introductory sentences highlight their essay's relevance here:

- After reviewing the theoretical basis for the claim of hierarchy, we probe the Schenkerian treatment of motivic relationships, in order to show that in analytic practice this basis is substantially undermined. The essay concludes by examining the potential for alternative conceptions of musical unity that preserve the advantages of hierarchies while simultaneously providing a theoretical basis for the realities of Schenkerian practice. We consider the case for complex networks (following the work of Meyer, Narmour, et al.), suggest

some refinements to it, and consider how such a view encourages relocating musical unity on the compositional "surface" itself, rather than in some "underlying simplicity." (157)

That relocation of musical unity from hierarchy to network, and from depth to surface, goes to the single heart of many of the issues crucial here. It addresses both the eclecticism and the commonality of the musicians and the music of our focus, not only with *which* analytical engines work and which don't, but also with *why* they do or don't. One can imagine an analytical enterprise that would situate FMP and free jazz as a branch of jazz, even as one could situate jazz as a branch of Western music (as the German music scholars mentioned in earlier papers have done so well). One could, for example, point out the subliminal connections to tonality, or to swing, or to motivity or formulaity in a "free" session. One could also find the simplest, broadest, most anchoring musical element in a given musical event--e.g., a pulse or recurring time frame, a pitch or pattern thereof, a timbral-textural effect, a volume or tempo--and posit it as a root from which the other musical elements issue.

Such analyses would not only be valid but also genuinely insightful and revealing of the music's actual roots and material. But when one speaks of roots, trunks, and branches, as Cohn and Dempster point out (157-60), one speaks of hierarchy. What if the music is that, yet also more? What if the "wind" in its "leaves" and "flowers" is blowing "seeds" and "pollen" around the entire "forest" in ways unseen when tunnel vision is focused on the integrity of the individual tree? The authors ponder this so:

- Even if we are clear about what sense of *hierarchy* we apply to music, we must still contend with the problem of scope. When we say that music is hierarchical, what exactly do we mean to denote by *music*? First, is hierarchy supposed to be a property of any and all musical events, or are there limitations, of culture, of style, of the skill of the composer, etc.? Second, is hierarchy a property of musical events in themselves, or is it some fact about our cognition of music, or is it merely an analytical bias that an analyst may or may not choose to adopt? Third, and perhaps most important for subsequent considerations, if a piece of music is hierarchical, are we to assume that the piece itself, as some kind of independent substance, has an independently hierarchical form, or are we to assume that its hierarchical form is only one of many simultaneously possessed, equally important structural attributes, each revealed, perhaps, by different analytical biases? (161)

Their specifications, drawn from systems science, of different types of hierarchy, would be too much detail here, as would most of their argument for Schenker's inconsistencies with his own hierarchical approach. The following points out the relativism disguised as absolutism that

results from such inconsistencies:

- Schenker used his knowledge of the foreground content to *guide* his decision about the composition's background structure, invoking motivic considerations to *tip the analytic balance* toward one of two otherwise equally well-formed reductions (Burkhart 1978: 170). In his analysis of a Haydn sonata, the desire simultaneously to bring out motives in the bass and the upper voice *led* Schenker to an otherwise peculiar decision to *ignore* the resolution of a dominant-functioning 6/4 chord. Similarly, Beach 1983, after modeling the development of a Mozart quartet by invoking harmonic and voice-leading considerations alone, suggests an alternative reading generated by motivic concerns. (168, my emphases)

(This underlying subjectivity recalls--seeds?--the blatant neutrality of meaning pointed out by Cone's backward-forward exercise with a twelve-tone piece, above.)

In place of the branching hierarchy, the authors' "product network" depicts the analysis of one musical object/event through several different networks (eg., horizontal, vertical, pointillistic) of its internal dynamics. They articulate the pros and cons of this alternative to rigid hierarchy:

- Networks have the advantage of liberating analysis from the vast number of constraints imposed by hierarchies and thus encouraging certain salient and powerful analytic claims that are suppressed or disabled by a purely hierarchical stance. In their tolerance of multiple cross-relations and over-determination of individual events, they are able to capture the richness that we often sense in those events. At the same time, in the absence of any further limitations, networks are too general to be of much use as paradigms of musical structure. Without imposing limits on the type or number of interrelationships, without providing an apparatus for exploring the possible impacts these relationships have on one another, without distinguishing between strong and weak, structural and incidental, networks threaten to be more complex than the surfaces they purport to explicate. In themselves, networks fail to satisfy our critical urge both to acknowledge and to master phenomenal complexity by discovering some underlying structural simplicity that specifies the contribution of every individual element. Abandoning the hierarchical home for unconstrained networks threatens theorists with a nomadic life of promiscuous pluralism, indeterminacy, or chaos. (172)

These words speak indirectly to perhaps the biggest question begged by both the whole concept of free musication and by the various (FMP, here) practitioners' working of that concept over

time: yes, like fingerprints and snowflakes, every improviser and every improvisation is unique, unrepeatable, and potentially both complete and self-sufficient and open to interconnections with other such; and, as we've seen, we've come to the point of such a statement about music through the systematic deconstruction of a musical/philosophical/social hierarchy some two millennia in the making. BUT SO WHAT? Is such organic integrity and freedom enough for the human spirit and community? If not, what more is required? If so, what are the criteria not only of excellence and skill, vocal or instrumental facility, but also of meaning and impact, of fulfillment of the potential of spontaneous musication?

The authors' suggestions of the "product network's" answers to such questions point to a view of the "plural unities" such networks form as a whole greater than the sum of its parts. (Such a whole, of course, is their inclusion of music's mystery within any otherwise strictly rational and exact analytical and/or generative paradigm/system.) Thus:

- Although unity and coherence are surely important canons of musical and music-analytic value, acting alone they are insufficient to distinguish masterworks from well-formed exercises in species counterpoint. The search for plural unities, over and above the unity certified by prolongational hierarchies, attests that music theorists are equally committed to a second, independent canon, which may best be characterized as *richness*. If this commitment is often tacit, perhaps it is for fear that richness can be captured only at the expense of unity: the open-minded adoption of many disjunct analytic perspectives is tantamount to having no unified vision at all. We have suggested reason to believe that, although basically independent of each other, the canons of hierarchically generated unity and richness are not in competition, but coordinate to produce musical and music-analytic values. Just as plural unities interact to generate events that constitute a musical composition, and condition their interpretation, so also plural canons interact to generate, and condition the interpretation of, the products and activities which constitute the music-analytic discipline.

We are edging into a call to theory here. We'll glimpse the bulk of what Pressing (1988) offers as "the first proper (though by no means necessarily correct) theory of improvisational behavior in music" shortly. Here it is useful to set forth the analytical devices through which he builds and presents that theory. They are three, as follows: (1) Object array, which breaks a conventionally notated musical event--a chord, a sound, a fingering--into alphanumeric labels for its components (eg., note, glissando, rest, scale); (2) Feature array, which attributes features to those objects (ie., by pitching the notes, giving them dynamics, durations); and (3) Process array, which describes the methods used to change the parameters of the above (eg., "follow

contour of octave," or "use trichord," or "follow interval sequence x,y, z, to paraphrase).

This is essentially a layering of aspects similar to the Schenkerian approach and its variants examined above; its microscopic focus and detail suits Pressing's speculative purposes (he's trying to get at the internal processes of the improviser); in fact, his element *s*, or cognitive strength, seems entirely speculative in the context of representing an outer rather than inner event, so we'll leave it and other details aside here, to pick them up later. What is useful here is Pressing's attribution of "feature" and "process" areas as most significant--more so than the "object" area of pitch relations--to improvisational activity, which he divides into two types: "associative generation" (improvisation based on similarity, clearly anchored to a given "object," while changing its "features" and "processes"--i.e., volume, timbre, tempo, voicing, etc.) and "interrupt generation" (radical breaks with a chain of associative generation into a new such chain).

Moving up an analytical level, he graphs an ongoing improvisation as a cluster of such events (objects varied through manipulation of their processes and features, then left for new objects), on an x-y-z axis configured to represent the three arrays (object, process, feature), so that we see objects that generate associatively distinct from those that "interrupt" to generate; and again, on an x-y axis denoting increasing association (y) against time passing (x), so that we see the relationship between associative and interrupt generations as issuing from a tolerance-intolerance of repetition that results in several tweakings of unchanging features (associative generations) followed by a sudden jump through some process to another feature array, for the interrupt generation.

The interesting difference between Pressing's two graphs of the same event lies in (1) the way the first captures both similarity and distinction between improvisations on the same object, and pictures "development" as a scatter throughout three-dimensional space, rather than a progression down two-dimensional lines; and (2) the way the second pictures both association and interruption generations as functions of the improviser's experience of time (the Y axis graphs the duration of tolerance for a single "moment," or associative chain; the X axis graphs the string of such moments, as well as their internal divisions into different associative generations). They both combine well with, enhance graphically, concepts and approaches examined already (Noll's, Winter's) and may prove useful here.

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All the above resonates with points I would here critically (as Lewin, and Kerman, use the term, in advocacy of its referent) relate to larger developments (and, I suggest, global ones, relative to this local crisis of the pitch matrix in musical analysis and theory), all from recent scientific discourse.

One is spelled out by Penrose (1994) at great length, and is essentially a demonstration that consciousness is not computable (in terms of mathematical descriptions of brain processes, including their chemical, electrical, and quantum events). Those events (by analogy, sounds) can all be described with the intricacy of the mathematics that describe them, but they explain nothing about the consciousness (by analogy, music) they clearly constitute.

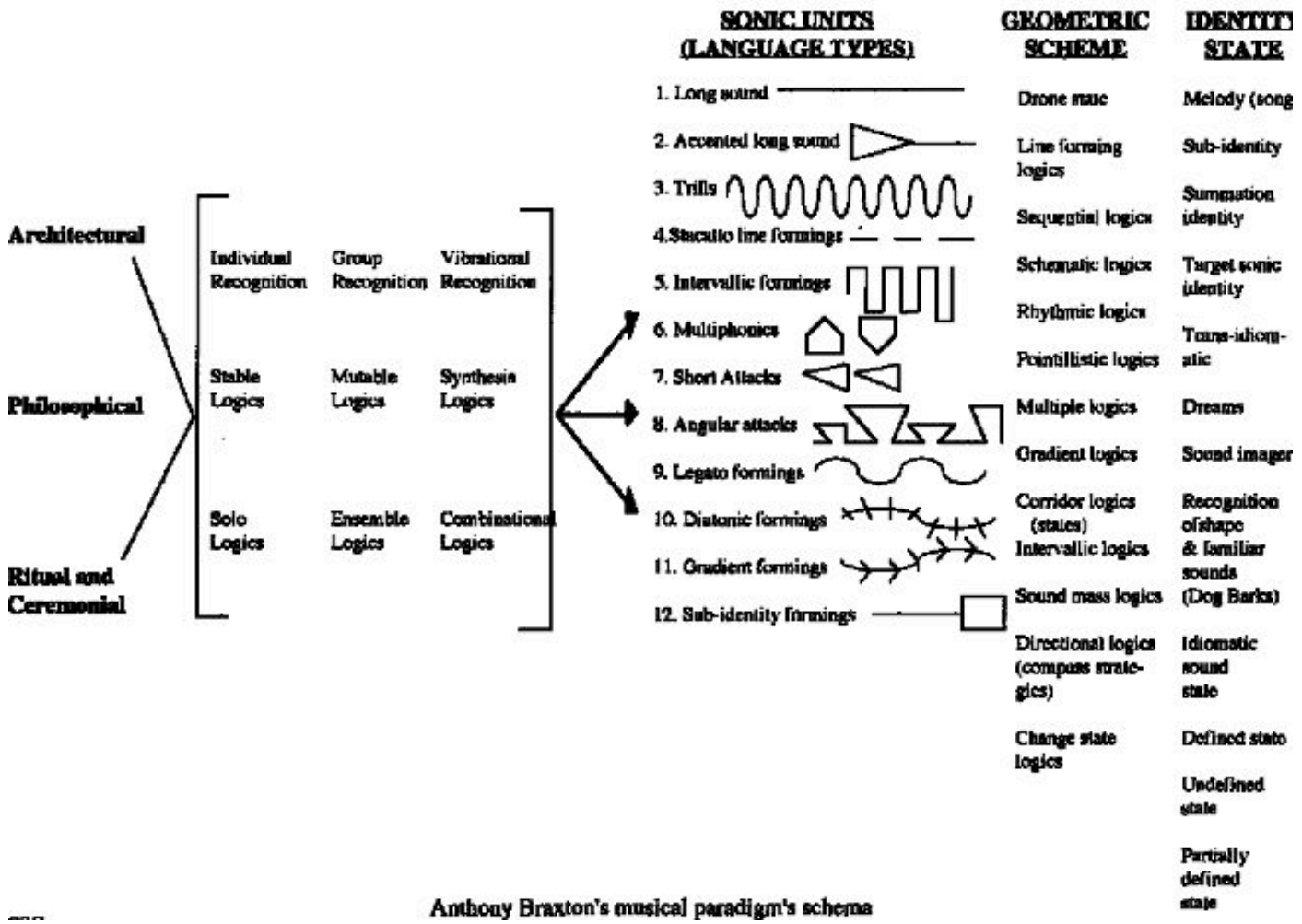
Another one is Thomas Kuhn's (1962) now famous concept of the paradigm shift. The overload of convoluted data that means nothing in the end is familiar to students of the collapse of the Ptolemaic (geocentric) into the Copernican (heliocentric) cosmology. The data themselves didn't decrease in importance, but their relationship to the phenomenon they were describing changed.

Again, the shift from Newtonian to Einsteinian paradigms showed that matter is only crudely analyzable in terms of matter (by analogy, pitches) dichotomized from energy (by analogy, music as a whole), that the unity of matter-energy is the deeper reality; and that, paradoxically, one can "see" matter as both particle and wave, but not both at once, and that one can measure position only at the expense of velocity, and vice versa.

All this is offered simply as the background appropriate to and driving this section's chapters (and, again, as fruitful nudges of future research). My analytic methodology will select from all the above strategies and observations as they pertain to the material; having settled on my approach, I will end with a look at another body of work that itself embodies, thus informs mine, thus saving me the work of *forming* mine in toto, ex nihilo. My Master's work acquainted me with this body of work, so I can exploit my own already extensive research into it: Anthony Braxton's writings.

Additionally, I see my analytical task here as similar to the one Braxton set for himself (explication of his own creative processes in the attempt to synthesize and personalize the world's music--all in memory and perception and imagination--from his own standpoint); I see my personal inclinations and traits--the compulsion to gather much disparate data and make new connections between them, to simplify the complex and unify the diverse--as similar too. And both of those similarities I see in sync with my subject. FMP too started from a local jazz tradition-vernacular and expanded it (and on and from it) to engage the realm of the world's music--witness its artists' many collaborations with Asian, African, South American, and non-Western European and Russian musicians, and with ancient musical data--as well as to forge personal styles and voices. Indeed, in this they can even be seen as the direct extension of their fellow Berliners, the first comparative musicologists, only a few generations their senior, who set out to ply their Western tools and viewpoints to the rest of the world's musical cultures. Seen so, they represent an evolution from literate to oral, from "self" to "other," and from observer to participant.

Braxton's work informs mine (especially in this Part III) on several levels. Most broadly, as he did not shy away from extramusical contexts in his *Tri-Axium Writings*--all about the larger historical, social, cultural, and philosophical contexts of his music and its traditions--I will not do so here. I will look for their areas of both distinction and overlap from strictly musical processes (those to which Dean, in fine and historically disastrous Western fashion, limited himself).<sup>17</sup> In the areas of distinction--embodied by Braxton in the sheer fact of writing separate works for extramusical and musical (in *Composition Notes*) matters--I will make it clear that I



... speak not with the authority of a professional, an expert, or an irrefutable empiricist so much as a man who has researched, engaged as a musician (like Dean and Braxton both) and thought about these things, cares about them, has an opinion, has an imagination, and has a tongue he hopes is both silver (lyrical, articulate, expressive) and golden (wise and true). In the areas of overlap--taking Braxton's cue from the two left-hand columns of his musical paradigm, above--I will include somehow the extramusical in with the musical aspects in whatever shorthand, iconic devices I construct to signal musical events and meanings.

In the more strictly musical components of sound states and their relationships, I will mix and match Braxton's categories with ones more specific to my material, and merge them with those of Noll, to try and capture both the elements and their combinations that are replacing pitch matrices as matrices of meaning in this music.

Finally, combining Braxton's far right column with concepts such as Husserl's (Fig. III.1 above), Noll's, and Ferrara's, as well as McKenna's (1989)--wherein are pictured transcendent and unifying emergences from aggregates of discrete events in time (Braxton's "identity states")--I will seek similarly seamless and organically asserted "meanings" in my analyses (perhaps only by imbuing those with a meaning subtly, as an artist herself imbues her work so, as craftily as she can).

The realm of such meanings is that, in our discipline's German-rooted history, of "speculative musicology:" [18](#) speculative because it speculates on a metamusical order of reality (akin to the neo-Platonic order Penrose (411-421) sees implicit in the patternings of both thought and matter that music is supposed to mirror [or, further, to "speculate" itself, in the older sense of the word, more akin to the meaning of glass spectacles and mirrors]). The following, from Paynter (1992), captures the thrust of such musicology:

- In the doctrine of correspondences, numbers are like the warp of a loom, to which the various manifestations cohere like the multicoloured threads of the weft. It is a concept which agrees, up to a point, with that of the modern scientist who believes that All is Number--yet all is not perceived as number, and that is why there is music. Music enables us to perceive directly the numbers that are at the heart of manifestation. Take two of the most common numbers in the doctrine of correspondences, seven and twelve, the numbers of the visible planets and of the zodiac signs. A mathematician can do all manner of tricks with them, but will never know them as intimately as the musician who works every day with the diatonic and chromatic systems. I do not speak figuratively in saying that the musician's knowledge is a direct perception of reality, only it concerns the quality of number, not its quantity. (269; this statement recalls Heffley/Mann's use of numbers to frame the spacetime legs of his trek across Eurasia)

In conclusion, I paraphrase a piece of advice Salvador Dali gave to young aspiring painters: "Do not worry about trying to be modern; it is the one thing you can't help but be." From this farewell to the centralization of pitch-based systems of analysis, and to the challenge of replacing them with something with as much potential for elegance and precision yet for the simplicity of musical truth as well, I say (to the analyst in me): "Do not worry about trying to find discrete units appropriate to the measurement you must make; such 'science' will fall in

your lap if only you intuit and concentrate on the poetry and spirit of the music's mythos."

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## **Aesthetical, Philosophical, Theoretical Considerations**

Having situated our subject historically, ethnographically, and as a potential object of analysis, we now turn to a discussion of current (or in some cases, current to the entire thirty-year moment of FMP's existence) theoretical and philosophical-aesthetic discussions in print pertaining to it.

This area's readings, like those on analysis, also fall into four categories: current or seminal discussions on such issues related to the study of music as a whole, those focused on improvisation, those focused on jazz/free jazz, and those interdisciplinary and wide-ranging music-informing treatises from which we will construct the theoretical umbrella suggested by the relationship of the first three groups to our subject.

### *Sonic concretes*

Hutchinson (1966) reaches for a balance between the concretes of musical expression and theory as to its aesthetical meaning. He notes a pervasive imbalance in the polarization of, on the one hand, the "elucidation of common practice in selected historical periods" offered up as musical "theory" and, on the other, something "abstracted to a history of certain ideas, removed from the . . . practical making of music" (393). He takes care to distinguish between *object*--the musical statement--and *intent*--that which motivated it (in our case, this is to take care not to theorize an FMP recording or performance, once analyzed, as "an expression of the idea of free improvisation," to look rather for an identity more specific to *that* musical object issuing from the intent behind it). More precisely, Hutchinson situates theory somewhere between idea and expression, the former too broad in its abstraction, the latter too narrow in its focus on physical details. He asks rather for a theory that is specific to the character of a given piece (not to its broad historical or paradigmatic underpinnings, and not to its musical mechanics).

John Dewey's aesthetic theory is invoked as a model music theorists could learn from. Hutchinson explains Dewey's writings on art as a successful engagement with the "general-particular dichotomy." He reminds us of the dichotomy's manifestation in a piece of music--its particulars of sound, and its complete sounding within a span of time--and notes the relativity of such an "object" to those cultures and individuals creating and receiving it. He formulates Dewey's position on the nature of form in an aesthetic object--that which arises from the dynamic juxtaposition of its various aspects as an integration of them into a consummatory

relationship--into a working hypothesis he then applies to a discussion of a Brahms passacaglia. He explains Dewey's terms "fusion" and "funding" as the processes of, respectively, connecting and exchanging information that occurs between those aspects to "holize" (my term) them into an aesthetic object. This integrative process of formalism always takes place in time and ends by defining a span of it, and, in the art of music, that span is itself part of the medium (as opposed to painting or writing, which remain fixed in their media upon completion--though, of course, as with music, generation and reception of them unfold in time). Form is thus by definition teleological, with itself as the goal, not something imposed on an expression to be fulfilled by the latter's conformity to it.

This discussion is indeed useful for its disassociation of formalism with such imposition, and its reminder that everything has at least the "goal" of existing as that which it is. The concepts "form" and "development" are thus redeemed from Western ethnocentricity for whatever broader purposes they might serve. The discussion also reinforces the centrality of the musical aspect of time to the philosophical discourse (and, here, that of art to FMP's discourse/roots, in Fluxus and certain favored painters). Finally, it suggests that musical objects and issues of the past--more specifically, harmonic and melodic ones--have found a full expression to which analysts and theorists have yet to finish reflecting so as to go on to new speculations. Hutchinson suggests timbre as a likely arena for such speculation.

Noll's *Klangfläche* theory, and analytical tools such as Braxton and (Wadada Leo) Smith have devised, satisfy, in the realm of free improvisation and composing for same, much of what Hutchinson calls for. They both specify points, lines, and totalities of definition that combine and converge to make up a whole beyond the sum of its parts. However, Hutchinson concerns himself with the aesthetics more than the metamusical, or philosophical theorizing of music. He may thus serve as a transition from the opening discussion of analytical issues (much as Ferrara does, linking analytical methodologies and philosophical concepts).

### *Sociohistorical context*

Burkholder (1993) ties musicology (history, analysis of style) to theory by asking why a certain history/style went as it did. He raises the question: of what *historical* import is a successful theory? (Specifically, here: if the theory of free improvisation I posited in Part II, and elaborate on in the final chapters, proves viable beyond its immediate original application to FMP circa 1968-2000, how has the social and musical history in which FMP's musical meanings are embedded contributed to that success?)

Burkholder argues that theory can not be abstracted from the music's historical context, much as

Hutchinson argued that it could not be abstracted from music's sonic concretes. His comments on Schenker's grounding in history--that of a long tradition of a contrapuntal/harmonic weave elaborating a simple underlying structure--suggest that Schenker simply brought this underweave to light, after thorough grounding of his own in the workings of those elaborations; and that Schenker's capstone work, *Free Composition* (1935), extended the analytical framework into one that suggested a methodology of original, not formulated composition. No wonder, then, that Schenker's relevance to Schönberg would be noted (Jackson 1990) and to jazz improvisation, especially post-1960, questioned (Pressing 1982). And what Schenker has been to diatonic-melodic and to chromatic-harmonic music--an unearther of the musical heart pumping its bloodstream of notes--is what practitioners-analysts-theorists such as Noll, Braxton, Kumpf, and Smith may be to free improvisation. (In any case, we are certainly not talking about logical positivism with them--simply of discrete and continuous sonic events in time, the most determined actualizations of which never add up to more than *potential* meanings, a potential *we* must actualize, and that constantly, and consistently, somehow--our quest is to discover how--with the details of those events and their potential.)

Burkholder's words below claim responsibility for the theorist of historical music to unearth meaning; they also speak (indirectly) to the challenge to (and responsibility of) theorists to *actualize potential meanings* once they've unearthed all the material and clues they can. They are also suggestive of (again, though they don't directly suggest) the feasibility and desirability for a piece of analysis and theory to itself *evoke* the same feeling and meaning as its object, as though that piece were itself an aesthetic expression, in its own right and equal with its object, as well as a ratiocination contingently reflecting the latter:

- The idea that musical structure is more important than expressivity or signification and is the only aspect of music that a theory must explain is itself an historically determined idea, emerging during the codification of the classical canon in the nineteenth century as a way to assimilate music from past eras, music that was recognized as excellent but whose specific meaning has been lost.

Music has meaning, just as language has meaning as well as structure. Precisely because we cannot understand the language of foreigners, we notice their vocal inflection more and find their speech meaningless. And precisely because we do not fully understand the meanings in music from another culture or from an earlier time, we are more likely to hear it as absolute music, as patterns in sound. But this music is still laden with meaning, and it is the role of those of us who study music from earlier times to move beyond describing its internal structure or its stylistic features and rediscover those meanings as well as we

can, as philologists rediscover the meanings of a dead language. Theorists and analysts must get over our longstanding reluctance to talk about expressivity and about the sociocultural associations of specific styles, forms, genres, procedures, and stylistic traits...(21)

(I should say that Burkholder, like Tomlinson, emphasizes as much the importance of unearthing original rather than projecting one's own meaning upon music.)

My point in citing him in this context: what is an analyst/theorist to do with a music whose makers *intended* its meaning--however *they* experienced, shaped and explained it--to also be ambiguous, mutable, and re/constructed by its receivers?

### *Advocating rationalism*

Brown and Dempster (1989, in an issue of a music theory journal devoted to their subject), by contrast, feel the potential of purely rational--"scientific"--constructs has not been fully or rightly exploited. They admit that such an approach will miss entirely the crucial non-rational musical dimension, but may (much like science might for the theist) glorify it indirectly more keenly.

They look at Benjamin Boretz' *Meta-Variations* as an attempt at music theory that fails, although it satisfies "scientific standards of explanation." Theirs is really a meditation on the philosophy of science--and, as such, pertains to freely improvised (most FMP) music, just as Husserl *et al* does for Noll and Ferrara (even from the same area of philosophy, phenomenology, one overlapping with physical science's province [phenomena]). It brings up the memory of "sciences" such as astrology and theology--with music--in contrast to post-Enlightenment material/immaterial schisms.

Boretz's system attempted to strip analytical-theoretical language of culture/history-specific connotations full of non-descriptive, metaphysical baggage and develop a lens for focusing, theoretically and in theory, on all music<sup>19</sup> (in fact, on all of *part* of it: pitch/time patterns). The positivist/phenomenalist assumptions these authors see in Boretz' work, however, they see as flawed and unviable; they invoke philosophers who have refuted it as such (76). In short, they dismiss Boretz's "science" as scientistic, and make a case for the superior descriptive powers of so-called metaphysical language (which, by virtue of such powers, is what we *would* use to make a piece of literary art, rather than of science-writing). Their examples--"logical form," and "harmonic propulsion" (74)--seem at first glance anything but "metaphysical," which seems to be why the authors consider them not only safe but effective (since on second glance, they are indeed beyond the pale of the strictly rational description). They go on to expose in some

detail Boretz's betrayals of the scientific method and the results he claims.

Then they define and critique "particularism," the idea that each piece suggests its own unique sets of methods and goals of analysis/interpretation, and should be mined as an individual, not an expression of a class, style, etc. They say this "is antithetical to the primary objective of scientific explanation: the formulation of powerful law-like generalizations about potentially infinite classes of phenomena" (82-83). They say the primary particularists--Boretz and other Princeton theorists--were actually composers seeking new systems from which to compose more than theorists seeking general empirical laws with their "theories."<sup>20</sup> Some examples of such theorists are Schenker and Forte, but the authors then also cite problems with that (the idea of a scientific general theory of music):

- Narmour and Taruskin, for example, suggest that Schenkerian theory and Forte's set theory are both circular. According to Narmour, Schenkerian theory is invalid because it allegedly shows that all tonal pieces can be reduced by a set of twelve prolongations to one of three background structures. But, to reduce a given piece, the Schenkerian must know in advance what the background structures and prolongations are--hence the circularity.

After criticizing Forte's theory as self-confirming, Taruskin proposes that, to break the circle, one needs to find external corroboration for the analysis. Along with sketch studies, this corroboration might include:

- "a thorough investigation of style . . . and of the composer's theoretical environment--his training, the theory books he knew, his ways of looking at his own music . . . the music he heard, loved, hated, the books he read, etc." (85-86)

Other criticisms: that physical and musical reality are fundamentally different (thus requiring fundamentally different sciences, or epistemological tools); and that musical theory is not predictive, neither of a creator's nor a receiver's musical truth, as scientific theory is of physical reality. The authors criticize particularism as an ignorance (or ignoring) of the *need* to universalize, to draw general, conclusive principles from particulars.

In consideration of all this, I would establish the uniqueness of a free improvisation, but I would not shy from reflecting on its *general* implications; if my general reflections were confirmed or refuted by other particulars, I would qualify them accordingly. This is to work from two parallel mental screens, the particular and the universal, informing each with the other. There is not such a dichotomy nowadays, since science is more aware of "relative/probable" than "universal/absolute." Too, since science is also (again) less schizophrenically polarized between

the material and the immaterial (witness recent physics, consciousness studies, biology) my "splitscreen" approach also lines up with the "doctrine of correspondences" worked by Godwin and the speculative musicologists.

Brown and Dempster call for precision of understanding and communication, and for a view of science that, if it can't grasp all aspects (including the totality) of an ontology of a theory embodied in a musical event, at least it can and should say so clearly (as physicists can say an electron can "be" both wave and particle, but not measurable as both at once).

- Our proposal does not only reorient music theory philosophically, but it also has practical consequences. By endorsing a scientific method for music theory, we are encouraging music theorists to be clear--perhaps clearer than they have been--about answering certain fundamental questions about their research: 1) What range of musical phenomena are being explained by some theory? 2) What generalizations or theories are being invoked to explain those phenomena? 3) What predictions does the theory make that will allow us to test the theory? 4) What guarantees the unbiased selection of test samples? 5) What theoretical states, structures, entities, or events are postulated by the theory? and is there good reason to believe that such things actually exist? (98)

Such questions alone are crucial contributions here.

Boretz's response, however, is impeccable. To paraphrase: "I did the best I could in response to my own needs as a composer-listener (which interpenetrate, and to which theory *is* subject, the phenomenon of music); I wanted to understand/explain particulars in general terms; go thou and do your own, likewise."

The lesson for this study? I seek an art that is scientific and a science that is artistically elegant in my analytic methodology and theoretical framework of free improvisation. It should thus be resistant to someone's "proof" or "disproof," and only intersubjectively contingent on criticism, not rigid and so not underminable. That, I suggest, is a solid first step through the abovementioned fundamental difference between a science of physical and one of musical phenomena, a step from the former to the latter--analyses and theories as art themselves, not arguments to be proved or disproved, not predictions or imperatives as to what tomorrow's art must be.

What is really being worried over in the above exchange is the nature and respective roles of faith and sight. Ultimately, one can only take what makes music music on faith, however much and keenly one can see in it. Ideally, faith (aesthetic/philosophical/spiritual experience) will increase rather than decrease with sight (analytical/theoretical grasp); Ferrara's philosophical

moorings speak to that ideal. We saw in the last paper his winningly holistic approach to analysis, along with Braxton's and Smith's; here we single him out even from them for his peculiarly German-philosophical orientation's resonance with our German subject, along with the only other analyst (the German Noll) who both took us beyond the pitch paradigm and into (Husserlian) phenomenology as well. Further, the influence of painters and poets on FMP principals and other European improvisers--glimpsed above and thickly exposed in Part II--is far greater and more integrated than anything similar in America, and it is painting and poetry that Heidegger discusses most in discussing art.

### *Phenomenological musicology*

In attempting to construct a philosophical platform that will bear analysis of meaning and mystery as well as mechanics, Ferrara moves through music-specific, or musicologically enlisted, thinkers we've touched upon here (Dewey, Meyer, Adorno, Langer, Gadamer) and others to their philosophical influences--Kant, Whitehead, and Cassirer for Langer--or to philosophies toward which he sees them leaning (the phenomenologists, particularly Husserl and Heidegger, particularly the latter, for hermeneuticists such as Gadamer, through Ricoeur). Before spelling out in more detail what phenomenology and hermeneutics purport, and portend for music, the following gives an overview:

- The analyst, as object, responds to the work. Gadamer is not interested in extending any use whatsoever of this subject-object dichotomy. His purpose in providing this reversed characterization is to partially but substantively suspend or undercut the dichotomy. It is clear that the analyst is not an object. One does not simply respond, one engages the work. However, it is the manner in which one engages the work that makes this process subjective or objective, or which undercuts (to some degree) the dichotomy. The view that human processes must be either subjective or objective results in a bifurcation of nature that splits man from his body and his world. Gadamer's reversal of the roles of subject and object uncovers the nature of music as an object. In order to maintain the scientific status of music as an object (*i.e.*, in order for there to be objectivity), conventional music analysts have placed themselves in a position of dominance over the musical work. This dominant role is achieved through their use of methods that question the work in a dissecting manner. The method becomes the machine, determining questions and tasks and limiting the parameters of discussion. (44)

Having impugned the "objectivity" of "rigorous" analysis so, he questions conversely how

dismissibly *less* "rigorous" methods ("nontraditional prose styles") truly are, and whether greater insights might not be gained by "subjectivity" than by "objectivity."

Ferrara approaches Husserl through Kant, Hegel, and Brentano. Kant was the first in German philosophical lineage to

- distinguish between *phenomena*, objects that are being experienced by consciousness, and *noumena*, things as they exist outside, separate, and autonomous from consciousness. *Phenomena* are thus the ideas of different objects as they exist in the human mind. This distinction was necessary in order for Kant to clarify what he concluded to be the importance of the interaction between objects and human consciousness.

In Kant's *the Critique of Pure Reason*, man's consciousness is the center or measure of all knowledge. David Hume's model of a passive mind that comprehends things-in-themselves as they exist, separate from consciousness, is thereby rejected.

Ferrara's discussion of Kant establishes subjective consciousness itself as the source and arbiter of "objective" knowledge and reality (again, that picture of science as art and art as science).

Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* deals with the dialectical relationship between human consciousness and objects, the latter as the "phenomena of culture," which are clearly contingent on their perceiver for meaning and efficacy. Ferrara cites Gadamer as saying that Hegel's philosophy "represents the last mighty attempt to grasp science and philosophy as a unity" (54) to note himself that scientific rigor and its apodictic goals have failed even in the natural sciences; how much greater their failure "in philosophy, the human sciences, historical research, or in arts criticism" (54-55)? Hegel's centralization, then, "of subjectivity and naive consciousness as starting points for his philosophical system" foreshadowed Husserl's later elaboration of that into a methodology.

Husserl called Franz Brentano (1838-1917) his "only teacher."<sup>21</sup> Ferrara pictures Brentano (55-58) as drawing lines he felt had been muddied by the subjectivism of Kant and Hegel, lines (between natural world--phenomena--and consciousness) that went back to Aristotle. However, paradoxically, he kept and developed the subjectivism as it applied to the (perceptive/receptive) realm of consciousness, in his concepts of "intuition" and "intention." We all have our own biases and agenda, yet they needn't taint rational enquiry; indeed, they empower superrational enquiry (the methodological approach of the "science" of psychoanalysis is a perfect example of this use of intuition and intention as reliable and rigorous tools, enlisted rather than suppressed in the pursuit of rational understanding).

Ferrara describes Husserl's development of Brentano's work so:

- Husserl absorbs Brentano's notion of intentionality, that is, that every conscious act is directed toward something. Consciousness is constituted by the objects to which it points or intends. For the purpose of analysis, consciousness is often distinguished from objects. However, for Husserl, consciousness is presented as the human engagement of objects *in immediacy*. That is to say, there is no separation between consciousness and the objects of its intentions. Consciousness is not a thing; consciousness *is* its function. That function, though not at all in the American pragmatic sense, is characterized as intentionality. Intentionality is to be understood within the context of its Latin roots: *a pointing to*. Thus consciousness is always and in every instance, being conscious *of* something. (59)

This view leads to a focus directly pertaining to music:

- During the presentation of a descriptive analysis of the process of intentional consciousness, Husserl notes that consciousness is constituted through the form of the inner flow of time. In 1905, he devotes an entire work to the phenomenon, temporality, attempting to carry out a phenomenological description of Internal Time-Consciousness. Husserl notes that objects intended by consciousness remain the same in appearance; as we engage them over time we accept their cross-temporal identity. Thus, the same painting remains perceptually unaltered as one views it over a period of time. In describing how we experience things through time, Husserl coins the terms "retention" and "protention." When consciousness engages an object, the object continues to appear to be "the same object" because consciousness, based on past experiences, "protends" or anticipates that it will continue to be the same object. Consciousness "retains" the immediately past appearing of that object in consciousness. This provides data which verify what have become past "protentions" and which ground future "protentions." Objects have a consistent self-identity because 1) they actually inhere physical consistency and 2) "protentions" are continuously being consummated in consciousness that are in agreement with past "retentions." (61)

Time is the field, and "perception is the ultimate *empirical* tool for Husserl" (63, my emphasis), who establishes "the *immediacy of perception* as the undergirding tool for his developing phenomenology and the ultimate foundation of knowledge." (63)

We'll turn more attention (in Chapter Twelve) to the details of Husserl's methodology for

accessing the proper and effective attitude and consciousness from which to assess and represent its objects. Ferrara provides some from Husserl himself (64-66) and more from one of his (more generally, phenomenology's) interpreters, Herbert Spiegelberg (67-74), on how one can "do" phenomenology. Suffice it here to say, through the following example built around my subject, that scholarly rigor includes, in the light of this detail, not only the first description but all of them.

Musical event (let us call it) FMP is:

- 1) a move from F to Bb, rough to smooth timbre, loud to soft, fast to slow, etc. (conventional analysis);
- 2) a force in motion (descriptive phenomenology);
- 3) a force contingent on sound in time (essential phenomenology);
- 4) a raging, fiery, torrential force (phenomenology of appearances);
- 5) a raging, fiery, torrential force that animated *me* and/or an *other(s)* to rage, or resistance, to action, or serenity (constitutive phenomenology);
- 6) a force which I, having engaged in above ways, can also transcend and reduce to my own representation, without sacrificing my immanent engagement with it (reductive phenomenology);
- 7) a force to which I can then ascribe meaning (interpretation), having so ascribed traits and effects and distinction from *me* (hermeneutical phenomenology).

Ferrara ends the chapter on Husserl by judging his attempt to free the ego (the "I" of consciousness) into a self-transcendence to be an ultimately futile but instructive attempt. While subjectivity cannot pull itself up by its bootstraps into objectivity, the quixotic idea and gesture of doing so brings more conscious control of reception, perception, and conception of phenomena, much like the scientific method does. It is Cartesian, in that the awareness of an isolated "I" precedes being in the world, indeed, generates it.

Free improvisation has been problematic to many for its supposed solipsism, for isolating the improviser's ego away from a common musical universe into a *community* of solipsists ("I am, therefore you are--and our music is music because we say it is"). Like Husserl's phenomenology, it started in an impulse to cut past the inherited forms of things to the process of their essential formation in consciousness; it ended, for many, as Husserl's work did for

Ferrara (and Heidegger), as just another inherited form itself, a dated and limited style and approach obviously bound in its historical and cultural contexts rather than transcending them.

Heidegger differed from Husserl in his presumption that all description was *bound* to be interpretation, and that not some purified and trained perception but rather "hermeneutics"--understanding anything as part of a larger whole, in relationship and context rather than absolute self-sufficiency and autonomy--led to the methodology truest to phenomenology.

Ferrara's background survey on hermeneutics in music reminds us of its development in scholarship as an interpretive tool of historical texts, and of phenomenology's appropriation of it in the service of existence, of Being itself as a text begging interpretation. Musicologists have found this appropriation apt to their task, and applicable not only to historical but cross-cultural and contemporary subjects (e.g., Tomlinson on Miles Davis, in Bergeron and Bohlman). As Ferrara traces the methodology through Renaissance Protestant theology, Enlightenment historiography, and nineteenth-century literary criticism, a picture emerges that resonates with the distinction of ethnomusicology from musicology in the former's emphasis on "music in the context of culture"--"music" and "culture" being replaced by the hermeneutic aesthetician with "art" and "existence." Heidegger explicated such a replacement in the more specific terms "being and time" (so: music/art/being-in-the-context-of-culture/existence/time).

Ferrara's recap of continental philosophy's working of hermeneutics reveals the development of the methodology away from specific applications (literature, history, law, theology) and, first through philosopher Friedrich D.E. Schleiermacher (1768-1834), into a "general hermeneutics as the *art of understanding*." Lest this, as with Husserl, again be mistaken for yet another covert subjectivism masked overtly by an agenda-less universality, we find in Ferrara's summation of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics a clear (and ambitious) agenda:

- There are at least three over-riding presumptions in all of Schleiermacher's works: 1) religious feeling (piety) can be characterized as ineffable; yet Schleiermacher 2) attempts to define religious feeling as the intentionality of the Infinite (God); the resolution of which is to be found in 3) hermeneutics, understood as an attempt to deal culturalistically with the *contradiction* of the first two presumptions, *i.e.*, that religious feeling is both a) ineffable and b) an object. (93)

If the free improvisers of FMP were saying, "We are making sound objects that we think of as the sum of their sound components--pitches, harmonies and melodies, tempi, timbres, textures and volumes, silence--nothing more, nothing less. No theory need or should go beyond the physiology of this process, and no analysis need or should fall short of its representation," then my task would find no parallel in Ferrara's above characterization of Schleiermacher. As soon

as any of them speak of their process in mystical or metaphysical or even metaphorical terms, however--or, for that matter, as soon as any of their audience, including us analysts, critics, and theorists reach for such terms--that parallel begins.

The rest of Ferrara's discussion of Schleiermacher, and of his successor in the phenomenological discourse Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), is marked by terms such as "divination" and "the analyst is a related or corresponding [to the artist] genius;" and by (Dilthey's ultimately unsuccessful) attempts to fuse the German traditions of idealism and scientific realism. (A parallel attempt in ethnomusicological discourse can be seen in the roughly contemporaneous work of German "speculative musicologist" Marius Schneider.)

Ferrara begins explaining Heidegger in terms of the latter's rejection of Husserl's "egology," moving instead toward a less personal, more-integrated-with-the-rest-of-the-world concept he called *Dasein* ("being there;" or, simply, human existence). Being in time: as the title of Heidegger's famous work *Being and Time*, this concept was the one he worked as *Urgrund*. The following is interesting for its pertinence to Sidran's work, and to the nature of black English that emerged in tandem with the African-American music that in turn led to FMP:

- The problem with the question of Being is that it cannot be defined. Being is not a being like a man, a dog or a tree, nor can it be reduced to any such being. Somehow, Being is that which is common to and ground for all beings. It is what Hegel calls the "indeterminate immediate." It is considered "the most universal and the emptiest of concepts . . . for everyone uses it constantly and already understands what he means by it." . . . If one states, "I am fine," what one means is "I *be* fine." Given the grammatical error, the meaning of "am" and "be" is clear. One *is* good, one *is* bad, one *is* rich or poor. In all cases no one makes an issue of the nature of the meaning of *is*. The statement, "one *is* good" means that one *bees* good. In this instance, being is not limited to noun use but (as in German: *ich bin*) has been appropriated for a more verbal syntactical role. Thus, the being of a thing is the essential manner in which it *is* or *bees* (as in the verbal form of being) in the world. (104)

To get to this "be-ness," this process, rather than its "isness," or products (such as, indeed, the Husserlian/Cartesian ego itself--that which I eschewed in my own words in Part I Introduction) is to engage with the fundamental of human existence. Heidegger starts with Husserl's work (especially the phrase *zu den Sachen*, "back to the things themselves") to devise the method for approaching such engagement (as opposed to Husserl's goal of disengaged perception and description). He goes back to the Greek coupling of *phainomenon* (fainomenon) and *logos* (logoV) to evoke the original sense of an immediate reality immediately bearing its own name, word, logic. This hermeneutic move to the root of the term itself was a move through centuries

of shift from the sense of *logos* as a presentation of *phainomenon* to an increasingly (potentially) unfaithful *representation* of it, thus from a true phenomenology to one similarly untrustworthy. The question now was rather ontological: what constitutes being in context of time and place, of history and culture, as well as of nature?

Ferrara mines Heidegger's concept of "being-there" (*Dasein*) in the world (*Lebenswelt*) for its resonance with music as potentially meaningful, contingent on its experiencer, meaningless as object. The following speaks especially to improvised music:

- Because *Dasein* is marked by its potentiality-for-Being, Heidegger notes that its character in the world is essentially and always unfinished; its being is always ahead of itself. Never complete, *Dasein* is always what it potentially can and might be. It is always "on the way" toward completion. The only possible resolution to *Dasein's* unfinished existential character is the point at which it is no longer in the world. As soon as *Dasein* begins to be-in-the-world, it is already being-toward-death. Death must not be viewed as a negative or as a static fact. *Dasein* only reaches wholeness (completion) in Death. Death causes the loss of *Dasein's* character of being (thrown) there for its potentiality. Death, that which is always distinctively impending, causes a key mood termed "anxiety." Not to be misinterpreted as fear, "anxiety" is the authentic disclosure that one's being in-the-world is always a being-toward-death. (111)

And this:

- *Thus, human Being (and probably Being itself) is founded in Time. In his authentic Being, man continuously interprets himself and his world by holding open a future which is always coming and must be anticipated as such. It follows that the meaning of Being is profoundly related to Time. In addition to its mission to carry out a hermeneutic of the ontological status of Dasein, Being and Time can thus be viewed as an attempt to reveal the temporal meaning of the Being of Dasein. (112-13, emphasis mine)*

Some of Ferrara's concluding comparisons between Heidegger and Husserl point out, again, the nature of their respective significant and different contributions to theoretical *Urgrund* of analysis:

- As a "life philosopher," Heidegger sought to develop a hermeneutic method that would reveal human existence in terms of life itself. Husserl's suspension

of the existence of the world (even if it is only the world of the "natural attitude") is also a suspension of the everyday ego as it appears in the world. The result of this suspension is a subtle Cartesianism in which there is a separation of transcendental consciousness from everyday consciousness. *For Heidegger, the reality of the "natural attitude" cannot be dislocated from transcendental consciousness.* Husserl reduces being-in-the-world (through his suspension of the "natural attitude") to the intentional relationship of the transcendental ego. This evidences a *preference for a psychological approach to the world and a disregard for that which is ontological.* Husserl's foundation in the transcendental ego limits his phenomenology to an inspired and radical psychology. His phenomenological reduction suspends Dasein and makes the study of its "thrownness" into an ontological world impossible. One might suggest that it is Husserl's separation of transcendental life from "factual" life that necessitates Heidegger's redirection of descriptive phenomenology to hermeneutic phenomenology. (115-16, emphasis mine).

Ferrara's move from the above chapter on Heidegger's earlier to the next one on his later work moves us into "Heidegger's Philosophy of Art." He paints a picture of a thinker who had made his points, however original, in the conventional "technical manipulation style" of German intellectual discourse.

- It became clear to him, after *Being and Time*, that only a radical leap out of metaphysics could propel his philosophy out of that tradition and on to new ground. Heidegger abandoned much of his earlier philosophical terminology and technical approach in *Being and Time* and moved toward a *meditative and poetic* stance. (124, emphasis mine).

His way of doing this as an unrenounceably Western man was, again, through a hermeneutical engagement with the pre-Socratic Greek thinkers more in line with Pythagoras (and Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides--Kowald's favorites) than with Plato. The clear Platonic split between "real" and "ideal," phenomena and noumena, that took over the West had not yet formed, and that ancient unity, though subverted, yet

- remains in the structures of the possibilities of Western thought and philosophy. In that sense, Heidegger's deconstruction of Western metaphysics is not an attempt to completely extricate himself from his roots (which he would say is impossible), but to rediscover his more original roots in early Greek thinking. (124)

Heidegger's understanding and working of these roots bore fruits in his concept of "meditative

thinking" to engage phenomena directly, and of "waiting upon" (not merely *for*) the revelation of those things as they really are. That distinction between ego-invested acts (such as "will," and "waiting *for*" something to be of service to you) and Heidegger's concepts of engaging and serving existence was more fully developed in his essay "The Origin of the Work of Art."

Heidegger approaches a piece of art as a phenomenon to be divined and explained, like all other phenomena. He had categorized all phenomena in *Being and Time* threefold: matter formed to a human purpose (like a car), matter formed naturally (a pile of leaves), and human existence (*Dasein*). Interestingly for our focus on free improvisation, his essay first considers art as if it were of not the first but the second type--a "mere thing" of nature, the "thingliness" of which he desired to meditate on and wait upon, like a revelation that needed and rewarded coaxing and service (again, this goes to Sven-Åke Johansson's way of improvising words).

He starts by another threefold division:

- Of what does the thingly character of "mere things" consist? There are three traditional interpretations of what things are: the thing as substance, that is, as bearer of characteristics; the things as a sum or totality of what is given to the senses, that is, as a collection of sense data; and the thing as formed matter. Heidegger dismisses all three. (126)

The first two he dismisses as futile attempts to define the whole as the sum of its parts (traits, sense data), the third as too far removed from human existence to be meaningful. He then turns to his first category of things--matter as "equipment" (the car)--to examine as the category for works of art.

(Before proceeding there, a brief aside: both free jazz [mostly in Europe] and contemporary art music [e.g. John Cage's] have embraced "piles of leaves"--mere things, shaped by chances of nature--as aesthetic objects in need of no human agency other than the intentions of presentation [rather than *representation*] and reception [and therein perception, *conception* being optional and superfluous] to make them such. The spectrum of human agency in art-making has come to range from that minimal engagement--one that still meets Heidegger's conditions for human-functional matter--to one in which the music-maker asserts his or her own activities and being therein as of a nature similar to those that *shape* a pile of leaves. FMP artists overwhelmingly fall on the latter end of the spectrum; free improvisation among them has become a discourse of distinguishable and highly developed voices, not anonymous and generic crafters of sonic events, though such events have always been part of that discourse.)

Heidegger starts his examination of art in earnest with a peasant's pair of shoes from a Van Gogh painting. Things that are mere equipment in real life reveal their essence as poetically

charged buffers between humanity and the elements, mortality, in the gaze upon the painting. But even closer to our subject (which is an example of non-representational art) is Heidegger's look at a Greek temple. It is a long and hard look at the materials themselves and their relation to their setting, not at their form.

- Heidegger's description of the work material or earth of the temple functions at a more fundamental level than traditional formalist criticism in the arts. His description does not speak about the lines, the balance, or the symmetry. This must not be construed as a denigration of formal analysis; traditional formal analyses of art works are vital to a thorough understanding of art works. Even so, Heidegger's description is markedly different from formal analyses which do not tend to speak about or in terms like "the rockiness that rests clumsily and spontaneously." He speaks of the luster and gleam of the stone and its textural contrasts with the sun, the night, and the sea. Heidegger's comments are more primary or fundamental than form in the conventional sense. Indeed, he is not describing the work's form (syntax) or content (reference) but has stepped back for a view of the stone (*i.e.* the work-materials) as such. This kind of view is closer to the artist's creative "handling" of his work-materials. Heidegger's analysis precedes the finished work as formed matter and deals with the matter as such. This does not preclude a traditional formal analysis; it grounds it! From such a start, formal analysis can be carried out with an enriched basis in the work materials themselves. (131; this recalls Heffley's pre-Mann experience with St. Stephen's Cathedral, in Vienna)

This goes to our tendency here away from formal and syntactical codes in sound and toward the sounds themselves, as timbres and textures.

Ferrara compares Heidegger's engagement with a work of art to the human *Dasein* in his *Lebenswelt* ("lifeworld"):

- As in his depiction of earth, Heidegger presents the world as something dynamic and happening. His statement that the world "worlds" means that the concept, world, is not static. "World" refers to something that *happens* in art, as in a dynamic event. When the world shows itself in a work of art, therefore, it is in this dynamic state of "worlding." And when this occurs, one can say that the work (*i.e.*, the art work) is *working*. Correspondingly, this brings that same dynamic character to an understanding of the nature of art. *Art is not a static thing but something that emerges and unfolds in our experience of it.* (132, emphasis mine).

Heidegger distinguishes between earth (*Erd*)--mere things, materials, with little human meaning--and world (*Welt*), that which human being makes out of, puts into, earth. For Heidegger, all art stems from language as poetry--that in-born capacity to "name the beasts of the world," not just arbitrarily but poetically, by means of reference to other aspects of the world and by virtue of the "syntax inherent" in the namer's organism itself.

- Given this conception, poetry, as fundamental linguistic projection, makes the languages of the various arts possible. Hence, all art is poetry for Heidegger. Poetry is the ground for art because all the other arts occur in the Open which is already opened by poetry. This is the case because poetry makes the ontological projection into Being possible. For Heidegger, poetry is the art of language. As such, poetry is the most "original" of all the arts. From its original projection into Being, all other art forms derive. (140)

This and the discussion of visual art are touchstones for the strong and ongoing influences of (and collaboration with) poetry/prose and painting among FMP artists, somewhat closer than their American counterparts--though not any closer than African-American blues and gospel, rap and poetry, or earlier Western music, especially from Germany.

The primal light, or sound, are beyond our reach. We must start with the primal eyes and ears that arose in evolution to *meet* primal light and sound; and we must recall that even those organs are only messengers bearing signals to be decoded, beasts to name. We learn their true names, in the beginning and end, by giving them.[22](#)

### *Reception/perception*

To these stirrings toward musical meaning--or better, identity (re: above distinctions between positivism and teleology cued by Hutchinson and Burkholder)--revealed in sonic events such as pitches, timbres, and their relationships; and to their singing in historical events, Lissa (1965) adds the dimension of reception, thus the issue of perception, of music by its audience. Again, critics of free jazz have often seen it as a sort of musical (often mutual) masturbation on the part of players heedless of an audience's needs; yet, of course, audiences, large and small, have always been there, willingly, happily. The following from Lissa reminds the scholar to include the audience in the equation:

- Treating the history of music mainly as the history of creativity, the musicologist had failed to notice the history of receptivity and barred from his field of vision the social function music performs, depending on the occasion; the influence of the time-and-place context on the listener's response to music;

and the development of those mental processes that make up musical perception.(273)

Lissa looks at reception (re: audience experience/support of FMP events, and FMP's response to that, described in Chapter Six) for the issues of *perception* it raises (here, how FMP events/recordings are understood at different times and places). She sees nineteenth-century Western art music as harmony-driven, its twentieth-century expression as rhythm-driven (e.g., Stravinsky, Bartok). Serial music, though generated from a systematic *paradigm*, doesn't generate its own clichés, since each *piece* plays by its own set of rules, thus is hard to analyze/theorize absolutely; but she suggests that, for that reason, aural aesthetics (those of the receivers) are evolving healthily (279), forced as they are to sink or swim.

If so, current reception is closer to Medieval culture than to that of the last three centuries, in its casting off of harmony as meaning-matrix. Medieval aesthetics centralized melody as primally motivic, marginalized harmony as static; later times mined harmony for motion (harmonic development) too, marginalizing timbre and texture as static. This begs the question of the move of timbre/texture's (including their overlap with the larger rhythmic field, in attack and phrasing, as well as instrumentation and instrument usage) to the center, after both harmony and melody have been mined for their motivic meaningfulness. She sees us in a transition time frame of centuries, having yet to catch up to the answer to that question.

The perfect listener would be one who instantly picks up a given piece's brand new ground rules, but that is ideal. Lissa suggests that creative artists in large part *determine* how listening (perception) will change. Tomlinson's approach (see "Composed Theory of Free Improvisation," Part II) relates crucially to her point that perception/reception, as much as generation, is contingent on time and place and circumstance, not absolute. The implications herein for FMP? They lie in the questions: how would FMP musicians have us hear (receive) them? why? how has this developed over time?

Similarly, Noglik (1990) discusses "horizonshifting," centering on the way traditional musical genres/categories/functions (generally, "popular" and "serious" music) were confounded by jazz, a music that came to Europe originally as popular (socially functional, dance and background entertainment) but developed (as in America) into a concert/art music. Noglik discusses German reception in general terms of the commercial, social and cultural arenas; he cites the FMP artists (and Anthony Braxton) as examples of "jazz" as esoteric *E-Musik*; other well known names are invoked as more celebrated in the social/commercial arena, some for having crossed over between "high" and "low." Noglik's interest here is in what sociopolitical and economic/cultural conditions *shift* in order to contextualize the music one way or the other. (Some examples from my subject's [and related] history: Anthony Braxton's move from small independent labels to the mainstream Arista with his decidedly unmainstream music; the Berlin

jazz establishment's early acceptance of FMP; expectations of early players that free music would be a mass popular, rather than a fringe esoteric, movement; Thelonious Monk moving from cult to cultural hero [via his music moving from esoterica to "standard"]; Chicago Art Ensemble trumpeter Lester Bowie forming a group called "Avant-Pop," and so on.)

We get a picture of horizonshifting occurring in the process of musical scouts running back and forth between the musical wilderness and "civilized" musical culture, gradually, in fits and starts, expanding the boundaries of the latter into the territory of the former.<sup>23</sup> Noglik speaks of this process in the discursive terms of much of the interdisciplinary concerns surveyed so far--linguistic, body/gestural, improvisation/composition, reception, musician-musician and musician-audience interactions--and that in the terms of the German and European cultural and music business arenas.

### *Generation*

- ...the temporal form of music...is "what saves me and other composers from mental breakdown." The underlying beat of any piece of music functions as "an abstract grid without which you would be sliding around in nothing."

--Steve Reich (in Hoffman, 1999: K4)

Here is where we look in a little more detail at Pressing's (1988) work, first met in the Part II Introduction. He lists and explains briefly "some special issues relevant to improvisation." They are:

- *skill classification* Solo improvisation is a closed skill, or one that relies only on self-produced stimuli; ensemble improvisation adds the element of extensive interaction with external stimuli. It is also "a fine, complex skill, with both perceptual and motor components; continuous actions predominate, although there are also discrete and serial motor aspects." This last point varies somewhat with the nature of the instrument played. He notes that most studies of learned motor skills are of simple ones (e.g., tracking), so amenable to a reductionist scientific methodology. Improvisation, a highly developed skill, has "distinctive emergent properties missed in these earlier short-term studies, properties such as adaptability, efficiency, fluency, flexibility, and expressiveness" (134-35);
- *feedback and error correction*, allowing for "a narrowing of the gap between intended and actual motor and musical effects," as well as for its "motivational and attention-focusing effects;
- Feedback redundancy is an important concept for music. Aural, visual, proprioceptive, and touch feedback reinforce each other for the instrumental improviser, whereas the vocalist

has only hearing and proprioception available...Likewise the design of some instruments allows more precise visual feedback and more categorical kinaesthetic feedback than others. This is almost certainly why sophisticated improvisation using advanced pitch materials is more difficult on the violin than the piano, and extremely challenging for the vocalist. For every first-rate scat-singer in the world there must be 500 talented jazz saxophonists" (135);

- Feedback works both on short-term movements and longer-term decisions about form and direction;
- *anticipation, preselection, and feedforward* This is something a level beyond the subliminal reactivity of the last quality, moving improvisatory consciousness closer to the conscious, rational control of composition;
- *hierarchy vs. heterarchy* This grounds the musical issues explored by Cohn and Dempster (see above) in the discourse of cognitive psychological studies of the central nervous system, or musical in psychophysiological reality;
- *time scales for the control of movement* (137-38);
- *timing and movement invariants* This refers to what musicians experience as the plasticity of a fixed musical event, such as a (fixed) beat one can play "behind" or "on top of." "Hence the improviser has access to generalized action programmes (in both motor and music representation), which allow overall parametric control (time, space, force) and subprogram tuneability. This may well be responsible for the flexibility of conception characteristic of experienced improvisation" (138);
- *motor memory*, such as that that comes into play when riding a bicycle after a long period of not doing it.

Also of interest here is Pressing's distinction between "massed and distributed practice." Improvisations on the same piece spread out over time show one kind of variation, developing "immediacy, and consistency of results under variable conditions;" those repeated in close sequence force the improviser to exhaust his or her clichés and virtually storm new musical terrain. Additionally,

- mental practice away from the instrument can be important for performers of fixed music, based on internal hearing of scores, but there seems very little record of its use in improvisation. This is presumably due to the intrinsically vital motoric link between performer and instrument for improvisation. (140)

And

- For all but very simple skills, instructions seem particularly effective when kept simple, and when focusing on goals and general action principles rather than kinematic details (Hendrickson and Schroeder 1941; Holding 1965;

Newell 1981). This certainly holds for improvisation. Probably too much intellectual detail both interferes with the fluid organization of action sequences, as mentioned earlier, and strains attentional resources. (141)

Pressing's own model is an attempt more Husserlian than Heideggerian (especially the late Heidegger, with his eschewal of formal-professional-technical in favor of poetic language), in its meticulous ambition to describe and chart, to slow and freeze, very mechanically, processes that take place in millisecond time frames and are ultimately beyond such mechanical descriptions (as consciousness, per Penrose, is beyond computation--an apt comparison, given Pressing's orientation to psychology)--but in this, of course, he corroborates Brown and Dempster in his embrace of the "scientific" approach for what it *can* reveal and suggest, in full knowledge of its limits.

Pressing uses algebraic language to express (for simplicity, only solo, factoring in ensemble interactions later) improvisation (I) as a set of "event clusters" ( $E_n$ ), each triggered at a specific time point ( $t_n$ ), both internally ( $E_i$ ) and externally ( $E_n$ ) (with a time window between the two,  $t_i$ ). He factors in "referent" (R--anything being improvised *on*, from a lead sheet to a sunset), "goal" (G--an improviser's conscious intention), and long-term memory (M).

Any given event cluster  $E$  has a number of simultaneously valid and partially redundant 'aspects.' Each aspect is a representation of  $E$  from a certain perspective. Most important are the acoustic aspect (produced and sensed sound), the musical aspect (cognitive representation of the sounds in terms of music-technical and expressive dimensions), and the movement aspect (including timing of muscular actions, proprioception, touch, spatial perception, and central monitoring of efference). Visual and emotional aspects normally also play a role, and in principle there may be others. (154)

Again, I include Pressing's model not as something I wish to build on--in its mode of presentation's centralization of professional Psychology discourse, it is farther afield from my Humanities area into hard-scientific language--but to consider as a source-in-an-area of information and insight worth pondering for its concern with the same processes concerning me and my FMP subjects.

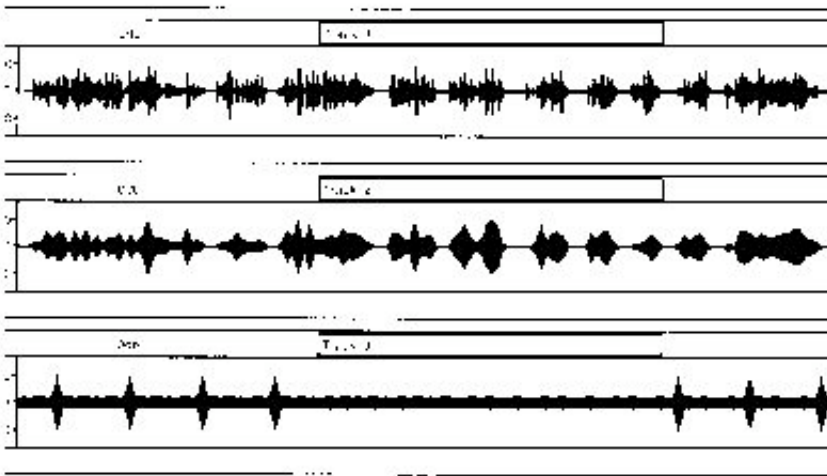
## Notes

1. With some qualifications in deference to Brown and Dempster's persuasive critique of "particularism," cited ahead. By contrast to that critique, I see corroboration of my approach in Noglik's (1991: 203-220)

"Composition and Improvisation--Comments in Search of a Fruitful Relationship." So many compositions for improvisation being experimentally/empirically (as opposed to paradigmatically) based, as Noglik notes, such compositions will (at least in part) suggest their own premises for the improvisational process, as well as the analytical and theoretical.

2. Anthony Braxton's *Composition Notes* and more recent classroom materials contain analytic strategies uniquely conceived for his own work, but as uniquely suited to more general usage. I will allude to those strategies throughout this essay and examine them directly at the end.

3. As a throwaway example, here's a visual representation of one of Chapter Seven's musical examples: a Peter Kowald bass solo with a metronome-imposed working pulse.



The top two lines (left and right channels) show the participant's discrepancies from the bottom, a click track of the working pulse extracted from the playing's implication of it and made explicit (notice how the pulse tends to fall on silences and attacks--beginnings or ends of phrases, rather than middles). In graphic form, this shows most clearly how unmetered improvised music can be metered for units of analysis most copasetically with sound-editing software.

4. Prögler's survey (25-30) of various devices from analytical and ethnographic literature, and new technology, fairly represents this impulse in scholarship to pinpoint and codify musical subtleties--jazz swing, interpersonal interplay on the stand, etc.-- with increasing subtlety.

5. Jazz lore is full of the importance of elegance and comportment, from Duke Ellington on. Miles Davis was famous for his sense not only of clothing style but of everything visual about his presentation--his posture, the way he held and played his horn, and the expectations along such lines he had for his bandmates (he articulated this as primarily important in an interview on Dick Cavett's TV show). Trombonist Roswell Rudd, in a private conversation, praised his longtime bandmate Archie Shepp for the latter's sense of theater in presenting his music, and Rudd himself has aspired to develop such a delivery. Recall, too, Günter Sommer's *Hörmusik* gesture of playing behind a screen so as *not* to be seen, though elsewhere he expressed the opposite desire.

6. It seems no accident that pianist-composer Cecil Taylor, given his instrument, influences, and ways of orchestrating, would be the focus of two such studies (Werts [1988], examined ahead, and Kiroff [1998], both (sadly) extraordinary for the analytical rigor and professionalism they bring to this subject.
7. See Briggs (1993) for a fascinating example of a spectographic analysis that charts the physical difference between a "sincere" and "insincere" singer's sound that was immediately apparent upon hearing to cultural insiders, but not to Briggs (in his fieldwork).
8. Noll's *Atentakt*; see discussion of Noll ahead.
9. Trumpeter/scholar Wadada Leo Smith's (remember him from Peter Kowald's trio with Günter Sommer?) analysis in Lock (1995) of an Anthony Braxton composition/performance (from the 1983 recording *Composition 113*) provides an interesting and viable contrast to this dearth of analyses of free improvisation. Smith uses Schenkerian-like and pitch-class-set-like approaches in analyzing the musical material provided in Braxton's liner notes, but he devises his own set of symbols to capture aspects of the improvisation on that material Braxton performed, with the following comments: "I think there is a significant difference between analyzing a composition and analyzing an improvisation. The most essential difference is to do with when the musical moment takes place. If the music-object is a composition, its musical moments are defined through notation and interpretation, so its musical moments are structurally bound within the activity of the score and later brought alive. Its musical moments will remain in the same place, because its conditions are known. In an improvisation, the musical moments cannot be known until the music-object has been realized. Because the music is created in the present, its musical moments are unknown and may occur in different places each time the music-object is realized in performance." (97; here we have corroboration for the notion of "playable notation" of an improvised musical event--such as that devised here by Smith--as Rohrshach trigger of new improvisation). See also my own use of Braxton's schematic of his music system for analyses of specific musical events (1996: 221-96).
10. See Kerman (1985: 190) on performance (interpretation) *as* criticism, and Cone's allusions to such an idea (in Kerman 1985: 198-99) as "sounding analysis." Indeed, as the lead quote to this section by Augustine states, music itself is already a kind of analytical exposition of life's parts and whole. This suggests, for the analyst's task, a technologically timely approach: one could play along with recordings on a MIDI keyboard and/or a multitrack tape until thorough familiarity syncs one's playing up with the recording as closely and variously as possible, mining the data one generates for what it says about what one hears and how one casts (in responding to) that. As for image options: not only diagrams and graphs and so on should be options, but also expressive art, perhaps mediated by critical commentary. As for text, poetry and prose, serving fiction/myth, likewise mediated, should join the "scientific" lexicon of the music-analytical toolbox.
11. Via simple vertical hash marks with conventional notation, a method exploited more fully by Prögler's use of Keil's PD theory, ahead.
12. Recall, again, the example from Potter of a study of a Bill Evans piano solo that demonstrated this.
13. Taylor's process is indeed similar to traditional oral practice. Jost (1988: 99) citing Taylor, writes, "This procedure...is not new, but is firmly rooted in the traditions of folk music: in jazz too, it has had its predecessors: Charles Mingus, for example. Cecil Taylor: 'I had found out that you get more from the musicians if you teach them the tune by ear, if they have to listen for changes instead of reading them off the

page, which again has something to do with the whole jazz tradition, with how the cats in New Orleans at the turn of the century made their tunes.' Korean *komungo* player Jin-Hi Kim (and sometime FMP guest/recording artist) recalls (in private conversation with me) learning similarly extended pieces note by note, from teachers who had themselves memorized them so, when learning the traditional music of Korea as a youth.

14. As is Anthony Braxton's for his similar "language musics," often with the same results (e.g., the line for the drone).

15. See also Bartholomew (in Smith 1989). Smith's is a theory reader that parallels Ferrara's analytical study, focusing on the phenomenological branch of philosophy (Husserl).

16. This neutralization of the forward-moving "arrow of time" in the realm of pitch sequences images a regression from higher to lower evolutionary levels of time as conceived by Fraser (1990: 313).

17. Specific to Dean's own observations, bulleted in Part II Introduction, his words "larger structures can be deduced from the patterns," the structures he sees as hierarchies, chain-associations, and selective are covered with *more* precision by Braxton's categories such as "geometry," "lineforming," and "sub-identity formings," "collage," "conceptual graft," and "coordinate music."

18. See Godwin (1989), and in Paynter (Vol. 1, 256-71). McClain, with his anchor in mathematics, resonates with Penrose as a mathematician enlisted for his relevance to musical analysis and theory. Godwin's jacket notes (1989) update McClain's historical sources so: "The idea that the universe is created out of sound or music (and therefore *is* music [and therefore is analytically approachable through physical science as meaningfully as through musicology--M. H.]) is a very ancient one. In this book, Jocelyn Godwin brings together three contemporary German thinkers who exemplify this tradition in its modern variants: Marius Schneider, Rudolf Haase, and Hans Erhard Lauer." Maconie (1990), the Stockhausen scholar, updates it fully into the postmodern heart of the Western art music tradition.

19. In this, it resembled much of Anthony Braxton's approach to analytical-theoretical language about his areas of focus. For example, Braxton prefers "restructural cycle" to terms such as "Dixieland," "Swing," "BeBop"--indeed, to "Jazz"--when discussing African-American (or his "trans-African, trans-European creative music") music history.

20. See Kerman (1985: 104) for an amusing account of the turn, under Boretz's editorship, the journal *Perspectives in New Music* took from something that looked like an engineer's or mathematician's notebook to a "typical avant-garde little magazine replete with amateur graphics, wildly fluctuating typefaces, spectacular personal effusions and--a fascinating new feature--poems in *vers libre*, generally printed a dozen lines or so per page, commenting on a few bars of some composition. It was a full swing of the pendulum..."--and one instructive in the context of my own leanings toward the aesthetic and beyond, not away from, the rational in my own work as analyst and theorist.

21. As philosophy lecturer at the Universities of Wurzburg and Vienna, his students included later luminaries such as Sigmund Freud and, of interest here, our own discipline's pioneer, Carl Stumpf.

22. See Elytis (1995) for a brilliant declamation of Heidegger's concept embodied in the thought of Peter

